



PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN
Permanent Representative

at the

General Debate of the High-Level Segment
ECOSOC Substantive Session 2010

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Mr. President,

Allow me to join the Honorable Ministers, Heads of Delegation, and colleagues who have spoken before me in extending their congratulations to you, your bureau and the ECOSOC Secretariat for the excellent arrangements and stimulating discussions we have had thus far during the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). The Philippine delegation has gathered much information from the National Voluntary Presentations, and even during the Breakfast Roundtables and ECOSOC side events, and we look forward to further learning and sharing in the remaining weeks of this substantive session.

This particular ECOSOC session is of added significance because of the various challenges that currently beset both developing and developed countries in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Within this context, major global discussions within and outside the United Nations are also taking place this year precisely to address these troubled times – the most prominent being the UN High-level Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the High-level Event on Biodiversity, and the High-level Review of the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (MSI+5) all in September, the succession of G20 meetings in Toronto and Seoul, and the Cancun climate change conference starting in late November.

This confluence of events and meetings, and the rapidity with which crises seem to be occurring – what some would call a ‘new normal’ that was referred to during one of the DCF policy dialogues – gives the impression that our global community should take decisive action soon in order to avert even greater problems on a wider scale. Given this context, Mr. President, allow me to add to your ‘five musts’, a sixth – that the ECOSOC, the UN system and each individual UN member country must take the difficult decisions to move these various discussions beyond mere rhetoric into the realm of action and thereby redeem the goals we ourselves set in our UN Charter.

Mr. President,

The Philippines has just entered a new phase in its development with the election of a new President, H.E. Mr. Benigno Simeon Aquino III, who is only two days old in his term, and who won his popular mandate based on a platform of 'good governance' imposed not by external influences, but borne out of a nation's disaffection with negative bureaucratic behavior.

As the start of President Aquino's term coincides with the end of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2004 – 2010, a national strategy which is anchored on the Millennium Development Goals, his administration will oversee the development and implementation of the entire next phase of the MTPDP 2010 – 2016. His other main campaign goal of reducing poverty is precisely in line with MDG One, and we can expect to see renewed vigor in pursuing the other MDG's during his term, since he has instructed his new cabinet to focus on projects in health, education, food security, job creation, justice and anti-corruption. In this manner, he can be considered as the Philippines' MDG President.

On the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women, I am pleased to report that this is one MDG where the Philippines is acknowledged to have done comparatively well. The recent passage of the Philippine Magna Carta of Women in August 2009 has put into one comprehensive law the role that women play in nation building, and thereby seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors, in all spheres of life - political, economic, socio-cultural, and even in their domestic and private life. The law also protects women from all forms of violence and ensures mandatory training on human rights and gender sensitivity by all government agents involved in the protection and defense of women against gender-based violence. Through this law, Filipino women can now claim legal accountability from violators and offenders. It is worthy to note that

President Aquino is himself the only son of the Philippines' first of two female Presidents, the icon of democracy and 'people power' - President Corazon C. Aquino - and also a brother to four sisters, so he should therefore have the rights and welfare of women close to his heart. He has already appointed 4 women to key ministerial level positions in his Cabinet, namely to the portfolios of justice, labor and employment, social welfare and development, and on the peace process. Putting women in charge of these important positions underlines the fact that there can be no sustainable development without peace, justice and decent jobs for all, and that women are in the best position to understand the problems in these areas and to develop and implement the policies needed to achieve national progress.

The five themes of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum are also congruent with Philippine interests as ODA to our country has been declining. We take to heart the statements from the past few days that indicate that ODA is but a part of a total approach to development financing, and we also note the observations that migration has an important role to play in development discussions. The Philippines joins the calls of many for a greater and more action-oriented role for the DCF in the future.

Mr. President,

Let me end with expressing the Philippine delegation's full support for your presidency and your determined efforts to ensure the continued efficacy and relevance of the ECOSOC. The Ministerial Declaration that we will be adopting later today is but one example of the important input that the ECOSOC will bring to the High-level summit on MDG's later this year.

Thank you.