



STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

delivered by

MARIA ANGELA A. PONCE

Minister and Legal Adviser

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations

**Agenda Item 90 : Strengthening and Promoting the International Treaty Framework
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The Philippines thanks the Secretary-General for his useful and informative report.

We supported the inclusion of this agenda item when it was first introduced in the 73rd session because we are convinced that a robust treaty framework is an essential precondition for an effective rule of law system.

We welcome the amendments to the regulations that resulted from the initial consideration of this item, particularly the acceptance of electronic submissions for treaty registration and recognition of the role of depositaries other than the United Nations.

On the issues identified in the Report, we note with concern the geographical imbalance in the number of treaties submitted for registration where treaties from the Asia-Pacific region constituted only 9% of registered treaties for the period 2009-2019. Given this, further reviews and revision of the regulations must aim to correct this geographical imbalance, by building capacity promoting registration, easing the process through transparency, accessibility, simplification of the process and wider use of digital and electronic means. We must promote a culture of registration, as the low number of registrations is not just a question of lack of capacity but also lack of awareness on the importance and value of registration.

With this in mind, we agree with Mexico that there is a need to address the registration of treaties provisionally applied in accordance with Article 25 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT). This conversation must however be made within the broader discussion of treaty practice and issues, for example, the practice of reservations and declarations to treaties and withdrawal of signature or instruments of accession.

On depositaries, we are of the view that UN regulations cannot modify or amend responsibilities of other entities that also exercise depositary functions.

On the use of electronic means for registration and publication, we support development of an online registration tool for treaties and the upgrading of the electronic treaties database.

In line with our recognition of multilingualism as a core value of the UN, we believe in maintaining the current practice of encouraging – but not requiring -- the inclusion of courtesy English and French translations of treaties submitted for registration. To require states to provide translations would be an additional burden that may further discourage registration.

We understand that the delay in translations by the Secretariat is one of the reasons for the backlog in the publication of the *Treaty Series*. As pointed out in the report however, there are other measures not related to translation that can be considered, such as expanding the limited publication policy and adapting the *Treaty Series* to a digital format of publication.

On capacity building, the pandemic has inadvertently shown us that online training sessions can be very effective and more cost-beneficial. The Secretariat may wish to develop an online training module that can be adjusted to specific national and regional needs. We also encourage organization of side events on treaty practice and issues, which can be used as a starting point for the development of a compendium of treaty practice, not just registration and publication.

Finally, we stress that revisions of the regulations should be comprehensive and not done on a piecemeal basis, so as to maintain stability and predictability and enable states to comply with them.

Thank you.