



PHILIPPINES

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Statement by
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at the

42nd Session of the Commission for Social Development

4-13 February 2004
United Nations, New York

Mr. Chairman,

First, allow me to congratulate you and the members of your Bureau on your well-deserved election. With your expertise and able guidance, I am confident that this meeting will reinvigorate our commitments in the area of social development and foster deeper discussion on emerging issues that increasingly demand the international community's serious attention.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this session's priority theme, "Improving Public Sector Effectiveness". Indeed, we can gauge how much progress we have made towards achieving the objectives of the Copenhagen and Millennium Summits by assessing how effectively the public sector has been in carrying out its policy-making and the delivery of social services.

Public sector effectiveness

Mr. Chairman,

The heart of the public sector's role, especially for developing countries, is eradicating poverty, the most stark manifestation of the lack of social development. It has often been said that efforts by developing and least developed countries to eradicate poverty is a "chicken-and-egg" situation. It is an especially complex challenge for a developing country's public sector to effectively provide adequate social services when it is impoverished itself, and wanting in essential resources and institutional and technical capacity. In order to help address this problem, strengthened international cooperation will provide the critical support needed for genuine social development. This, however, does not imply any diminution of the responsibility of governments. While the task of improving the public sector remains primarily incumbent upon governments, it can only be accomplished successfully when all actors, including civil society, the international community, the United Nations and relevant international organizations, are able to contribute to an environment conducive to a better quality of life for all.

In recognition of the importance of an effective public sector, the Philippines embarked on a program aimed at reengineering the bureaucracy and improving governance. The program embodies the overall strategy of the government for improving service delivery and strengthening institutional capacity. It also rationalizes the distribution of functions among government agencies and boosts public and private partnerships. In addition, several special programs such as those aimed at ensuring prudent expenditure management, reforming accounting and auditing procedures, wiping out corruption, utilizing information and technology communication to streamline and speed up processes and sustaining decentralization and devolution, are being implemented to enable the public sector to effectively respond to the social needs of communities.

Equalization of opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines has always been steadfast in its commitment to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. To complement national efforts in this area, the Philippines hosted an inter-regional seminar and regional demonstration workshop on accessible ICT and by tabling the resolution on the World Programme of Action for Persons with Disabilities at the 58th session of the General Assembly.

The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities has been an invaluable tool that assisted efforts to promote the full enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities, especially before any international convention on disability had been contemplated. For the first time, the Standard Rules had put together norms and standards to enable persons with disabilities to live their lives fully and integrate themselves into society. However, the successful meeting of a joint government and civil society working group last January in New York produced a draft text of a disability convention and has thus paved the way for a more comprehensive, coherent, and probably, more widely accepted set of norms on the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. We welcome this very positive development and urge countries to converge all efforts towards ensuring that the future Convention truly embodies the principles and actions needed to significantly improve the situation of persons with disabilities in every country. As a global instrument, the Convention should harness international cooperation in key areas, especially for the benefit of countries where poverty is prevalent and where persons with disabilities are more disadvantaged.

International Migration

Mr. Chairman,

Let me commend the Secretariat for preparing a balanced background paper that deals with the social perspective of international migration. We are pleased with the Commission's deeper sensitivity to the emerging, yet important, social development issues, particularly international migration.

The dynamics of globalization present issues which are increasingly hard to ignore. Many challenges have been identified with the movement of capital and progress in technology and information. Nevertheless, by far, the most serious challenges are those associated with human mobility. Migration has a human face. There is, therefore, a moral imperative for the international community to urgently address its related problems and allow people, as they move across borders, to fully enjoy their human rights.

The task of forging international cooperation on migration is not without difficulties. Perhaps the reticence of many countries on the convening of an international conference to discuss migration and development, and even the weak acceptance by countries of transit and destination of the Migrant Workers Convention need to be assessed closely and discussed more openly. As mentioned in the background paper, international migration, especially as an issue that stands before the Commission, needs to be seen through a social lens, not only because of its effect on the social fabric of countries involved, but also because it is about the well-being of people.

The international community is, at best, inching its way towards concrete action to address the issues of international migration. The background paper has clearly emphasized that the way the world is evolving indicates a growing need to respond to the challenges of migration.

Bearing this in mind, we wish to support the suggestion that the Commission be made a venue for further dialogue among governments to increase understanding and cooperation on international migration.

Thank you.