



PHILIPPINES

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PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. HILARIO G. DAVIDE, JR.
Permanent Representative

at the
General Debate
of the
31st Session of the
Committee on Information (COI)

New York, 05 May 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Forthwith, the Philippine delegation congratulates you and the members of your bureau on your election. It assures you of its full support and cooperation to your stewardship of the 31st Session of the Committee on Information to ensure it of a fruitful and productive conclusion.

The Philippine delegation takes this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor Mr. Andreas Baum for his able leadership of the 30th Session of the Committee as well as to the members of his bureau.

The Philippines also associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. However, it wishes to stress some matters.

Mr. Chairman,

For the past years, we have witnessed how the Department of Public Information (DPI), using both traditional and modern media, effectively delivered and provided timely, accurate, impartial, comprehensive and coherent information not only about the United Nations but also on the myriad issues it has been dealing with. Credit for this goes to the communications specialists here at the United Nations Headquarters and in information centers and field missions throughout the world. The Philippines commends all of them, most especially Undersecretary General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, who has ably guided his department with a passion for excellence.

The Philippines welcomes the key advances made by the DPI in promoting the work of the United Nations to an ever growing global audience through its strategic communications services. It takes note of the report of the Secretary General on the successful efforts of the DPI to support the substantive goals of the United Nations by devising effective communications strategies on priority issues and carrying out communications campaigns to broaden public understanding of the United Nations and its work. The Philippines notes in particular the efforts to publicize the key UN messages through coordinated communications campaigns that reach out to target audiences and strengthen its outreach to the public in both developed and developing countries through the network of UN Information Centers (UNICs) worldwide. The increasing coordination between UNICs and the UN country teams at both local and international levels deserves praise and further encouragement. The important role of UNICs in bringing the story of the United Nations to local audiences cannot be stressed enough.

The Philippines would also like to cite the United Nations Communications Group for effectively serving as the unifying platform in developing and implementing common communications strategies for the UN system. It takes particular note of the formulation of standard operating procedures for crisis situations that were implemented in January during the crisis in the Gaza.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines is pleased with the efforts of the DPI to promote a better understanding of various issues that are of importance to the international community. The thematic communications campaigns the DPI continues to undertake in support of the Millennium Development Goals, financing for development, human rights and climate change must be sustained and expanded. Its Stand Up and Take Action for the Millennium Development Goals campaign brought together as many as 116 million people worldwide. We wish to inform that UNIC Manila worked together with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her Cabinet to earn for the Philippines the distinction of having mobilized a record-breaking 35 million people who literally stood up against poverty.

As to human rights, the activities undertaken by the DPI worldwide in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other thematic programs must be underscored.

The Philippines again commends the efforts of the DPI to propagate the culture of dialogue among civilizations and for promoting religious and cultural understanding through the mass media. In this regard, DPI should also lend its facility for the dissemination of the activities of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, of which the Philippines is its Chair and DPI is a partner. The Philippines expresses its appreciation to the assistance extended by the DPI in promoting the General Assembly Meeting on Interfaith Cooperation held in November. As the leading proponent of the interfaith initiative in the United Nations, the Philippines would wish a closer interaction between the DPI and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which serves as the focal point in the UN Secretariat on inter-religious and intercultural matters. That global peace can be achieved by interfaith dialogue is an obvious understatement. Hence the UN must give special stress to this initiative through the DPI.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines remains convinced that effective information dissemination is crucial to the success of any peacekeeping operation. The DPI plays an important role in this regard by serving as the media backbone of UN peacekeeping operations. It lauds the efforts of the DPI to address the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN field missions, and cites in particular DPI's initiative to work closely with the Conduct and Discipline Unit of the Department of Field Support in devising a procedure to make public cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly the activation of a Web-based database to ensure a transparent tracking of the status of cases.

The Philippines also welcomes the efforts of the DPI to generate popular support in Member-States that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations, such as in projecting the important role of UN Blue Helmets in helping keep the peace in various conflict areas worldwide.

The Philippine Mission to the UN has also been working closely with the DPI in disseminating information on the activities of Filipino peacekeepers who serve in various

peacekeeping missions abroad. This working relationship must be strengthened and improved in order to more effectively project to the public the important role played by the men and women from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police in helping keep the peace overseas.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines notes the efforts of the DPI in utilizing available new technology to further amplify the work of the United Nations. The Philippines would like to see the DPI continue to make full use of new technology to allow the public better and faster access to information about the United Nations, especially on pressing global issues that affect them.

It is reassuring that the UN is evolving with the use of new technology and communication tools such as instant text messaging and web conferencing as well as the expanded use of blogs, Google video, Youtube and Facebook and other web-based social networking sites.

The Philippines takes particular note of such activities as the Txt4Peace that was conducted to raise awareness on the International Day of Peace on September 21 where some 20 million messages were sent. The Philippines, which is considered the texting capital of the world with an average of 400 million text messages sent per day, is ready to participate and support this undertaking

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippine Delegation concludes this statement with a reiteration of its full support and cooperation to ensure the success of the 31st Session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you.