

PRESS RELEASE

Philippine Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

14-16 Allée David-Morse, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland • Telephone No. +41 22 716 1930 • <http://www.genevapm.dfa.gov.ph>
E-mail: geneva_pm@dfa.gov.ph • Facebook: Philippine Consulate General, Geneva URL: <https://www.facebook.com/genevapcg/>



PHILIPPINES TAKES OWNERSHIP OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA AFTER SUCCESSFUL TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH THE UN



Geneva, 04 October 2024 – Philippine justice officials reaffirmed the government’s strong resolve to take ownership of the national human rights agenda at a panel discussion on the sidelines of the 57th Human Rights Council Session held in Geneva, Switzerland on 04 October 2024.

Justice Undersecretary Raul Vasquez underscored the Philippines’ readiness to sustain and broaden gains in human rights promotion and protection, following a successful three-year joint technical cooperation program with the United Nations (UNJP). The Philippines established the Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination (SCHRC) to oversee initiatives post-UNJP in line with the national development agenda and the fourth Philippine Human Rights Plan (PHRP) which will be adopted later this year. A national forensics institute will be created to strengthen accountability mechanisms.

“After a successful three-year collaboration... we now chart our own destiny... The work ahead remains challenging, but we are inspired by the progress we have made, especially with the establishment of the SCHRC. Moving forward, the Philippine government aims to attain a rights-based governance framework in a just and humane society”, Undersecretary Vasquez stressed.

Justice Undersecretary Jesse Hermogenes Andres added that the UNJP provided a platform for greater engagement with civil society which contributed to the following advances: (1) decongestion of prison facilities; (2) dismissal of harassment suits against the Sumalo farmers; (3) investigation of custodial death; (4) review of the anti-illegal drug policy; (5) study visit of Filipino medico-legal doctors from the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police to Argentina on the Minnesota Protocol;

(6) dialogue with the families of alleged extra-judicial killings victims to facilitate access to justice; and (7) consultations with CSOs on the substance of the civil and political rights chapter of the 4th PHRP.



The panelists of the side-event titled “After Technical Cooperation: Taking ownership of the national human rights agenda”, held on 4 October 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland, (L-R) Christian Salazar Volkmann, Director of Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, OHCHR, Australia Deputy Permanent Representative Emily Roper, Justice Undersecretary Jesse Hermogenes Andres, Ana Maria del Rosario-Dionela, Executive Director of ECPAT, Philippine Permanent Representative Carlos Sorreta, Justice Undersecretary Raul Vasquez, Thailand Permanent Representative Usana Berananda, and Iceland Permanent Mission Counsellor Ragnheidur Kolsoe.

Thailand Permanent Representative to the UN Usana Berananda emphasized the need to foster national ownership in technical cooperation by ensuring that human rights agenda setting is not externally imposed.

Australia Deputy Permanent Representative Emily Roper acknowledged the Philippines’ achievements under the six workstreams of the UNJP and affirmed Australia's interest to sustain cooperation, including within the framework of the SCHRC.

Iceland Permanent Mission Counsellor Ragnheidur Kolsoe commended the Philippines for its willingness and commitment to take ownership of its national human rights agenda.

Director Christian Salazar Volkmann of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights cited UNJP best practices and expressed optimism on the sustainability of the achievements.

Executive Director Ana Maria del Rosario-Dionela of the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) positively noted the active participation of at least 319 civil society organizations in the UNJP, particularly in the drafting of the 4th Human Rights Action Plan. *“From the point of view of ECPAT Philippines, I can say that we have laid a solid ground, a fertile soil that is now ready to carry on and harvest the fruits of the three-fold*

spirit of the UNJP-partnership, trust-building and constructive engagement”, Executive Director Dionela said.

The panel discussion was moderated by Philippine Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Carlos D. Sorreta.



The side event, titled *“After Technical Cooperation: Taking Ownership of the National Human Rights Agenda”*, was organized by the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva to shed light on the effective approaches to technical cooperation in the field of human rights, particularly from the perspective of the main stakeholders; ensure sustainability of human rights reforms after capacity-building; and discuss ways forward to maximizing technical cooperation in human rights promotion and protection, including at the regional level. **END**