



PHILIPPINES

51ST REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Philippines
5 October 2022

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Delivered by

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Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Philippines
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Excellencies,

Thank you for your comments. It was a rich and fruitful dialogue. The Philippines has always engaged openly with this Council, the OHCHR, and stakeholders to clarify issues and forge a constructive way forward.

We are encouraged by the acknowledgment of the Philippines' deeply-rooted human rights tradition and the vibrancy of its democracy – animated by an empowered public, a free press, and an equally free and robust civil society. We hold our obligations under international human rights law sacrosanct and take allegations of violations seriously. That the

rule of law prevails is a duty and responsibility that the Philippine Government assumes with abiding commitment.

The High Commissioner's report recognizes the many strides made by the Philippines in its ongoing efforts to strengthen domestic human rights mechanisms and frameworks. We would like to stress however that many of the recommendations outlined in the report are already being undertaken, including those pertaining to enhancing cooperation between law enforcement agencies, CSOs, and the CHR; multi-stakeholder consultation on the next iteration of the National Action Plan on Human Rights; and implementation of a comprehensive, victim-centric, and human rights-based approach to the illicit drug problem and terrorism, among others.

No less than President Marcos himself has called for refocusing the anti-illegal drug strategy towards rehabilitation, prevention, education, and assistance to victims.

Reforms to ensure "real justice in real time" will be unrelenting. The Department of Justice will work tirelessly under my watch and do all it can with other government agencies and partners to raise our standards, decongest our prisons, protect witnesses, hold perpetrators accountable, and most of all – inject human rights into the DNA of all processes of law enforcement and delivery of justice.

The Philippines Anti-terrorism Act of 2020 is replete with human rights safeguards having been crafted in consultation with a wide range of

stakeholders, including CSOs, and after careful study of relevant international instruments and similar laws mostly of developed countries. Its constitutionality has been challenged before our Supreme Court but was eventually upheld attesting to the health of the country's check and balance system.

Excellencies, we also heard today strong support for the Philippines' constructive approach to human rights. The Philippines' sovereign decision to embark on a joint program on human rights is a vote of confidence in the UN Development system, particularly its capacity to rise above politics and pursue cooperation that truly serves the causes of human dignity, social justice, and sustainable development. As the UNJP progresses to its second and final stages, our national programs and commitments will continue.

Having said this, we know much remains to be done. The promotion of human rights in any society is always a work in progress. Yet the Philippines shall not waiver, and we will deliver.

Thank you.