



PHILIPPINES

AS DELIVERED

STATEMENT

of

H.E. ENRIQUE A. MANALO
Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations

First Session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on
Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies
for Criminal Purposes
28 February – 11 March 2022, Conference Room 4, UNHQ

Madame Chair,

I extend my warmest congratulations to you and the members of the Bureau on your election. I further express my appreciation for your tireless initiatives in laying down the crucial groundwork for the substantive sessions of this Committee.

I also thank the Secretariat for their invaluable work in preparing for this first session.

Please be assured of my delegation's support throughout this process.

Madame Chair,

Two years ago, the General Assembly came together on a landmark resolution to address the issue of the use of ICT for criminal purposes, the embodiment of which is a future UN convention to combat cybercrime.

That decision proved to be fortuitous as not long thereafter, the world was plunged into the nightmare of COVID-19. What this global crisis has taught us is that criminals will always rise to the occasion. The increase in the incidents of cybercrime during the pandemic, as monitored by INTERPOL, is proof that these unscrupulous elements will not hesitate to exploit any situation in order to profit at the expense of decent people.

Like many countries, the Philippines is no stranger to the impact of cybercrime. To respond, we have enacted legislation, such as the Access Devices Regulation Act of 1988, the Electronic Commerce Act of 2000, the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012, the Data Privacy Act of 2012 among other ICT laws.

Our Executive Branch has established offices in relevant agencies to specifically tackle cybercrime-related matters within their mandates. The Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center was created to protect and secure the country through effective institutional programs and policy development. To stem online intellectual property violations, the Intellectual Property Office has undertaken significant efforts to curb online counterfeiting and piracy. The proposed amendments to the Intellectual Property Code include measures to address increasing online IP violations, such as a mechanism for shutting down IP infringing sites.

However, these efforts may not be enough. The transnational and borderless nature of cybercrime behooves all countries, rich or poor, technologically advanced or emerging, to work concertedly to combat cybercrime before we are outstripped by criminals. This has prompted us to join 66 other countries in the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

The Philippines shall take active part in this collective effort to draft the first universal and comprehensive international instrument to combat cybercrime. The Philippines wishes to see the entire process guided by following principles:

1. It should be inclusive, open, and transparent to assure us that all Member States will be heard and their views taken into consideration;
2. It should remain State-led while allowing the participation of stakeholders, including ICT practitioners, researchers, and industry leaders who can lend their expertise and insight to the process;
3. Member States should strive towards consensus-building to ensure that the outcome document gains the widest support;
4. The work should be informed by existing instruments that States have already adopted at the regional and international level, such as the Budapest Convention, and should also take into consideration the work of existing platforms such as the UNTOC;
5. It is also crucial that technical assistance and capacity-building are provided to developing States, upon their request, to bridge the knowledge and technological gap, improve States' national legislation and cybercrime frameworks, and strengthen States' abilities to contribute to the fight against cybercrime.

Madame Chair,

Over the next two years, we need to craft an international convention that is guided by the past, rooted in the present, and looks towards the future. Let us ensure that the

product of our efforts remains relevant beyond today's needs by imbuing it with the flexibility to adapt to future challenges.

We look forward to constructive engagements in the hope that we will find more commonalities than points of divergence.

Thank you.
