

***NATIONAL STATEMENT of the Republic of the Philippines  
30<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention  
and Criminal Justice  
10-12 May 2021***

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen...Good Morning, Good Afternoon, Good Evening!

The Philippines expresses its sincere congratulations to the Chair on your election for the 30th Anniversary of the Commission, well aware of the challenges brought about by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but confident that your leadership will be successfully steering the Commission into performing its mandate to combat crimes and promote criminal justice.

Mr. Chair, I would like to draw your attention to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice efforts laid-out by the Philippines under the pressing issues of Terrorism, Trafficking in Persons and Migrants Smuggling – combatting them, we believe, will bring about prosperity, sustainable development, peace and stability to the Philippines, to the ASEAN and to the world.

[Terrorism]

Terrorism, has been a threat not only to the security and stability of the Philippines, but also to the international community. Unfortunately, even in the midst of this pandemic, the Philippines continuously faces serious

security challenges, with the new normal leading to the emergence of new trends and patterns on terrorism.

To give teeth to the war against terrorism, the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Act was passed, and will give law enforcers that much-needed legal framework to support the criminal justice system in preventing terrorism and prosecuting those who are involved in terror activities.

While the present administration and leadership caused the surrender of thousands of drug users and traffickers not too long ago, now, hordes of rebels are going down from the hills, laying down their arms, going back to the folds of the law, seeking better lives and and rejoining their families.

The Philippines had also participated actively in various specialized capacity building activities, continuously engaged in counter-terrorism initiatives / and coordinated with stakeholders to strengthen its international and regional counter-terrorism efforts, reaffirming its commitment to deepen bilateral counter-terrorism partnerships with other countries, / and for this, would like to acknowledge not just UNODC but also the Interpol in helping make these partnerships against transnational organized crime happen.

**The Philippines strongly believes that fighting terrorism can only be effective when efforts are integrated and coordinated not only domestically but regionally and globally, to extinguish the propagation of ideologies that encourage terrorism and to target the sources that finance these groups.**

These efforts can only be realized when international cooperation in the areas of border control, information-

sharing and provision of legal assistance is well harmonized.

#### [Trafficking in Persons & Migrants Smuggling]

The Philippine government has continuously undertaken serious and sustained efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, namely:

- (1) The establishment of functional Anti-Trafficking Task Forces composed of dedicated and well-trained prosecutors;
- (2) The strong collaboration on investigation and prosecution of TIP cases between law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and social workers, strengthening investigation and case build-up;
- (3) The dedication of increased resources from the government, partner NGOs and international organizations such as the ACTIP;
- (4) The increase in the number of TIP cases resolved ; and
- (5) The employment of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS), which was launched and had digitally linked law enforcement agencies, allowing them to coordinate their actions while monitoring the progress of human trafficking cases, especially those of Overseas Filipino Workers.

During the pandemic, the spike of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) cases was monitored, and law enforcement units were quick to intensify their operations, leading to the arrest of perpetrators and the rescue of victims. With the collaboration of the Philippines and foreign law enforcement authorities, the Philippine Internet Crimes against Children Center / was established to boost the

exchange of information and best practices in addressing OSEC, recognizing its transnational nature.

Further, being the Voluntary Lead Shepherd on trafficking in persons of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime, the Philippine Government remains fully committed in addressing human trafficking.

### [Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice]

Crime prevention during the pandemic has been demanding, but the Philippine justice system has risen to this challenge to keep the wheels of justice continuously turning, without sacrificing the health and welfare of the court employees and the public, and swiftly modified procedures for inquest, posting of bails, and the filing of criminal cases in court, /allowing the appropriate use of technology in all stages of trial through videoteleconferencing.

The Philippine Supreme Court allowed reduced bail amounts and considerate measures towards indigents and persons deprived of liberties (PDLs) especially that COVID-19 was also spreading in jails and detention facilities. With the courts being allowed to perform even during the lockdowns, some 81,888 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) were released on bail, their bail reduced, or allowed recognizance, while others were acquitted, had their cases dismissed, or are allowed out on probation.

The Supreme Court also implemented the 2019 Amendments to the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure

minimizing delays and decongesting the courts of cases,/ the 2019 Amendments to the Revised Rules on Evidence which incorporated the technological advances and developments in law, jurisprudence, and international conventions; / and the 2020 Interim Rules on Remote Notarization of Paper Documents - all of which minimized face-to-face meetings especially during the lockdowns

In closing, allow me to, once again, assure you of the strong commitment of the Philippines to the fight against crime and the promotion of the rule of law, looking forward to the success of this conference with the strong desire of putting an end to the evils of transnational organized crime, hoping to bring about peace and stability among the nations of the world.

Mr Chair, permit me express our sympathy to the loss of millions of lives and the bereaved families they left behind by the pandemic / and to acknowledge in this great forum all the Filipino frontliners not just in the Philippines but worldwide / who have sacrificed the lives of their families and their own, in confronting this COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for this opportunity, Mr Chair.

Sources:

1. Department of Justice Rules on the Conduct of Electronic or Online Inquest
2. Supreme Court Administrative Circular No. 33-2020
3. <https://manilastandard.net/spotlight/343403/the-peralta-court-rising-above-the-pandemic.html> accessed on May 13, 2021
- 4.
- 5.