

COUNTRY STATEMENT

Delivered by

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Secretary of Justice of the Republic of the Philippines

On the occasion of the
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and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ32)

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(Speaking time: 3 minutes)

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,

For the past year, our criminal justice institutions had been the subject of a transformative reform agenda to deliver ***real justice in real time***. Nonetheless, we continue to maintain our constructive and open engagement with the international community consistent with our commitments under the UN Charter and other conventions. We strive to improve the administration of justice in our country.

[On prosecution of cases]

We mandated our prosecutors to cooperate and coordinate with law enforcers in the investigation of crimes and build-up of cases. We also increased the degree of proof needed for filing of cases to reasonable certainty of conviction and prima facie evidence to prevent frivolous cases.

For cases pending before first level courts, we directed our prosecutors to initiate the dismissal of cases if there is no reasonable certainty of conviction based on the evidence.

These new paradigms are aligned with the *Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors* adopted in 1990 at the 8th UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

Bail for indigent accused has also been liberalized, allowing them provisional liberty at less than Two Hundred U.S. Dollars (\$200.00).

[On our Corrections System]

To address the immediate problem of prison overpopulation, we undertook the monthly releases of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). The Philippine mega-prison in Metro Manila shall be transferred and the entire prison system regionalized to facilitate the reintegration of the PDLs into society.

[On Multi-sectoral Approach]

Through the Justice Sector Coordinating Council, major criminal justice reforms are jointly planned and implemented, and relevant information now shared to the different stakeholders. Our Supreme Court and the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior and Local Government continue to ensure the speedy administration of justice.

[On Trafficking in persons]

Under the *"Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act,"* various agencies undertook intensive capacity building activities to enhance their capacity to successfully investigate and prosecute these crimes.

[On Illegal Drugs]

Under the Marcos administration, the fight against illegal drugs now prioritizes law enforcement only against top-tier drug personalities, and treats the drug issue as a health concern with respect to drug users and dependents. The focus shall now be poverty-eradication, rehabilitation, education and assistance to victims and their families.

[On Terrorism]

Our Anti-Terrorism Council identified groups supporting terrorists and their activities. Our judiciary accelerated the judicial process through the designation of specialized terrorism courts.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 provides for a National Justice Information System (NJIS) and a Criminal Justice Information Exchange (CJiX) that will enable effective data sharing among criminal justice institutions.

We reaffirm our commitment to enhance our criminal justice system and crime prevention strategies in order to bring peace and harmony, not only in our country but across all nations.

Thank you very much.