

COUNTRY STATEMENT
Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Michael P. Ong
Republic of the Philippines

*8th Session of the Conference of the State Parties to the
United Nations Convention Against Corruption
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (16-20 December 2019)*

ITEM 1(f) General Discussion

Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of the Philippines, I wish to congratulate you and the other officers of the Bureau of the 8th Session of the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). We are certain that under your able leadership and guidance, the Bureau will be successful in accomplishing its important tasks, and we look forward to a fruitful and relevant outcome of the Conference. Our delegation also thanks the United Arab Emirates and its State Audit Institution for the hospitality extended to our delegation. We likewise express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this Conference. The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Group of 77 and China and the Asia-Pacific Group.

Mr. President,

It is widely-accepted that corruption is an evil that undermines good governance and creates instability and inequalities. In the words of our President during his State of the Nation address last July – “Corruption exasperates. It frustrates.” It is because of this that the Philippines has been relentless in its fight against corruption. Recognizing that a coordinated multi-sectoral approach in combatting corruption is indispensable, our government has taken decisive steps to promote good governance and comply with its obligations under the UNCAC. We did so with

the active cooperation and involvement of all relevant stakeholders including those in the private sector.

By virtue of the Executive Order issued in 2014, the Presidential UNCAC Inter-agency Committee, headed by the Executive Secretary, was created to oversee the review and implementation of the UNCAC in the Philippines. Being among the countries currently undergoing the second review cycle, we recognize that gathering inputs from so many stakeholders is not an easy task. The experience has taught us that it is critical that the invitation to participate in the review mechanism and contribute inputs come from the highest government office in the land.

The Philippines takes this opportunity to thank the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and our peer-reviewers from South Africa and Niue for sharing their observations and expertise while thoroughly assessing our compliance with the UNCAC.

Mr. President,

The Philippines takes pride that its three (3) branches of government and its independent constitutional bodies are all doing their part in combatting corruption.

The Legislature has enacted laws aligned with the anti-corruption initiatives of the government including the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act, which aims to improve government service delivery and fight corruption.

The said law also created the Anti-Red Tape Authority and mandated it to initiate investigation, *on its own initiative* or upon receipt of a complaint, and refer the same to the appropriate agency, or file cases for violations of the said Act, and assist complainants in filing necessary cases with the appropriate courts or agencies.

The Judiciary has been working on improving its case management, addressing court delays, and strengthening judicial

integrity. Its efforts include using a computer-based case management system, also known as the “eCourt System;” issuing rules and regulation to advance the speedy disposition of cases; and endeavoring to adopt an internationally-recognized quality management system specifically designed for judicial reforms.

On the part of the Executive, the President has been consistent about his zero-tolerance on corruption and continually calls on the public to report erring government officials, with a promise that his Office is open 24/7 when it comes to receiving reports on corrupt activities. In line with this, the strengthening of the Citizen’s Complaint Hotline 8888 has been prioritized and is now working in a much-improved capacity. This enables swift imposition of administrative sanctions should government officials be found guilty, after due process, of committing corrupt acts.

Further, the Office of the President, together with the Office of the Ombudsman, has been spearheading the implementation of the national corruption-prevention program known as the Integrity Management Program. It aims to identify and reduce corruption vulnerabilities in government agencies and operations; ensure integrity in the public sector; and improve the public’s trust and confidence in the government.

On the part of our independent constitutional bodies, the Office of the Ombudsman has recently formulated a Public Accountability Roadmap containing programs and projects that include capacity assessment and capacity building, institutional strengthening, strategy and policy reviews, and knowledge exchange.

The Commission on Audit, the government’s primary audit institution and the watchdog of the State’s financial operations to prevent anomalous transactions and irregular disbursements of public funds and properties, is a member of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions and has promulgated a number of domestic issuances to implement international standards.

Mr. President,

In closing, the Philippines strongly reaffirms its commitment to uphold the principles of the UNCAC. We are thankful for the support that the UNODC and other development partners have been extending to the Philippines in our anti-corruption initiatives, as well as in enhancing the capacity of government officials to tackle it.

Thank you very much.

Mabuhay!