Statement delivered by
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During the Third Committee Debate on
Agenda Item 69(b): Human Rights questions, including alternative approaches
for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms
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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his reports and the Special Rapporteurs
for the presentations made under the agenda item concerning alternative approaches
for improving the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

The promotion and advancement of human rights is foremost on our national agenda.
The Philippine Constitution provides for the State to value the dignity of every human
person and to guarantee full respect for human rights. The Constitution also mandates
that Congress give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and
enhance the right of all people to human dignity, reduce social, economic and political
inequalities, and to remove cultural inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and
political power for the common good.

In addition and pursuant to our Constitution, we have a comprehensive set of domestic
legislation, which complements the core international human rights treaties currently in
force and other human rights-related instruments that we are a party to. For example,
the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which we have ratified, is
supplemented by our National Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. The Magna
Carta of Women, a comprehensive law that strengthens our legal and institutional
framework, is in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Anti-Torture Act is compliant with our obligations under the Convention against Torture; and while we ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in August 2011, as early as December 2009 we already incorporated the spirit of the Rome Statute within our domestic laws with the passage of Republic Act No. 9851, or the “Philippine Act on Crimes against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and Other Crimes against Humanity.”

Mr. Chairman,

A people-centered, human rights-based approach lies at the core of our national policies and programmes. We are committed to investing in people by empowering them, raising their participation in and integration into society, and protecting and promoting their rights. The Philippine Development Plan for 2011-2016 operationalizes President Aquino’s social contract with the people through key strategies aimed at achieving inclusive growth through the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, reduction of mass poverty, and creation of decent jobs and employment opportunities.

Full and effective advancement of human rights, however, can only be achieved when efforts on the domestic front are complemented by bilateral, regional, and international cooperation. We therefore again underscore the importance of States to take a human rights-based approach both domestically and internationally to address issues of common concern, including equality, financial regulatory reform, migration, food security, climate change, and trade.

Mr. Chairman,

Just last month, the General Assembly held the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, where we had the opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the global discussions about migration policies worldwide. It was an opportune time to identify ways and means to maximize the productive capacity of individuals and earn for themselves the full developmental effects of migration, while at the same time ensuring that a human rights perspective is maintained in all aspects of the migration debate.

In this regard, we welcome the Declaration of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which places human rights as a priority in the relationship between migration and development. Migration, involving, as it does, relationships between and among individuals and nations, must rest on principled foundations to ensure its smooth, safe and orderly flow. The Philippines has always maintained that one of these principles should be the protection of the human rights of individuals because it is only with such a foundation, backed by the principles of fairness and equity and the rule of law, that a relationship of any kind can fruitfully subsist and flourish. As the Secretary-General noted in his report on the Promotion and protection of human
rights, including ways and means to promote the human rights of migrants, there is increasing evidence that a human rights approach to migration policy leads to better and more sustainable human development outcomes. Educated, healthy, and empowered migrants are better able to lift themselves and their families out of poverty and contribute to the wider community and economy in countries of origin, transit, and destination.

To this end, we once again call on Member States to consider the ratification and enforcement of relevant human rights instruments, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Persons and Members of their Families, the Palermo Protocol, and as well as other relevant ILO Conventions including ILO Convention No. 189 on Decent Work. We also urge governments to implement the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons as migration makes workers, women migrant workers, and those at the lower end of the job market in particular, more vulnerable to inhumane treatment and many forms of violence and abuse in work places as well as to trafficking.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, taking into account the importance of the right to development in all human rights, my delegation continues to advocate for and support discussions on the right to development. Twenty years ago, the World Conference on Human Rights adopted by consensus the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which reaffirmed the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. Three overarching themes were at the heart of the World Conference: the universality of human rights, the importance of democratic participation, and the imperative of development. Unfortunately, the imperative of development seems not to have been given the due attention it deserves. As we stand at an important juncture in history to frame our collective vision for a post-2015 development framework, it is our we hope that we make good use of the opportunity to exert greater efforts to work towards to the realization of the right to development and to create a better quality of life for all.

Thank you.