

# STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

**Item 82 The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**  
Sixth Committee, 69<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly  
10 October 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Two years ago, the United Nations held its first-ever high-level meeting on the Rule of Law. It resulted in a consensus Declaration on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels. The Philippines today reaffirms its support for that Declaration.

Paragraph 14 of the Declaration emphasizes the right of equal access to justice for all.

In criminal cases, the indigent accused have the right to defense counsel. The State, through the Public Attorney's Office, is mandated to provide such counsel. The Integrated Bar of the Philippines also requires all lawyers, and in fact all law students, to render service to indigent clients through its Legal Aid Program. We have a cadre of community-based paralegals handling public interest cases. The

Philippines follows the *shari'a* system in Muslim Mindanao to implement Islamic law and its principles of equity and justice.

Our *Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997* (Republic Act No. 8371) is the first law on ancestral domain in the world. It recognizes, protects and promotes the rights of indigenous peoples and cultural communities, paying due regard to their customary rules in informal justice mechanisms.

Creating a protective and nurturing environment for women and children is national policy. Through our *Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992* (Republic Act No. 7192), the *Magna Carta for Women of 2002* (Republic Act No. 9710), and related laws, the Philippines promotes and protects the rights of women especially those belonging to marginalized sectors, and recognizes their role as full and equal partners in development and nation-building. The latest edition of the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report* – which benchmarks the national gender gaps of

136 countries on economic, political, education and health

As an immediate approach, the TAP calls for the cessation of specific activities that escalate tensions, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea or the DOC. For example, inhabiting uninhabited features including massive reclamation violates the DOC.

As an intermediate approach, in order to manage tensions until a final resolution is achieved, the TAP highlights the need for the full and effective implementation of the DOC and the expeditious conclusion of the Code of Conduct or the COC as mentioned earlier by Lao PDR in our joint ASEAN statement.

As a final approach, the TAP underscores the need for a peaceful settlement mechanism to bring the disputes to a final and enduring resolution on the basis of international law. That mechanism is Arbitration, which is an open, friendly and durable dispute settlement mechanism that will clarify maritime entitlements and, therefore, lead to genuine and lasting peace in the South China Sea, for the benefit of all littoral States and the whole world.

The TAP is a positive, comprehensive and constructive framework, which brings