

Philippine Statement
70th Commission Session of UNESCAP:
"Regional Connectivity for Shared Responsibility"
8 August 2014

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Your Excellencies,

UN Undersecretary and Executive Secretary Ms. Shamshad Akhtar
Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Security Mr. Xanana Gusmao
Prime Minister Mr. Tshering Tobgay
Prime Minister Lord Tu'ivakano
Foreign Affairs Deputy Permanent Secretary Manasrvi Srisodapol

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Honorable Delegates:

Good afternoon.

On behalf of the Philippine Delegation, I wish to convey warm greetings to the distinguished delegations attending the 70th Commission Session of UNESCAP.

Allow me also to extend my heartfelt condolences to the distinguished delegation of China on the loss of lives and property due to the recent strong earthquake and typhoon and to the distinguished delegation of Viet Nam on the damage caused by typhoon Rammasun.

The Philippine Delegation attaches great importance to regional connectivity for shared prosperity the theme of this session. We believe that connectivity should not only be through physical infrastructure but also through the sharing of *relevant* information and technology that could bring about multi-dimensional cooperation to address common concerns.

In recognition of this, the Philippine Government has undertaken numerous initiatives with the aim of connecting the country with the Asia Pacific region and its people.

Excellencies,

Honorable Delegates:

The Philippines has made considerable headway in our maritime connectivity by enhancing our existing facilities that link our hundreds of islands to regional capitals. At the sub-regional level, the Philippines is an active contributor to the BIMP-EAGA that links four (4) ASEAN member States. We also intend to further link our archipelago with mainland Asia and thereby generate greater mobility of goods in the Asia Pacific region. In order to achieve these ends, we reaffirm our commitment to freedom of navigation and the rule of law.

In the area of air connectivity, we improved the aviation industry by addressing safety concerns, and increasing flights to and from the Philippines. This will boost the country's efforts to enhance the connectivity of our archipelagic country, which is linked only by water and air to its neighbors. Greater air connectivity will increase people-to-people exchanges, tourism, trade and investments that contribute to the dynamic development of our economy.

On land connectivity, the Philippine national budget for infrastructure was doubled during 2011 to 2014 period in recognition of the significant contribution of infrastructure to economic development. 12,184 kilometers of national roads were widened, repaired and constructed. Public-private-partnership projects (PPPs) for the construction of airport passenger terminals, highways, bridges, dikes and water facilities are being built.

On information communication technology (ICT), the Philippines continues to collaborate on capacity building with the Asia Pacific Center for Information Communication Technology (APCICT). In partnership with the private sector, our Information Communication Technology Office (ICTO) and the National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) are pilot testing TV White Space Technology. The project aims to use TV White Space technology as a tool to spread information that would increase productivity.

By hosting the World Economic Forum for East Asia 2014 in May this year, the Philippines provided a venue for connecting the various business sectors in Asia. In 2015, we look forward to contributing more to connect our region with the rest of the world through our hosting of the APEC Summit.

Excellencies,
Honorable Delegates:

I am pleased to note that pursuant to the Philippine-sponsored Commission resolution on 69/15 on implementing the outcome of the High-level Meeting on the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, the first ever CRVS Ministerial Conference in our region will take place in November this year. The Philippines strongly believes that the issue of civil registration is fundamentally linked to a range of rights, the protection of which are crucial for the prosperity of our people and our region.

The Philippine Government is keenly aware that our region is also connected by the numerous disasters that beset many of our countries. Typhoon Haiyan showed how relevant and timely sharing of information and technology could mitigate the effects of disasters. We thank all countries, international institutions and organizations for their continued support for the rehabilitation of those affected by that climate change-induced phenomena.

We call on all ESCAP member States and the ESCAP Secretariat to support regional efforts to build resilience to, and mitigate the risks of natural disasters, and develop a basic range of disaster-related statistics. We hope that through these efforts, gains that have been achieved could be safeguarded and sustained.

Thank you and mabuhay.

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