

Hon. Albert F. Del Rosario on the Occasion of the UN Day (October 30, 2014)

Opening Remarks

Excellencies and Members of the diplomatic corps;

UNDP Resident Coordinator Ms. Luiza Carvalho and UN Officials;

Distinguished guests;

Colleagues in the government;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good evening.

At the outset, please allow me to warmly welcome all of you to the Department of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of the 69<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary of the United Nations. I am deeply honored to be with you as we celebrate our historic partnership since the landmark signing of the UN Charter in the City of San Francisco.

We look back to that day nearly seven decades ago, when the nations of the world, including the Philippines, came together with a steadfast commitment to secure a better future. I could imagine how seemingly insurmountable that goal must have been, coming so soon after the throes of a global war marked by destruction and suffering of unprecedented proportions. And yet, we have managed to hurdle the challenges. We continue to prosper and thrive.

The threats that we face today, however, are more complex and daunting, requiring creative solutions and strategic responses.

Recalling the statement of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at the recent General Debate of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, it has been quite an intense year for

the “principles” as enshrined in the UN Charter, principles that we have sworn to collectively uphold and defend.

Our consciousness is dominated by news of the gains made by violent extremism, of pandemics that are increasingly difficult to contain, of social injustices that lead to extreme poverty, of the oppression of vulnerable groups, of extreme weather conditions wreaking havoc on lives and properties, and those choosing to wield the sword rather than extend the hand of peace. All of these paint a grim picture of the challenges that lie ahead of us.

In these times of uncertainty, however, hope springs for the many things that remain constant and continual. There is the assurance of steadfast cooperation and partnership between our countries and the UN. There is our staunch determination to confront these challenges together.

Please allow me, therefore, to let thanksgiving be the theme of my remarks tonight.

Next weekend, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, we will mark the first year since Super Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest typhoon to have made a landfall in recorded history, devastated Central Visayas. Let me reiterate a grateful nation’s deep appreciation to the United Nations and the international community for the overwhelming solidarity with the Philippines. From immediate humanitarian response and recovery, to the painstaking process of rehabilitation and reconstruction, your efforts have greatly contributed to helping the Philippines get back on its feet.

Even now, as we are implementing our Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan, we are grateful that you chose to stand by us and support us in seeing this massive undertaking through. What we will commemorate next weekend will not be the destructive power of Haiyan, but the power of our collective will and indomitable spirit as a community of nations.

Our collaboration in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management is just one avenue for our enduring partnership. Every day, in every corner of the world, our diplomats, soldiers, policemen, educators, health workers, and other civil servants are working tirelessly and

with integrity, hand-in-hand with the UN and civil society organizations. We continue to fight poverty, rebuild from the devastation of armed conflict and natural disasters, champion the rights of the poor and the vulnerable, counter violent extremism, stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, uphold peace, security and the rule of law, and stem the effects of climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Given all these opportunities for meaningful collaboration with the United Nations, next year, 2015, is, therefore, a crucial period for our global village. With cautious optimism, we look forward to measuring our progress in achieving our national targets under the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs, and moving towards the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda with focus on human rights, social cohesion and justice, accountable governance and inclusive development.

We are well aware that where poverty, hunger and hopelessness reign, the scourges of our time – armed conflict, extremist ideologies, and environmental degradation – breed and fester. We are determined, now, more than ever, to ensure that the Philippines' economic growth is inclusive, resilient and sustainable. And we support international efforts to address these seemingly intractable challenges under the auspices of various UN agencies.

In terms of climate change negotiations, 2015 provides an opportunity to build the foundation of climate-resilient societies for future generations. The 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which will be held in Paris in 2015, should cement international support for low carbon economic growth trajectories as well as access to climate financing and technology transfer. As a country that has experienced the destruction of extreme weather conditions, bringing these objectives to reality is a priority for the Philippines.

Right now, the UN and the international community are starting to piece together robust responses to the violent extremism espoused by the Islamic State, and the

catastrophic public health consequences of the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak. The year 2015 may mark a turning point in our response to these crises, a year when we can turn the tide and push our way back towards security and stability. Let us seize every opportunity to ensure that by this time next year, when we celebrate the UN's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we can share an inspiring narrative, from adversity to triumph.

Please rest assured that the Philippines' partnership with the United Nations will continue to be strong, steady and steadfast.

We will continue to advocate for the three (3) key priorities for the future of our global village: eradicating poverty, preventing conflict; and promoting democracy.

Going back to the basics, if you will, please recall the Preamble of the UN Charter, where we swore to end the scourge of war and uphold human rights, justice, rule of law, social equality, and maintain international peace and security.

As we prepare the way for future generations, let us not forget to look back to the fundamental underpinnings of our community of nations. In the simple yet powerful text of the Charter's Preamble, there can be no better guide for our individual and collective actions to help achieve our vision of a world where people live a life of dignity, security and in peace.

As we set the stage for the Post-2015 development agenda and reaffirm the very *raison d'être* of this multilateral platform, let the United Nations continue to serve as the institutional, historical and moral edifice upon which we manifest the collective dreams and ideals of humanity.

<http://www.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2013-06-27-21-50-36/dfa-releases/4497-hon-albert-f-del-rosario-secretary-of-foreign-affairs-on-the-occasion-of-the-united-nations-day-30-october-2014-thursday-6-00-p-m>

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