

## ***PHILIPPINE STATEMENT***

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**H.E. DR. ALBERTO G. ROMULO**  
**Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines**

**COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES MINISTERIAL MEETING**  
**3:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m., Thursday, 24 September 2009**  
**Conference Room 1, UN Headquarters**  
**New York City, New York**

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to commend Portugal for its able stewardship of the Community of Democracies as Chairman of our Community and its Convening Group.

I would also like to congratulate Portugal for its successful hosting of the Fifth Ministerial Conference in Lisbon last July. The effort to tackle the impact of the global economic and financial crisis on democratic governance at the Lisbon Ministerial Conference was certainly timely and appropriate.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Lithuania as well on its assumption of the Chairmanship of our Community. The Philippines shares our Community's full confidence in Lithuania's ability to provide leadership as we move forward towards our common vision of a better world where all nations will be drawn closer together through adherence to freedom, justice and democracy.

In Lisbon, our Community demonstrated its commitment to confront the vast problems posed by the global crisis that is affecting billions of people across the globe. We recognized that this grave situation undermines programs of democratic governance and social progress in many nations, particularly where governments must also grapple with the difficult process

of consolidating their democratic transition and of strengthening those institutions vital for that purpose.

It is, therefore, imperative for our Community to continue its advocacy in showing the world that democratic ideals and principles are effective, indeed, are indispensable, in managing the current global crisis.

The Philippine experience shows that despite the many development challenges it faces as a nation, we are always mindful that growth and development are best achieved within a democratic framework. Democratic governance produces democratic development. And the Philippines remains fully committed to democratic ideals and principles, keeping in mind that the democratic process requires constant vigilance and nurturing.

Without in any way diminishing democracy, the tough economic decisions taken by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo have allowed the Philippines to weather the current crisis and mitigate its impact on the lives of the Filipino people.

In the face of terrorist and other threats to Philippine national security, we are advancing interfaith dialogue as a strategy and objective for greater understanding and respect between and among peoples. In pursuit of just and lasting peace we are drawing communities together in authentic dialogue.

Dialogue continues to be an integral part of democratic governance. Our government works closely with constituencies and stakeholders to formulate and implement national development policies.

Our democratic partners in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, North America and Europe play a key role in sustaining the gains we have thus far achieved.

And in regional organizations such as ASEAN, and international fora such as the United Nations, we remain committed and determined to work hard with all our partners in order to uphold, promote and protect human rights – the bedrock of a strong democracy.

Just recently, one of our former Presidents, H.E. Corazon C. Aquino passed away. President Cory Aquino is an iconic symbol in the growth and development of democracy, not only in the Philippines, but for the whole world. A housewife who stood up to a brutal dictator in the cause for freedom and justice for all Filipinos, her stand and advocacy inspired Filipinos to conduct a peaceful and bloodless “People’s Power” revolution that restored democracy to the Philippines.

This, in turn, inspired other similar peaceful transitions to democracy in a number of countries.

The massive outpouring of grief by the Filipino people on the death of Cory Aquino reveals the deeply rooted appreciation for democratic ideals and principles that continues to run in the consciousness of the Filipino people.

I am, likewise, confident that all members of the Community of Democracies fully share the same ideals, aspirations and determination to strengthen our democracies internally, and to aim for democratic principles and ideals to underpin relations between and among States. Herein lies our collective strength, built on a common devotion to democracy that is born of our separate individual national experiences on the long journey to freedom.

Our Community must not falter, in pursuing the desire for better government for the benefit of all, particularly as we strive to overcome obstacles and barriers in our way.

Through sustained collaboration in the pursuit of the Community's vision, goals and commitments, as embodied in our declarations made in Warsaw, Seoul, Santiago, Bamako and Lisbon, I have no doubt we shall be able to contribute significantly to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions around the world.

Thank you. END