

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM #1
THE STATE OF CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE WORLDWIDE
BY
AMBASSADOR VICTOR G. GARCIA III
HEAD OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Philippine delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of the 10th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, including the Vice President of Colombia for assuming the chair of the high-level segment. I would also like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Congress, Mr. Pino Arlacchi, and the entire Secretariat for the work they have done in preparing for this conference. It seems appropriate that we are holding the first major United Nations conference on crime and justice at the beginning of this new century, in view of the multifarious challenges that demand effective responses, through our respective commitments as sovereign States and as responsible members of the international community. I am confident that with the support of your entire bureau and all delegations present here, we will be able to forge new paths toward a safer and just world.

Mr. President, the Philippine Government gives utmost priority to crime prevention and criminal justice as illustrated by the following programs and strategies:

- Increasing emphasis on crime prevention through research on the root causes of crime, strengthening the community, promoting community-oriented policing and improving police-community relations;

- Enhanced police visibility and intensified police operations, particularly in the campaign against drug trafficking, syndicated crime groups, kidnap-for-ransom groups and terrorists;
- Creation of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force under the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission, which also targets heinous crimes and crimes committed by men in uniform;
- Continuing implementation of the three-pronged national strategy of supply and demand reduction and regional/international cooperation in the anti-drug campaign, and more recently the establishment of the National Drug Prevention and Law Enforcement Coordinating Center;
- Continuing campaign against graft and corruption through the Office of the Ombudsman and, more recently, through the creation of independent fact-finding bodies to respond to allegations of graft and corruption against large projects of government; and
- Sustained partnership between the Philippine Government and nongovernmental organizations (e.g. Crusade Against Violence, United People Against Crime, Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption and Foundation for Crime Prevention) in enhancing peace and order through advocacy, court-watch and community policing projects.

On the legislative side, the Philippine House of Representatives is currently deliberating on six bills that seek to strengthen the Government's campaign against crime. These are the Anti-Racketeering and Powerful Syndicates Act, the New Dangerous Drugs Act, the Anti-Pedophilia Act, the Anti-Trafficking in Women and Minors Act, the Revised Anti-Car Theft Act, and the National

Bureau of Investigation Reorganization and Modernization Act. There are also separate bills pending before the Philippine Senate on the eradication of racketeers and professional syndicates and on trafficking in women.

Mr. President, the Secretary General's report in document A/CONF.187/5 identifies trafficking in human beings as one major concern of the international community in the field of crime prevention. The Philippines fully shares this concern - that is why we are actively supporting the *Global Programme on Trafficking in Human Beings*. Just recently, the Philippine Government signed the project document on Phase 1 of the project on *Coalitions against Trafficking in Human Beings in the Philippines*, the first pilot project under the *Global Programme*. This was immediately followed by the *Asian Regional Initiative against Trafficking in Women and Children (ARIAT)*, organized by the Governments of the Philippines and the United States, which adopted its own regional plan of action.

Mr. President, the Philippine Government values the work of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, including the United Nations interregional criminal justice network, in providing a sound basis for own crime prevention and criminal justice program. One example is the UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute) worldwide survey on victimization in 1994, which resulted in similar surveys at the local level. An observation is made in document A/CONF.187/5 that conclusions on the state of crime should be based on a set of indicators that support each other. We hope that the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP) will be able to advance this sound recommendation to UN Member States through its technical assistance programs.

Mr. President, it is an acknowledged fact that criminals and criminal groups are always one, or even several steps, ahead of us. The pillars of our national criminal justice systems would definitely benefit from the development of appropriate legal instruments, the availability of new methods and techniques, the dissemination of best practices as well as assistance from regional and international organizations. Developed countries likewise play a major role by providing not only funds, but also more up-to-date knowledge and technical assistance. As a consequence of globalization, new technologies are urgently required to combat the pernicious effects of crime. Nonetheless, the Philippine delegation believes that our better chances lie in according high priority to crime prevention. - Even now, as new crimes evolve, long-term investment in institutional reforms that go beyond the criminal justice system would seem to be the best antidote to a dangerous and unjust world.

Mr. President, this Congress will come up with one declaration that will chart the directions we should take in meeting the new challenges of the 21st century in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The Philippine delegation expresses the hope that this declaration will capture present realities, anticipate trends, promote capacity building, and underscore the political will necessary to make a genuine and lasting difference in combating the world crime problem.

Thank you, Mr. President.