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# PHILIPPINES

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## STATEMENT

By

**H.E. Mr. HILARIO G. DAVIDE, JR.**

Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines

at the

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING  
DEVOTED TO THE MIDTERM REVIEW  
OF THE ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

General Assembly  
02 October 2008

Mr. President,

Thank you for giving the floor to the Philippines.

Since this is my first time to speak at this 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly, allow me to begin by congratulating you for your truly well-deserved election by acclamation. With the theme of your stewardship clearly defined in your address at the opening of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session last 16 September, the Philippines is confident that you would provide that rare brand of leadership that promises to bring the dawn of a new day for the UN as it grapples with the series of crises that have engulfed our world. Strengthened as you are by your Faith, I know, just as St. Paul in **1 Corinthians 16** exhorted, you will be courageous and strong, and your every act will be done with love. In this spirit, Mr. President, the Philippines pledges its cooperation and full support in all your efforts to pursue your noble plans for the UN.

The Philippines likewise commends and congratulates His Excellency Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his incisive and comprehensive report on the Almaty Programme of Action for its mid-term review.

Allow me, finally, to extend the Philippines' gratitude to Amb. Cheick Sidi Diara, the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for his unceasing efforts to obtain success in the multiple roles he plays, especially in advancing the cause of these countries; and to H.E. Amb. Yukio Takasu of Japan, for his crucial role in negotiating and facilitating the outcome document.

Mr. President,

The Philippines aligns itself with the statement of the G-77 and China delivered by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda. Nonetheless, it wishes to speak briefly on some Philippine concerns.

It must forthwith be stated that the review process provides an opportunity to take a critical examination of the accomplishments made and the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries in addressing their respective development goals, including the MDGs and IADGs.

Although the Philippines is not a landlocked country - it is an archipelago with 7,108 islands - the issue of access to markets in the landlocked countries finds congruence in the challenges related to the Philippines, as her islands, big and small, separated by sometimes unfriendly water, similarly face problems in transport and infrastructure needs.

Admittedly, these challenges are not as complicated in terms of seeking third country access for our products to be exported to the wider global markets. However, the overarching objective of integration into the world economy through harmonization of policies and trade facilitation are familiar topics of discussion in a similar grouping in which the Philippines is involved – the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

These similar topics of discussion between the Almaty Agenda and APEC, pointed and led to the possibility of finding points of synergy, cooperation and mutual benefit. The global village is shrinking fast. The problems and crises in one country directly or indirectly affect the rest. The development, progress and stability of one country ought to benefit directly or indirectly, the rest. In short, as someone has said before, no man can be an island entire to himself. This brings us to the conclusion that the logic and the wisdom of global trade means looking beyond one's immediate geographic neighbors. Thus, Almaty's broader concerns must extend beyond access to the coasts. Even though the Almaty Agenda is very much situated in the United Nations process - while the APEC is not – it would clearly appear that if the topics of trade facilitation, policy harmonization, transit and infrastructure needs are of common interest, then there should be some advantage to a mutual awareness of discussions and best practices in each forum, especially since some APEC members are also Almaty transit countries.

This is not to advocate the establishment of any formal connection between these two fora. However, since knowledge is power and access to knowledge is free, there is no downside to being aware of information that can be useful or applicable to one's particular situation. In any event, the benefits derived from knowledge sharing are unquantifiable; and, if in the end this could lead to the process of a formal connection between the two fora, a new dimension of cooperation would be achieved for the summum bonum of all.

Mr. President,

The Philippines wishes to support the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's Report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (APA). The special needs of landlocked developing countries should be recognized; and as I stated earlier, and as similarly recommended by the Secretary-General's report, there is a role to be played by regional and sub-regional organizations in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

In addition, the ESCAP report on emerging issues in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action provides a region specific analysis of the existing challenges and efforts undertaken in the five identified priority areas. Again, here, the ESCAP's and Economic Commission for Europe's (ECE) efforts

to provide technical expertise on paperless trade, mirrors similar discussions in APEC.

Mr. President,

The current activities that focus on the needs of the Landlocked Developing countries (LLDCs) are providing UN Member States with an update of the challenges that remain as the LLDCs try to situate themselves in a world now hit on all sides by crises of unimaginable proportions: climate change, food and energy crisis, and now the financial crisis heightened by what seems to be a failure of the bailout strategy in the United States. Verily, the global financial markets are in the midst of upheaval, in grave turmoil. The future of the Doha Development round remains uncertain. All these sad and unfortunate developments point to extremely difficult times and, unfortunately, the LLDCs are placed in danger of being the most negatively affected.

Our discussions here today must take these ominous developments into account. We must work harder to ensure that the MDGs are not put further out of reach of these countries. We must learn to look at the broader picture, taking into account how regional and sub-regional discussions can integrate the needs of LLDCs and thereby come up with mutually beneficial policies for all stakeholders.

Finally, Mr. President, let me put on record that the Philippines will give full support and cooperation in seeking a common way forward for the expeditious realization of the goals of the Almaty Agenda as we move beyond this midterm review.

I thank you for your attention.