



PHILIPPINES

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**STATEMENT OF
H.E. ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO
SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Madame President,

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

We all grew up with stories, anecdotes and parables. Stories that inspire and give us hope, build our character and spark the determination to change the world.

We are told these stories at home, in schools and in places of worship. Thus, we come out of adolescence and enter adulthood with such idealism that we know in our heart that we can change the world. That we are here to unite and not to divide, to heal and not to hurt.

This is the same Spirit of Idealism we feel the first time we enter the United Nations.

Unfortunately, as time goes by, many if not most of us are changed by this world. We become victims of pragmatism rather than champions of idealism.

And as things get complicated and struggles get more difficult, we are tempted to simply “do what is already being done” and accept that we cannot solve the problem. When this happens, we settle for a statement from the majority rather than a broad consensus on how to solve the problem.

This reminds us that Persistence is good, but it doesn't mean that we should be repetitive and simply keep doing the same thing.

Albert Einstein defined stupidity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

While certainly there is no stupidity in the UN, yet a tendency to just keep doing the same thing seems to plague us all. Trying new things is a challenge, it might or might not work but we shouldn't be afraid of trying, not be afraid of failing. What we should fear is stagnating. That we as a community of nations end up accepting failure and make ourselves feel better by "doing something", even if this something is the same thing that precisely failed to address the issues and solved the problems.

The good news is that there is Persistence in what we call, Hope, in Idealism and in the aspiration of wanting to change the world.

We teach our children "To Love GOD and To Love our Neighbor". But do we actually practice what we preach. So much inhumanity has been done in the name of God, and so little is being done at times for our neighbors.

We live in a world that is fast becoming bigger, but also constantly getting smaller. From Families to Clans, to Tribes to a federation of tribes we call a Nation, from there we are a Global Village. And with tools like the Internet and social media, everything is known and communicated in real time. Thus, nowadays we are all neighbors, all members of the global community. Being connected to each other all the time has transformed the world into a global community and we are all citizens of the world.

Today, our social contract is no longer confined to our nation state. We should therefore exert efforts to connect, to emphasize commonalities and not differences, to think that we are less Filipinos, Americans, Chinese, French or Russians, and think more of ourselves as global citizens, the people of the United Nations.

Yes, it is true that we need not always act with a united front or as a community. But neither can we ignore the fact that there are many problems which can only be solved by a united global community.

Whether it is issues on protecting the environment, extreme weather conditions, poverty and inequality, Rule of Law, countering terrorism and violent extremism: these are problems or challenges that we can only solve together. Together we can find pragmatic idealism, that will give us hope, and the momentum to do more.

Love thy neighbor! Migration is a reality, a fact, something that will continue to grow. Issues on migration cannot be swept under the rug, but should be discussed openly, frankly and thoroughly. The Global Compact on Migration is a huge step in the right direction. And this huge step will be even bigger if we can get everyone on board. Again, Love thy neighbor. Thank You Pope Francis, UN Secretary General Guterres and all the countries who stood together for the GCM. Thank you migrants around the world for inspiring us to have the first, inter-governmentally negotiated compact to cover holistically and comprehensively all dimensions of international migration.

The Philippines under the leadership of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is one with the UN in being uncompromising on the issues of Rule of Law, Just and Equitable Peace that leads to Order, Development and Prosperity, and the protection of each and every human beings' rights.

As a sovereign and democratic country led by duly-elected President, we are on track in salvaging our deteriorating country from becoming a Narco-State or a State held hostage by the rich and powerful who ignore the plight of the poor, powerless and marginalized, or both.

The hunger for change, for peace, for law and order is genuine. There is passion to improve our economy, so that 10 million Filipinos abroad may choose to work at home or abroad, and not be forced by poverty to find high paying jobs at the expense of leaving the country and separating from their Families. And those at home may at the very least live a safe and comfortable life.

We may sometimes differ in how we express ourselves, yet this should not be interpreted as turning our backs on the universal declaration on human rights. On the contrary, we are instituting all of these reforms to be able to protect the rights of every single Filipino.

Yes, rights of all Filipinos, if that is at all possible. But in cases where we have to choose between protecting the rights of law-abiding citizens and law

enforcers versus the rights of Drug Lords and Criminals, it is clear we will protect the former. Who wouldn't? Wouldn't you do the same?

Challenges will always be there, but so will Hope! Hope leads to Faith, and Faith with actions produces Miracles.

The United Nations is the place, the venue of great opportunity, of putting action to our Faith, of changing the world for the better.

That is of course if we can transcend our personal and sometimes national interest, for the interest of the global community, or simply put for the greater good.

Faith without action is dead. And the United Nations is not a place to bury our dead, it is a place to rise up, to resurrect our hopes and dreams of a better world.

The President of the General Assembly, Her Excellency María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, provides us with hope and something to aspire for, as seen in this year's theme: "Making the UN relevant to all people: global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies."

Making the United Nations Relevant to all is a dream, yet it is a dream worth fighting for.

The Filipino People will remain to be persistent in our quest for peace, order, development and prosperity, and the quest for a safe and comfortable life for all Filipinos. We will continue to have faith, put actions to our faith and love our neighbors.

And finally, We would like to close our statement by expressing our sincere and profound gratitude to all the Countries and Peoples who have assisted us, stood with us and lifted us up when we needed it most.

GOD Bless You,
GOD Bless All Peoples of The United Nations.

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