

*Draft as of 10 August 2006*

GENERAL STATEMENT

**Philippines**

Second Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
August 2006, Geneva

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Mr. President,

The Philippines is gravely concerned over the deteriorating situation and the escalation of violence in Lebanon, particularly the loss of innocent civilian life and the rising number of civilian victims, including migrant workers from several countries.

As stated by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the situation in the Middle East at their meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 25 July 2006, the Philippines condemns all acts of terror, violence and destruction, especially attacks which have resulted in the death or injury of innocent civilians, and the destruction of civilian property and critical infrastructure. In this regard, we are deeply concerned over the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Lebanon and we are also deeply concerned over the disproportionate, indiscriminate and excessive use of force of Israel. The situation in Lebanon, moreover, has significantly set back its development efforts.

We urge all parties to exercise restraint and to respect international human rights norms and humanitarian law in order to end the humanitarian and human rights crisis. We call for the immediate provision of humanitarian assistance to the victims of the on-going conflict. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire and support efforts of the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to help steer relevant parties towards adhering to a ceasefire under UN supervision, with the ultimate goal of working towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region based on peaceful dialogue and negotiation.

Mr. President,

The Philippines joins the call of the international community for parties to respect and ensure the safe passage of all foreign nationals evacuating from Lebanon.

The Philippine Government has ordered the evacuation of an estimated 30,000 Philippine citizens living and working in Lebanon. The Government has been exerting all efforts to secure the safe passage of our nationals to transit points outside Lebanon for onward voyage to the Philippines. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance offered to us, including by international partners such as the IOM.

The evacuation efforts continue now, as we speak. Due to the plight of the thousands of overseas Filipino workers, as well as other foreign nationals in Lebanon, and the need to ensure their safety, we urgently call on all parties to respect and help facilitate the safe passage of all civilians and foreign nationals seeking to escape from the conflict-affected areas. We call on parties to respect safe zones and all land and sea routes, including bridges, being used for evacuation and other humanitarian purposes. Most of all, we reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.

Thank you, Mr. President