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JOINT STATEMENT ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE UN JOINT PROGRAMME ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES (UNJP)

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In July 2021, the Philippines and the United Nations (UN) launched a three-year joint programme on human rights, within the framework of Human Rights Council resolution 45/33, to facilitate technical cooperation and capacity-building in support of national initiatives and institutional frameworks in **six (6) areas**: (a) domestic investigative and accountability measures; (b) data gathering on alleged police violations; (c) National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up (NMRF); (d) civic space and engagement with civil society and the Commission on Human Rights; (e) human rights-based approaches to drug control; and (f) counter-terrorism legislation.

The UN Joint Programme (UNJP) was managed through a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, led by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the UN Resident Coordinator, bringing together **7** Philippine lead agencies, the Commission on Human Rights, **5** UN entities, **26** civil society organizations, and representatives of **9** contributing countries of the UNJP Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and bilateral funding – Australia, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union. The MPTF reached a total of **4,005,687.15 USD** by 25 January 2024, with the Philippine Government providing **200,000 USD** in addition to the budgetary resources allocated by relevant national agencies for projects under the UNJP.

Conclusion of the UNJP

As stated in the UNJP project document, the joint programme concluded on the **31 July 2024**. This marks the completion of a successful journey that the Philippines, the UN, and the UNJP partners have taken to bring about transformative change through practical and rooted solutions to serve the noble causes of human dignity and social justice.

In a span of 3 years, the Philippines, the UN, and the UNJP partners convened **6** Steering Committee Meetings and almost a hundred Technical Working Group Meetings. These engagements have been rich, inclusive, collaborative, and fruitful, providing vital and robust platforms for Government, CSOs and the UN and lending credence to the power of partnerships and cooperation in human rights. In this context, the UNJP has set the ground for collective engagement in an area requiring further investments.

The UNJP has been cited as a **model for innovative, constructive, and transformative cooperation** between a sovereign duty-bearer and the UN system in the field of human rights: one that meets mandates for (1) promoting human rights by leveraging best practices and expertise, (2) generating meaningful and enduring results

that have positive impact on duty-holders on the ground, and (3) effective multilateral action that is conscious of the demands on accountability and stewardship of resources that resonate in all corners of the UN system.

The results of the UNJP are grounded on the following:

- Philippines' long-standing cooperation with the UN and the international community in relation to its commitment to advance democracy, rule of law and good governance;
- The UN system's collaborative and consultative approach to support states on the implementation of good governance, human rights and development agenda;
- Situating human rights action within broad UN development-oriented country program;
- Spirit of dialogue that respects perspectives and values the contribution of experts, practitioners, partners, and civil society actors alike; and
- Continuing adherence to national and international human rights laws and standards.

As part of its concluding procedures, the Philippine Government and the United Nations Philippines, will hold its **final Steering Committee Meeting** on 09 August 2024 to discuss summary of achievements, and to finalize the delivery of end-of-term requirements pursuant to the UNJP Document, including the conduct of an **independent evaluation and a consolidated final report**, to ensure the highest standards of transparency, accountability and a lessons learned approach.

Forward-looking Ownership

The Philippines is ready to sustain and broaden its achievements under the UNJP. Along this line, the government has been actively pursuing three (3) important initiatives which were officially announced by the Philippines at the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Geneva, last December 2023

Firstly, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. signed Administrative Order No. 22 on 08 May 2024 creating the **Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination (SCHRC)**. The SCHRC had an organizational meeting on 27 June 2024 to start the drafting and consultation process for the Implementing Guidelines of Administrative Order No. 22.

The SCHRC institutionalizes a more comprehensive inter-agency coordination platform and a robust multi-stakeholder process for the promotion and protection of human rights through dialogue and joint monitoring, actively engaging civil society. The Committee will set out pathways for coherent, solutions-oriented and accountable partnerships with a wide range of partners. Engagement with the UN will be conducted under the new 2024-28 UN Development System Cooperation Framework signed with the Philippines..

Secondly, the Philippines will establish a **Forensics Institute** that will serve both as a training and learning institution, as well as a fully operational investigative facility that professionalizes and elevates the standard of law enforcement and justice delivery of the country. The Philippines will engage with bilateral, regional and UN partners to leverage

the best available expertise on these fronts.

Thirdly, the Philippines is adopting, through a multi-stakeholder process, the **Fourth Philippine Human Rights Plan (PHRP4)**, a comprehensive and progressive blueprint for protecting human rights and addressing emerging human rights issues, such as the rights of older persons and human rights and climate change.

To date, 5 of 8 joint regional consultations for the on-going development of the PHRP4 have been conducted involving 319 civil society organizations of various advocacies.

The PHRP4 shall be launched through a ceremonial signing on 10 December 2024 in time for the International Human Rights Day.

These initiatives offer opportunities for the Philippines, bilateral partners, the UN and its entities, local and international civil society partners to sustain their engagements in an inclusive human rights agenda.

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