

PHILIPPINE DELEGATION STATEMENT
Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Maria Cleofe R. Natividad
Head of the Philippine Delegation to the
International Afghanistan Conference Bonn 2011

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, I wish to thank the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, in particular His Excellency Foreign Minister Dr. Guido Westerwelle, for hosting this Conference.

The Philippine Government is thankful for the opportunity to take part in this historic conference on Afghanistan. This year marks 10 years since the first International Conference on Afghanistan was convened in this same city. That conference has provided the impetus for the country's transition back to the folds of the international community.

The countries that are gathered here in Bonn have understandably, come to help Afghanistan accelerate its transformation into a truly democratic, stable and progressive nation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines recalls its own participation in providing assistance to Afghanistan over ten years ago, when it responded, along with the rest of the international community, for the needs of its people during the winter season, through the United Nations agencies based in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman,

This Conference recognizes the improvements needed in the areas of good governance, economic development, security and the on-going peace process in the country.

We, in the Philippines, believe that all these endeavours will succeed only if all sectors and members of the society actively participate in efforts toward achieving a common goal. In the Philippines, men and women, old and young, take an active part in nation-building.

Filipino women are in the homes, in business, education, civil society organizations, and most importantly, in public office. They have a strong presence in all branches of

government - executive, legislative and judiciary. The Philippine Government and the society as a whole appreciate the contribution of women in creating more prosperous and better communities. An environment that gives men and women equal opportunities for personal and professional growth also empowers them to lead productive and meaningful lives not only for themselves, but also for their own families, their communities and for the country.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippine Government and the Filipino people will assist the people of Afghanistan in a manner where we can best be of help. As we believe that transformative development must occur with the full participation of all individuals in the society, we stand ready to provide what we are best known for. We will continue to provide expertise and skills required in infrastructure development, business operations, health services and education. Already, scores of Filipinos work in Afghanistan to share their personal expertise through their involvement in various international organizations based in Afghanistan. More than that, we are ready to craft and implement appropriate capacity-building programs for the Afghan people. The Philippines remains committed to supporting Afghanistan, through our active participation in various bodies of the United Nations and other international organizations, where issues pertaining to Afghanistan are tackled.

As a developing country, the Philippines has expertise in a variety of areas. In education cooperation, Philippine schools and universities can welcome students from Afghanistan for skills training as well as to meet the demands of nation-building and socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

While modest, the Philippines remains committed to finding more meaningful and constructive ways to help Afghanistan in its on-going transformation. Together, the Philippines, along with the international community, must meet the challenges and opportunities in helping Afghanistan's transition, in order to generate tangible and actual outputs which will directly benefit the Afghan people.

Thank you.