



# AUSTRALIA

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## Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 13th Session

### Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines

#### Statement by Australia

29 May 2012

Australia commends the Philippines' efforts to protect and promote human rights since its first UPR. We welcome new legislation in the Philippines, including the Magna Carta for Women and the Anti-Torture Act. These initiatives have been complemented by an increased focus on human rights issues, including training within the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippines National Police (PNP).

Australia also commends the Philippines' ratification this year of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, as recommended by the Philippines' first UPR.

Australia welcomes the work of national human rights institutions in the Philippines. We trust the development of a Philippine Human Rights Action Plan for 2012 to 2017 will continue to raise the profile of human rights issues across the Philippine Government. We are pleased that the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has recently opened an office in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

**Australia recommends the Philippines continue to improve its capacity to uphold human rights, including by increasing the CHR's fiscal autonomy and organisational capacity, as well as further efforts to prevent human rights violations by Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippines National Police personnel.**

Australia encourages the Philippines to ensure that its human rights obligations are implemented effectively, particularly in relation to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. We welcome the reduction in cases of these serious human rights violations since 2007, but remain concerned that violations continue to be committed with impunity. It is vital that those responsible be brought to justice.

**Australia also recommends the Philippines continue efforts to combat impunity and ensure alleged perpetrators of serious human rights violations are brought to justice, including through renewed efforts to arrest Major General Jovito Palparan Jr, former Governor Joel Reyes and the perpetrators of the Maguindanao massacre.**

Australia is pleased to support the Philippine Government's priorities of enhancing transparency and accountability, and protecting and promoting human rights. Australia is proud to be the largest bilateral grant aid donor to the Philippines, with a bilateral program in 2011-12 of A\$123 million. We will continue to assist the Philippines to implement its human rights obligations.