

PHILIPPINES

Statement by
H.E. Amb. Evan P. Garcia
Permanent Representative of the Philippines
to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva

Human Rights Council
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UPR of BENIN
24 October 2012

Thank you Mister Vice President. The Philippine delegation welcomes the delegation of Benin, headed by H.E. Marie Elise Gbedo, Minister of Justice. The Philippines thanks Benin for its report, which includes, among others, an overview of recent developments in the country's institutional and legal frameworks, Benin's compliance with international human rights obligations, and the implementation of its accepted UPR recommendations.

The Philippines acknowledges Benin affirmative actions to improve the standard of living of its people, in reducing resource distribution imbalance and in empowering women. My delegation welcomes Benin's intensified efforts to promote access to healthcare and increased budget allocations to health services, with particular attention to the needs of the poor and destitute.

My delegation joins Benin in recognizing that promotion of the right to education is essential for development and social change. The Philippines **recommends** that Benin continues to provide free education to women and girls, especially those living in rural areas.

Mister Vice President, Benin deserves encouragement and support from the international community as it implement its human rights agenda, such as its free public education programs, its poverty-alleviation measures, its national initiatives on the rights of the child, and its public awareness campaigns to inform people of their rights. It is in this light that the Philippine recommends that Benin continue to enhance its financial and technical capacities through, among others, constant constructive engagement with regional and international development partners.

Thank you Mister Vice President.