

Please Check Against Delivery

PHILIPPINES

Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Cecilia B. Rebong
Permanent Representative of the Philippines
to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva

Human Rights Council
18th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

UPR of VANUATU
30 January 2014

Mister President, the Philippines welcomes the delegation of Vanuatu and thanks it for the presentation of its national report. We note the efforts made by the Government of Vanuatu to implement the recommendations it has accepted in its first UPR.

The Philippines particularly appreciates that, despite its resource constraints, Vanuatu has focused on the improvement of the conditions of vulnerable sectors in society during this reporting period. We commend Vanuatu's determination to develop a national policy and an action plan on gender and women. We welcome the establishment of protection units to investigate and prosecute domestic violence. We **recommend** that Vanuatu continues to allocate resources to the Department of Women Affairs to allow it to further enhance and implement programs for the advancement of women's rights. We also **recommend** that Vanuatu includes in its priority action plan measures to step up efforts towards protecting children from abuse or violence.

We would also like to **recommend** that Vanuatu gives consideration to improving its domestic legislation and existing programs aimed at increasing access to education.

It is noteworthy that Vanuatu was able to accede to the Convention against Torture and the UN Convention against Corruption in 2011. We urge Vanuatu to also consider accession to other international human rights instruments, including the ICRMW.

Noting the challenges being faced by island nations in the Pacific, including those brought on by climate change, the Philippines encourages Vanuatu to continue to explore opportunities for cooperation and capacity-building, through various UN organs and other development partners, in order to advance its development agenda. We call on the international community to provide Vanuatu with the support and assistance that are most critical for the fulfillment of the economic, social and cultural rights of its people.

Finally, Mister President, we join other members of the Human Rights Council in wishing Vanuatu success in its second UPR. Thank you Mister President. END