*Pls. check against delivery*

**PHILIPPINES**

**Statement by H.E. Cecilia B. Rebong**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative**

**to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva**

**UPR of PANAMA**

**22nd Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Human Rights Council**

**06 May 2015**

Mister President, the Philippines welcomes the delegation of Panama to the 2nd cycle of the UPR. We also welcome the presentation of its national report, which was drafted through an inclusive and extensive consultation process.

The Philippines appreciates the establishment of Panama’s national human rights institution that will ensure compliance with and follow up to its treaty obligations and design and coordinate government policies and actions to protect human rights. The Philippines also lauds Panama for its recognition of the existence of racial discrimination against Afro descendants and the need to combat it.

My delegation welcomes Panama’s ratification of several core international human conventions. We **recommend** that Panama consider ratifying ICRMW and ILO Convention 189.

My delegation welcomes the increased participation of women in the labor market. We are, however, concerned that wage gap between women and men remains and that opportunities to occupy leadership and decision-making positions remain elusive to working women. My delegation **recommends** that Panama consider reviewing its labor laws with the view to address these concerns.

My delegation notes the improvement Panama’s domestic legislation on human trafficking, aligning it with the Palermo protocol and strengthening the normative framework for coordinated government actions against trafficking and for the care for the trafficked victims. We **recommend** that Panama continue to provide adequate human and other resources to its anti-human trafficking programs.

Thank you, Mister President.