

PHILIPPINES

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

**UPR of SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
23rd Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Human Rights Council
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Mister President, the Philippines welcomes the delegation of Sao Tome and Principe on the occasion of its presentation of its second report to the UPR Working Group.

The Philippines recognizes the efforts being undertaken by Sao Tome and Principe, with the support of its international partners, to pursue judicial reforms, as well as other measures aimed at implementing the recommendations it received in its last UPR. We encourage Sao Tome and Principe to continue taking steps towards ratification of other core international human rights treaties and aligning its domestic legislation with international human rights standards.

We appreciate the strategies for the protection of the human rights of those who are most vulnerable, such as women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, but note the need to enhance and monitor implementation of these programs.

Cognizant of the constraints and challenges faced by Sao Tome and Principe as a small island developing state, we **recommend** that Sao Tome and Principe intensify efforts to engage with development partners to support policies and programs that would advance the socio-economic rights of its people.

We further **recommend** that Sao Tome and Principe redouble efforts to devise a comprehensive national strategy and ensure implementation of action plans for the protection of the rights of the child, particularly in the area of prevention from child labor, violence and abuse.

Finally, we **recommend** that Sao Tome and Principe provide women with equal access to education and employment opportunities, and give priority attention to women-led households in the Government's poverty-alleviation and food security programs.

We wish Sao Tome and Principe every success in its second UPR. Thank you, Mister President.