

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY NEW ZEALAND
PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT FORUM
“Accelerating Inclusive Growth and Deepening Fiscal Stability”
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New Zealand is an active participant of the Philippine Development Forum and wishes to commend the Government of the Philippines (GoP) and the World Bank for successfully establishing the PDF as the primary vehicle for harmonizing, aligning and rallying support for the country’s development agenda. Donors like New Zealand are especially pleased in the way the PDF process has developed and promoted opportunities to implement aid effectiveness approaches.

The Philippine has put in its best economic performance in over three decades despite the slowdown in the global economy and its overall direction is sound. We commend the Arroyo Government for its economic reform programme which will help to accelerate sustainable and equitable development.

New Zealand through its international aid and development agency, NZAID, continues to support the Philippines’ efforts to eliminate poverty and meet the Millennium Development Goal targets by 2015.

With an annual bilateral ODA allocation of about US\$ 2.8 million, New Zealand remains a relatively small donor in the Philippines and continues to be a niche player.

Since 2003, New Zealand’s Development Cooperation Programme in the Philippines has been anchored on a five year country strategy focused on natural resource management (Camiguin Coastal Resource Management Programme and Philippine National Ecotourism Programme), development of indigenous peoples (UNDP’s Integrated Programme on IP Empowerment and UNICEF’s Child Friendly Movement in Mt Province) and governance (CARAGA Local Government Unit Management Training Programme). Cross cutting programmes include Peace and Development in Mindanao (UNDP’s ACT for Peace and WB’s Mindanao Trust Fund), Human Resource Development (New Zealand Development Scholarships) and the Small Projects Scheme. The current country strategy is due

for review in the second half of 2008. The impending review will give both the GoP and New Zealand the opportunity to further streamline the bilateral programme (in the context of maximizing impact), focus on results on the ground, identify issues and lessons learnt and formalize mutual accountability in the future.

With respect to the more recent initiatives either currently or about to be supported by NZAID, during President Arroyo's state visit to New Zealand in May 2007, she asked that New Zealand consider providing further assistance for the Philippine forestry sector. In response to this request, both Governments have agreed to the conduct of a forestry scoping study to help determine how best New Zealand might assist Philippine forestry development objectives.

President Arroyo's state visit to New Zealand as well as Prime Minister Helen Clark's two visits to the Philippines in 2006 also paved the way for the two countries to agree to enhance bilateral linkages in the areas of police cooperation and human rights. With respect to the former, New Zealand Police is currently providing rights based training to the Philippine National Police (PNP) under the PNP's model police station project. An initiative on Women in Policing is also in the pipeline. In respect of the latter, in February of this year, the Human Rights Commissions of both countries signed an agreement to jointly implement a three-year Human Rights Community Development Programme. This collaboration was developed as a contribution to the reduction of human rights abuses in the Philippines with a particular focus on three predominantly indigenous communities and the agencies of Government (specifically the military and police) that most impact on the human rights of the people in those communities.

In line with New Zealand's efforts to contribute to the strengthening of human rights in the Philippines, it recently supported a project of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) to comprehensively document for historical and reference purposes, the Philippines' successful campaign to abolish the death penalty. To help enhance the quality and sustainability of governance in the country, NZAID has likewise supported the development, publication and advocacy of the 2008 Philippine Human Development Report entitled

“Institutions, Politics and Human Development in the Philippines. The report aims to create a greater understanding of how the political environment determines the interactions between local and national government units and between the three branches of government and how these influence human development outcomes.

NZAID continues to support the Philippines through non-bilateral programmes, including the KOHA-Partnerships for International Community Development (PICD) scheme, which channels funding through New Zealand NGOs, and the Asia Development Assistance Facility - Partnerships for Sustainable Development (ADAF-PSD) which funds New Zealand organisations to add value (in terms of their expertise) to their in-country Asian partners ongoing programme or process that reduces poverty. Taking all these sources into account, New Zealand aid flows to the Philippines from all sources are estimated at approximately US\$3.5 million for 2007.

In closing, we congratulate the Philippines on its impressive economic achievements and on its efforts to help ensure broad-based economic growth and development. New Zealand remains committed to assisting the GoP sustain these gains with the end in view of eliminating poverty through equitable and sustainable social and economic development.

Thank you.