



# PHILIPPINES

---

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR LESLIE GATAN  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
Agenda item 68 (a) and (b) – Rights of Children  
New York, 19 October 2007**

Mr. Chairman,

The commitment of the Philippines to protect and promote the rights of Filipino children extends to our strict adherence to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments, which promote the well-being of our world's most valuable resource, our children. The Philippines has passed several pieces of legislation that ensure the protection, growth and development of children, notably Presidential Decree 603, various executive orders and proclamations, Republic Acts, rulings and decisions of the Supreme Court, and ordinances of local governments. Above all, its Constitution devotes an article on the family (Art. XV) whose section 3 directs the State to defend the rights of children to assistance, including proper care and protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

The Philippines has also taken several steps to prevent children from being affected by armed conflict. The Philippines has affirmed its concurrence to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1612 and has already conveyed to the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict its readiness to cooperate and receive her early next year.

It is illegal for Philippine military authorities, in particular the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to recruit or employ children; and, certainly, it never did nor does it field child soldiers. It is taking all necessary measures to avoid harming children recruited by non-state actors who wantonly deploy them in combat zones. The Philippine government is making every effort to ensure that no child is affected by armed conflict and those few captured for their involvement by non-state actors, such as rebels or insurgents, are being reintegrated into society by various government agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

My government is carefully studying the Paris Principles and notes that it contains elements that could be inconsistent with UNSC Resolution 1612, in the sense that it does not take into account on-going peace processes, which are key factors leading to lasting peace with non-state actors in the Philippines. Nevertheless, we still look at the Paris Principles with an open mind.

Mr. Chairman,

The month of October in the Philippines is National Children's Month. Commemorative events throughout the country are carried out during this month with the aim of emphasizing the importance of the role of the child within the family and in society. Several special awareness-raising activities and programs are being undertaken throughout this month to highlight the many facets of children's welfare, putting the spotlight on the promotion of values, the rights of children, the social and developmental aspects, and addressing new challenges facing children. This is my government's demonstration of its commitment to protecting and promoting the rights and development of children.

The Philippines is also further intensifying its implementation of the Child 21 Plan, a national strategic framework or blueprint for the development of children. A program under this plan called the "Bright Child Strategy" is a comprehensive undertaking to protect and promote the welfare of all Filipino children. This holistic program is being implemented by the national and local government units in cooperation with the NGOs. The "Bright Child Strategy" also includes a component on effective parenting to equip parents and caregivers and enable them to respond to parental duties and responsibilities during early childhood development, the management of younger and older children, husband-wife relationship, the prevention of child abuse, health care and other responsibilities of parenting.

The Philippines places priority focus on the home and the family for the promotion of children's welfare. We believe that the family, which is the natural environs for growth of children must be supported to truly nurture children and protect them from all physical, emotional and psychological harm.

The Philippines looks to cooperating with the international community in order to improve the conditions of children. For this reason, we call on international partners, the UN system, and international organizations to continue to support developing countries in their efforts to attain internationally agreed goals to improve the lives of children.

Mr. Chairman,

May I reiterate that our children are our most valuable asset. They must therefore be protected, cared for, nurtured, taught, and given the proper environment in order for them to succeed. There is universal agreement that we must do all we can for them. Therefore, we should all work together to insure the development of all our children, the architects and builders of the future of humanity. Thank you.