



PHILIPPINE COALITION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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PNoy's action on Rome Statute hailed by CICC Asia network

Country representatives of member organizations of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, gathered in Manila for a Regional Strategy Meeting for Asia on 11-13 April 2011, applaud the decision by President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III to transmit the instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute to the Philippine Senate.

"As part of a global movement to end impunity, we welcome the President's decision," says Mr Yap Swee-Seng, the executive director of the Bangkok-based Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia). "This is a historic moment long in coming. The Philippines signed the Rome Statute way back in December 2000, and yet it has taken more than a decade for that signed treaty to get to the next stage in the constitutional process of ratification, namely, the vote by the Philippine Senate."

"That the Philippines will hopefully join the ICC under an Aquino presidency holds a symbolic power that will boost the Philippines' commitment to human dignity, and will help us convince other Asian countries to follow in the noble path on which the Philippines has now embarked," Mr. Yap continued.

Another participant in the strategy meeting, Mr Bhatara Ibnu Reza of Imparsial (The Indonesian Human Rights Monitor) says the representatives of the Coalition member organizations have worked with human rights victims in their own countries and "are aware that President Aquino has first-hand knowledge of the human costs of state coercion and abuse, having borne the agony of his father's detention when the Philippines was under martial law – through solitary confinement, a death sentence under a kangaroo court, exile and execution on the airport tarmac upon his return. We are aware of the resounding electoral mandate that he received during the presidential elections of May 2010."

PCICC co-chairs Dr Raul Pangalangan and Dr Aurora Parong, updated the Asia CICC network on the plans of the Philippine Senate. In anticipation of the transmittal of the ratification papers, the chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senator Loren Legarda, has announced the plan to create a sub-committee to be headed by Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago to facilitate the deliberations of the Senate.

The closing statement of the Regional Strategy Meeting for Asia called on Philippine President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III to transmit forthwith the Rome Statute to the Philippine Senate, and to bring the moral weight of his office and his resounding electoral mandate to complete the country's membership in the International Criminal Court.

Authenticated by Rebecca Lozada, PCICC National Coordinator

NOTES:

CICC Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy Meeting participants:

Indonesian Civil Society Coalition for the ICC

Odhikar

Bangladesh Coalition for the ICC

Bar Council Malaysia

Vietnam's Lawyers Association

National Coalition for the ICC, Nepal

[Human Rights Watch]

Philippine Coalition for the ICC

Bantay Katarungan

Minbyun Lawyers for a Democratic Society

[Burma Partnership]

ICC Project Office in China

Task Force on ICC, Thailand

Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

[Amnesty International]

[REDRESS]

The PCICC is a member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court which is a worldwide network of over 2,500 non-governmental organizations in 150 countries that promotes a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court (ICC). PCICC members include Amnesty International-Pilipinas, Ateneo Human Rights Center, BALAY Rehabilitation Center, Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance, Task Force Detainees-Philippines, Women's Legal Bureau and WEDPRO.