

**STATEMENT OF  
HON. JANETTE P. LORETO- GARIN  
SECRETARY OF HEALTH, REPUBLIC OF THE  
PHILIPPINES  
INTERNATIONAL EBOLA RECOVERY CONFERENCE  
UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK  
JULY 10, 2015<sup>1</sup>**

UN Secretary General Ban Ki- Moon,  
Honorable ministers,  
Excellencies of the diplomatic corps,  
Distinguished Representatives of agencies of the United  
Nations, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental  
organizations  
Ladies and gentlemen:

Good Morning.

Though the economies of the global and regional communities have undergone significant development in most fronts, pandemics, emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases continue to threaten regional and global security. The current threat posed by the Ebola outbreak in West Africa underscores the fact that we are one global village. Thus, we

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<sup>1</sup> Draft prepared by Bureau of International Health and Cooperation. Reviewed and Revised by Drs. Linda Milan, Yolanda Oliveros and Donn Mc Angelo Valdez, July 9, 2015.

believe that a whole-of-society, regional and global approaches to address biosecurity issues are of paramount concern.

The global battle against the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the worst the world has ever seen in modern times, is still being waged. The collective resolve of the international community, led by the United Nations, allowed all of us to contain this scourge. The outbreaks in affected countries such as Senegal, Nigeria and Liberia were declared over.

However, Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) transmission remains persistent and widespread in Guinea and Sierra Leone.<sup>2</sup> As we all live in one inter-connected global village, the potential for international spread is not a far-fetched possibility; a tool for mass panic and hysteria that can easily cripple the strongest of societies.

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<sup>2</sup> Briefer on DOH Response to Ebola as of 25 June 2015 by DPCB.

Today's event highlights the shift in global response, from one of emergency response to helping the ravaged health systems of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia build back better. Building resilient health systems capable of resisting and overcoming shocks, such as this EVD epidemic, have been the clarion call of the recent World Health Assembly held last May 2015. Given the abated, yet still significant danger posed by EVD, the Philippines is committed to sustain health systems resilience within its borders.

Close to a year since the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa was declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 8 August 2014<sup>3</sup>, the Philippine Government geared its actions towards **Preparedness and Response for the Prevention and Control of Ebola Virus Disease**<sup>4</sup> which extensively involved the participation of various government agencies.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup>Briefer on DOH Response to Ebola as of 25 June 2015 by DPCB.

<sup>4</sup>Department Memorandum 2014-0381, issued on December 1, 2014.

<sup>5</sup>Presidential Executive Order No. 168, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, issued on May 26, 2014.

value of preparedness, capacity building and the effective communication of risks cannot be underestimated.

As of today, there has still been no reported case in the Philippines. The Philippine government is committed to sustain and make the most of the gains we have achieved thus far.

As a responsible member of the international community of nations, the Philippines is also committed to do its share in the global response against EVD. On February 4, 2015, the Philippine government through the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) signed a Standard Administrative Arrangement for the management of the country's contribution of USD 2 Million to the Ebola Response Multi-Transfer Fund (ERMTF) to support global Ebola outbreak control efforts.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Briefer on DOH Response to Ebola as of 25 June 2015 by DPCB.

In the future, the Philippines may also consider offering advanced training on infectious diseases for medical practitioners from EVD-affected countries, as our resources and manpower will allow.

Our government strongly believes that through this Conference today we will be able to harness the partnerships we have forged since the International Health Regulations (IHR) of 2005<sup>7</sup> to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to public health risks, in this case, the international spread of EVD. It is now more critical how the outputs of this collaborative activity will be translated to meaningful outcomes in different countries that we represent, especially in the context of building back better and more resilient health systems.

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<sup>7</sup>The IHR is an international legal instrument binding on 194 countries, including all member states of the World Health Organization. It was put into force in June 2007, replacing the IHR of 1969. Its aim is to guide the international community on prevention and response to acute public health risks to all hazards that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide and that avoid interference to international travel and trade. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/ihr/9789241596664/en/>.

Rest assured that the Philippines will continue to be of support to related undertakings to achieve "get to zero and stay at zero" campaign against Ebola Virus Disease.

Thank you.