AGREED MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PHILIPPINES-MYANMAR JOINT COMMISSION FOR BILATERAL COOPERATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the Agreement on the Establishment of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the Philippines and the Union of Myanmar signed on the 17th of October 1997, the First Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Union of Myanmar was held in Yangon from 11 to 12 April 2004.

2. The delegation of the Republic of the Philippines was led by Her Excellency Mrs. Delia Domingo Albert, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines. The delegation of the Union of Myanmar was led by His Excellency U Win Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar. The lists of the two delegations appear as Annexes A and B.

3. The two delegations discussed various issues of mutual interest with a view to further enhancing the existing relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. The texts of the opening remarks by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar appear as Annexes C and D.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

4. The agenda of the meeting appears as Annex E.

III. DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL RELATION

Exchange of Visits

5. The Meeting underscored the importance of exchange of visits between the two countries. The two sides agreed to promote exchange of visits at various levels and expressed the belief that such visits would serve to promote better understanding and contribute to the further strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries and peoples.

Trade

6. The two sides noted that the volume of trade between the two countries was not very significant at present but that the potential for enhancement of bilateral trade exists in many areas.

7. With a view to promote and expand bilateral trade, the Myanmar side proposed to form a Joint Trade Commission, led by the Minister for Commerce of Myanmar and the Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines, to review the development of trade, identify areas of mutual interests, to hold consultations and exchange information on trade and other related areas. The Philippine side agreed to the proposal in principle. A draft Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Joint Trade Commission from Myanmar

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appears as Annex F.

8. The two sides agreed to organize and participate in each other's trade fairs, with a view to organizing trade fairs strictly for Myanmar products in the Philippines and vice-versa in the future. Further", the two sides agreed to inform one another in advance of upcoming trade fairs in each country.

Cooperatives

9. The two sides agreed to promote cooperation between the small and medium-sized enterprises of both countries. The Philippine side invited Myanmar to participate in the yearly trade events organized in the Philippines in order to promote Myanmar's lacquer ware industry and other small and medium-sized enterprises. A copy of the trade events appears as Annex G.

10. The Meeting agreed to promote information exchange and networking activities between the business organizations of the two countries to further boost existing bilateral trade and investment ties.

Investment

11. The two sides recognized the fact that both Myanmar and the Philippines are striving to attract foreign direct investments into their respective countries. However, it was agreed that the two sides should also encourage their respective private sectors to invest into each other, in keeping with the spirit of the Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the two countries. The two sides also recognized the need to increase investments on a reciprocal basis.

Agriculture

12. The two sides agreed to enhance the existing level of cooperation in agriculture.

13. The Myanmar side expressed its interest for cooperation in the areas of estate plantations, transfer of technology in food processing, and in food packaging industries.

14. The two sides agreed to promote information exchange and explore possible joint ventures, particularly on the establishment of plantations for banana, pineapple, coconut, agro-based industries and food processing industries.

15. The Myanmar side took note of and welcomed the Philippines' offer of training on post-harvest technology, particularly in packaging and preservation.

Forestry

16. The two sides reiterated their interest to implement as soon as possible the Memorandum of Understanding on the Promotion of Technical Cooperation in Forestry and Forest Industries Development signed between the two countries.

17. The Myanmar side emphasized the promotion of cooperation in areas such as forestry research and development; forest products processing and marketing; people-oriented forestry; forest protection, biodiversity conservation; eco-tourism and technology development in forest utilization, particularly in lesser-known species. The Philippine side agreed to explore ways and means to further enhance cooperation in this area.

Tourism

18. The two sides reaffirmed their belief that tourism is a key component in economic development and in increasing awareness and understanding of the culture of both countries, and agreed to cooperate further in this area, both bilaterally and in the context of ASEAN.

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19. The two sides agreed to promote each other's tourist destinations. The Myanmar side proposed to cooperate in the development of tourism seminars, conventions and exhibitions through the exchange of programs between the two countries. The Philippine side was also requested to dispatch technical assistance and specialized human resources through the exchange of experts and information, to organize training of personnel, to promote exchange of visits between tourism officials and the private sectors of the two countries. The Philippine side agreed to promote cooperation in this area.

Culture

20. The two sides recalled with satisfaction the signing of the Agreement on Culture Cooperation signed in 1998, and reiterated their commitment to implement the agreement as soon as possible.

21. The two sides noted mat previous activities in this area have been undertaken under the ambit of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). The Meeting agreed to further promote bilateral cooperation on culture.

22. Myanmar side expressed its interest in post-graduate courses in culture offered by Philippine universities and offered courses, such as in performing and visual arts, for Philippine scholars at the University of Culture in Myanmar. Moreover, the two sides agreed to pursue possible initiatives, such as promotion and preservation of cultural heritage and archaeological sites and exchange of visits between officials of the National Library and National Museum of the two countries.

Education and Training

23. The two sides recognized the need to establish linkages between the educational institutions of the two countries. The Philippine side agreed to consider Myanmar's suggestion for a possible Memorandum of Understanding on Education between universities of the two countries.

24. The Myanmar side took note that the Philippines is willing to resume training for junior Myanmar diplomats in the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of Foreign Affairs and its invitation for Myanmar to participate in training programs organized by the Technical Cooperation Council of the Philippines.

25. The Myanmar side took note that the Philippines is willing to renew the Memorandum of Understanding on a package of assistance for human resources development for Myanmar. In order to carry out this program, the two sides agreed to work on finding third country funding partners.

26. The Meeting noted Myanmar's request for possible training courses as well as post-graduate courses in the fields of meteorology and hydrology, including assistance on Myanmar seafarers' education and training.

Health

27. The two sides agreed to explore ways and means to cooperate in the field of health. The Myanmar side took note that the Philippines is willing to share its expertise on primary healthcare, nursing practices, HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis, emerging infectious diseases, and disaster preparedness and management. The two sides discussed possible information exchanges followed by exchange of visits between the relevant agencies in traditional medicine of the two countries.

Air Services

28. The two sides agreed on the important role of air links in the development of their countries, particularly in facilitating the promotion of trade and tourism between them.

29. The Meeting took note that the civil aviation authorities of the two sides will meet soon in Yangon to discuss

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the possibility of forging a new air transportation agreement and having direct air links initially between Manila and Yangon.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

30. The two sides exchanged views on ICT matters currently being pursued under the ASEAN framework. The Meeting agreed to explore possible bilateral activities on ICT. The Myanmar side took note of and welcomed the proposals submitted by the Philippine side on possible activities that could be pursued under a bilateral framework.

Security Matters

31. The two sides agreed on the importance of establishing linkages between the defense establishments of the two countries to further promote bilateral cooperation on security matters.

32. The two sides agreed to implement the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Cooperation against the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Abuses thereof.

33. The two sides agreed to pursue cooperative activities under the MOA. As an initial activity, it was agreed that the concerned authorities of the two countries would pursue exchange of visits and information on their respective anti-drug campaigns.

Visa-free entry for Filipino nationals with regular passports

34. The Philippines informed the Meeting that Myanmar nationals who are holders of regular passports are granted visa-free entry privileges for a period of up to 21 days. Myanmar took note of the Philippines' request to study the possibility of granting similar visa-free entry privileges to Filipino who are holders of regular passports and are traveling to Myanmar for business and tourism.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

35. The two sides agreed that the Second Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of the Philippines would be held in the Philippines at a date mutually agreed upon. The dates will be communicated through diplomatic channels.

V. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGREED MINUTES

36. The Meeting adopted the Agreed Minutes of the First Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

37. The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the results of the Meeting which was held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and in a spirit of friendship and goodwill. The Philippine delegation expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Union of Myanmar for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to the delegation during their stay in Yangon and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

(Sgd.) DELIA DOMINGO ALBERT
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

(Sgd.) U WIN AUNG
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Yangon, 12 April 2004

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