 **PHILIPPINES**

**Third Forum on Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law**

“Equal access to justice for all: a necessary element of democracy, rule of law and human rights protection”

Geneva, 16-17 November 2021 (hybrid format)

**STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Part II: Equal access to justice: a foundation for human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and sustainable development

*Speaking time: 2 minutes*

Thank you, Chair.

The Philippines affirms the importance of access to justice and ensuring its swift and fair administration in the functioning of a democratic society. This priority is duly reflected in our Philippine Development Plan of 2016 to 2022.

The Philippine Government has boosted human resource support for the Public Attorney’s Office in order to enhance access to justice by the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups. The Government has also been supporting efforts to enhance victim assistance and support including integrated referral procedures, creation of public assistance desks, and legislative amendments to raise compensation especially for victims of violent crimes and unjust imprisonment.

Improving the efficiency and accountability of the Philippine justice sector, including through enabling ICT and digital systems and platforms, forms a major component of the Philippines’ human rights cooperation with a number of development partners such as the European Union through the Governance in Justice Program which has entered into its second phase.

Cooperation in the area of accountability and the rule of law also comprises the three-year UN Joint Program on Human Rights in the Philippines which was launched in July this year. The Joint Program seeks to strengthen, among others, the investigative and prosecutorial functions of the national accountability mechanism, also known as the Administrative Order no. 35, for cases involving extra-legal killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and other grave violations to the right to life, liberty and security of persons.

The Philippine Government’s efforts in the area of access to justice place emphasis on constructive partnerships in building an inclusive and thriving justice ecosystem composed of actors and institutions.

The High Commissioner has reaffirmed the focus of OHCHR on leveraging data on human rights, including data collection and indicators, toward ensuring objectivity, reliability, and credibility of the system. We seek to ask the panelists for good practices they could share on integrating data and information system in the area of access to justice a manner that informs policy making as well as ensures the integrity of the system. Thank you, Chair. END.