**PRESS RELEASE**

**United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Regional Centre Assists Philippines in Building Capacity to Control Small Arms**

**and Other Conventional Weapons**

NEW YORK, 23 January (Office for Disarmament Affairs) — The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has commenced a project with the goal of further strengthening the national capacity of the Philippines to control transfers of small light, light weapons and other conventional arms and prevent their illicit trade and diversion.

Developed at the request of and in cooperation with the Government of Philippines, the project will be implemented between January and March 2017. It will provide the Government with technical and legal assistance to facilitate its further implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects, as well as to support its future ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. These two global instruments provide mutually complementing and reinforcing mechanisms for countering illegal trade and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and other conventional arms.

The project consists of three stages. From 24 to 27 January 2017, a technical and a legal expert, as well as representatives of UNRCPD, will conduct an initial assessment visit to Manila, the Philippines, meet and consult with to 50 Government experts and representatives involved in conventional arms control, and assess and identify the Government’s legal and technical assistance needs. On that basis, the two international experts will subsequently spend several weeks carrying out reviews and analysis, and preparing recommendations for the improvement or further development of comprehensive laws, regulations and technical procedures. These will aim at ensuring that the national controls related to the physical security, stockpile management, as well as to international transfers, of arms comply with international standards. At the final summary visit to the Philippines, planned for March 2017, the experts will then present their review outcomes and recommendations and discuss them with Government representatives.

The project is implemented with financial support from the United Nations Trust Facility Sup- porting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR).

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