

Press Release

We cannot accept China's illegal and unilateral actions, says Philippines Minister of Foreign Affairs

China's peaceful and responsible rise is extremely important for necessary equilibrium in the Asia-Pacific region, says H.E. Mr. Albert F. Del Rosario, Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Philippines, while delivering the Second Rizal-Nehru Lecture organised by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi on 14 October 2015.

He elaborated that we cannot accept China's illegal and unilateral actions on the artificial islands as fait accompli. The world cannot allow a country, no matter how powerful, to claim an entire sea as its own nor should it allow coercion to be an acceptable dispute settlement mechanism.

He underlined that after exhausting all reasonable means of political and diplomatic negotiations, we pursued arbitration precisely to preserve a valued friendship with China. Arbitration is an open, friendly, durable and rules-based dispute-settlement mechanism.

The Minister acknowledged the growing support from the international community including India in peacefully resolving disputes in the South China Sea through arbitration. The Philippines, the Minister said, believes that the final outcome of this arbitration process would pave way for a peaceful settlement of the maritime disputes.

He stressed that the Philippines has long placed its faith in the rules and institutions that the international community has created to regulate relations among states. He reiterated that the International law allows small countries to stand on an equal footing with wealthier, more powerful states: "Right is might."

The Minister urged that only peaceful means and not the use of force, intimidation or coercion should be the acceptable manner of resolving international disputes.

On his arrival, Mr. Albert F. Del Rosario earlier met Smt. Shushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India. Ambassador Shyam Saran, Chairman, RIS and Ms. Monika Mohta, Additional Secretary (South), Ministry of External Affairs were also present.

In his remarks, Ambassador Shyam Saran underlined that RIS is focusing on various facets of India-ASEAN engagement and for that RIS has evolved different modalities. RIS also organises the India-ASEAN Eminent Persons Lecture series which was launched in December 1996, to facilitate people-to-people interactions to complement the evolving partnership between the two regions. The institute has been entrusted with the task of coordinating this Lecture Series by the Government of India. Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS gave welcome remarks.

The first lecture in the series was delivered by the then Minister for External Affairs Mr. Salman Khurshid at the sidelines of the second meeting of the Philippines-India Joint Consultations Bilateral Commission.