[Fight against drugs and crime aims to protect law-abiding people, Philippines tells UN](#)

23 September 2017 – The Philippines' battle against corruption, crime and illegal drugs seeks to protect the human rights of peaceful law-abiding people, the country's top foreign affairs official said today at the United Nations General Assembly.

"The Philippines integrates the human rights agenda in its development initiatives for the purpose of protecting everyone, especially the most vulnerable, from lawlessness, violence, and anarchy," said Secretary for Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano during the annual high-level debate.

He said that the very principle of 'responsibility to protect' must encompass the vast majority of peaceful law-abiding people who must be protected from those who are not.

As a responsible leader, the country's President, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, launched a vigorous campaign against the illegal drug trade "to save lives, preserve families, protect communities and stop the country's slide into a narco-state," Mr. Cayetano said, adding that the campaign was never an instrument to violate any individual's or group's human rights.

As of August 2017, the drug trade had penetrated at least 24,848 barangays. This is 59 per cent of the total of 42,036 of the smallest government units spanning the country's archipelago.

The Philippines have also discovered the intimate and symbiotic relationship between terrorism vis-à-vis poverty and the illegal drug trade, Mr. Cayetano said.

These terrorists were somehow able to bring together an assortment of extremists, criminals, mercenaries and foreign fighters who attempted to take control of Marawi. The national armed forces will regain full control of Marawi from Islamic State-inspired terrorists.

On regionalism, he said, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, has overcome the divisions, fears, and hostilities of the past, forging regional cooperation in promoting growth, development, and peaceful settlement of disputes.

[Full statement available here](#)