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ENFiD Statement on the Ruling on the South China Sea Arbitration

The European Network of Filipino Diaspora, ENFiD, joins the Filipino people all over the world in its jubilation on the unanimous Award issued by the Tribunal of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague regarding the Arbitration instituted by the Republic of the Philippines against the People's Republic of China. This arbitration concerned the role of historic rights and the source of maritime entitlements in the South China Sea, the status of certain maritime features and the maritime entitlements they are capable of generating, and the lawfulness of certain actions by China that were alleged by the Philippines to violate the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS).

ENFiD was actively advocating for years for the Philippine cause regarding this which is also popularly known as the West Philippine Sea dispute. We are therefore exultant with this result. We congratulate the Philippine team which include, among others, former Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario, Justice Antonio Carpio, and former Justice Secretary now Senator Leila de Lima.

ENFiD hopes that this ruling would ultimately help reverse the recent trends toward confrontation. Moreover, ENFiD hopes that this ruling will serve as an example to other claimant countries so that China will be motivated to negotiate in a peaceful manner. It is our ardent hope that this legal clarity and the corresponding international attention it generates will counter the imbalance between China, the Philippines and other countries in the region.

We look forward to the reopening of the Scarborough Shoal to the Filipino fishermen and a total cessation of China's interference with fishing and exploration activities by the Philippines and other claimants. We trust that China will now prohibit its fishermen in poaching endangered species including the irreplaceable coral reefs.

Finally, we hope that this ruling marks the progress in formulation of the code of conduct within the ASEAN where all the parties involved would commit to binding norms of behavior, reduce the risk for clashes and restore the faith in China's pledge for peace and cooperation.

Signed:

The European Network of Filipino Diaspora
13 July 2016