



PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Strategic Assessment

Date 28 Nov 2011

Department of National Defense, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Tel. Nos: 982-5600 Loc. 5653 **Fax No.: 911-2882**

PH Co-hosts with New Zealand Legal Seminar on Peacekeeping Operations

The Philippines' Department of National Defense co-hosted with New Zealand's Ministry of Defense a Legal Seminar on Peacekeeping Operations. Held in Wellington, New Zealand on 21-23 November 2011, the seminar brought together 45 participants composed of legal and policy officers as well as those with peacekeeping operations experience from 14 Asia-Pacific states. Experts on peacekeeping operations which included former New Zealand Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer, Mr. Luke Mhlaba of the United Nations Office for Legal Affairs and Major General Natalio Ecarma from the Philippines who currently serves as the Chief of Mission and Force Commander of the UN Disengagement Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights shared their thoughts on the complexities of peacekeeping operations.

The legal seminar was intended not only to familiarize the participants with the web of peacekeeping-related international laws but to recognize the challenges facing countries when they abide by their international obligation to help maintain peace and security by contributing to UN peacekeeping missions. Legal instruments such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Rules of Engagement (ROEs) are some of the necessary legal instruments for an effective peacekeeping operation. But the ability of peacekeepers to adapt to the unique context of every peacekeeping mission is likewise necessary.

The legal seminar is the first of the practical initiatives meant to enhance the peacekeeping operations capacities of regional states being undertaken within the ambit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM-Plus) composed of the ten ASEAN members and their eight dialogue partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, US). When the defense ministers of the 18 countries met for the first time in Vietnam in 2010, they agreed to ensure undertaking practical cooperation among their countries. And to effectively meet this goal, five experts' working groups have since been established with the peacekeeping operations group being co-chaired by the Philippines and New Zealand. The other working groups focus on maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, counter-terrorism and military medicine.