

Manila, 08 May 2012

Almost thirty years ago on 10 December 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica, 159 countries including the Philippines signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

On 08 May 1984, the Philippines became the eleventh State Party to ratify the UNCLOS, which would enter into force on 16 November 1994.

UNCLOS is the international law governing the rights and responsibilities of nations - big as well as small, rich or poor, coastal and landlocked - in their use of the world's oceans.

It enshrines the norms that determine the rights of States over maritime areas and contains important mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes on matters relating to the oceans.

UNCLOS has never been more important for the Philippines than today, when overlapping maritime claims threaten as never before the peace and prosperity in our part of the world.

The Philippines believes that the rules-based approach in UNCLOS, together with the norms in the UN Charter and international law, are the way forward in addressing in a just, peaceful and lasting manner the maritime disputes in the West Philippine Sea.

Together with our commemoration of the 30th anniversary of UNCLOS this year, we are also commemorating this year the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1982.

This is another historic and important document, particularly at this time when the Philippines is

exerting every effort to address and resolve the conflicting claims in the West Philippine Sea.
END