Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

The UDHR is the most widely translated document ever, with at least 360 translations to date. During the World Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), several UN agencies and departments, with the cooperation of governments, the academic and international, regional and grass-roots NGOs, launched a project to have the Declaration translated into as many languages and dialects as possible.

The declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles that touch on a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all persons are entitled. Over time, the UDHR has been accepted as a contract between governments and their peoples. Virtually all states have accepted it.

On December 10, 2007, the UN Secretary-General launched a year-long campaign urging the members of the United Nations to take part in the 60th year commemoration of the Declaration, which will culminate on December 10, 2008.

With the campaign theme “Dignity and justice for all of us,” the UN wants to reinforce the vision of the Declaration as a commitment to universal dignity and justice and not simply as a luxury or a wish-list.

This year-long commemoration aims to continue to raise awareness of the Declaration and its relevance to people – especially the poor and marginalized sectors – around the world. It also hopes to get the wide participation of individuals and institutions to make the Declaration a reality for all. While the Declaration opened the door to much progress in human life, the current human rights situation in many countries, including the Philippines, leaves no room for complacency. At every moment, a case of human rights violation is recorded in every part of the world, and human rights advocates should not let up on their vigilance in reminding everyone that human rights should always be respected and upheld.

As the world observes the year-long celebration of the UDHR, the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) will commemorate the 60th year of the Declaration with a series of information/advocacy activities promoting the principles and rights enshrined in the said Declaration.

Together with the promotion of the Declaration, PAHRA will bring to the public eye the human rights violations being perpetrated by the Arroyo government. These information and advocacy activities will involve school/university fora, community/ barangay and church discussions, photo exhibits, film showings, and poster making, essay writing and poetry contests that will highlight the various articles of the Declaration that the Arroyo administration has failed to uphold.

—Jonal Javier, PAHRA