Every day migrants cross, or attempt to cross, air, sea or land borders to escape poverty, discrimination, or persecution, to reunite with family, or to seek a more dignified life. At borders, they are often at risk of violent crime, kidnapping, extortion or other harm as well as discrimination, unlawful profiling, disproportionate force, indefinite detention, torture and other ill treatment.

The legitimate interests of States in securing their borders and exercising immigration control cannot undermine their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all migrants arriving by sea, land or air. At the same time it is increasingly clear that upholding human rights facilitates the effective governance of international borders.

In order to support States and other stakeholders in developing human rights-based border governance measures, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recently released a set of Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders which contain practical guidelines on issues such as rescue and interception, human rights capacity-building at borders, avoiding unnecessary detention at borders and implementing alternatives to detention, and ensuring human rights-based return or removal.

This side-event, organized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and co-sponsored by the Government of the Philippines, aims to explore challenges and good practices in promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants at international borders and looks to OHCHR’s Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders for practical solutions to contemporary dilemmas of border governance.

Chair
H.E. Ms. Cecilia B. Rebong, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Philippines

Opening remarks
Ms. Jane Connors, Director, Research and Right to Development Division, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Organized by:

Panellists
Ms. Charmaine Hili, Directorate Migration and Protection, Directorate-General Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, European Commission

Dr. Hafedh Ben Miled, Migration and Refugees Program Coordinator, Tunisian Red Crescent

Ms. Catherine Tactaquin, Executive Director, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRI)

Ms. Maria Giovanna Manieri, Programme Officer, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

Mr. Paulo de Tarso Lugon, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)