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CENTRE**

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## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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### **In Memoriam: Dr. Leticia Ramos-Shahani (1929-2017)**

The Council of Representatives, the Board, and Secretariat of the South Centre are deeply saddened at the passing of former Philippine Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani on 20 March 2017. The South Centre expresses its deep condolences to the people and Government of the Republic of the Philippines, and to the family of former Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani on their loss. She served with distinction and commitment on the Board of the South Centre from 2008 to 2012.

Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani was a trailblazing pioneer in the Philippine diplomatic service and an influential voice in Philippine national politics. She was among the first women to join the Philippine foreign service, rose to the rank of ambassador, and eventually appointed as vice-minister of the Philippine foreign ministry in 1986. For many women who entered the Philippine foreign service after her, Dr. Ramos-Shahani was a role model not only in showing that women can rise to the top of a traditionally male-dominated service and in supporting women in the career service, but also in effectively asserting both national and developing country interests in multilateral negotiations.

She also served as one of the highest-ranking Filipinos in the United Nations system in the mid-1980s as the UN Assistant Secretary General for Social and Humanitarian Affairs. She served as the Secretary General of the UN World Conference on the UN Decade of Women in 1985.

In 1987, she was elected a Senator of the Republic of the Philippines and served two six year-terms (from 1987 to 1998), chairing various Senate committees and eventually rising to serve as Senate President Pro-Tempore. During her time in the Senate, she championed women's rights, agricultural reform, and environmental protection, and was among the twelve senators who voted in 1991 against the renewal of the Philippine-US military bases treaty, leading to the closure of permanent US military bases in the Philippines in 1992.

After finishing her terms of office in the Philippine Senate, Dr. Ramos-Shahani continued to remain in public service, serving at various times as the presidential adviser on culture and as the chair of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, as well as serving as the Dean of the College of International, Humanitarian and Development Studies of Miriam College in the Philippines.

The South Centre had the privilege of benefiting from Dr. Ramos-Shahani's expertise, experience, and insights, from 2008 to 2012 when Dr. Ramos-Shahani was elected by the Council of Representatives of the member States of the South Centre to serve on the Board of the South Centre, filling one of the three Asia-Pacific seats on the Board. She was instrumental in having the Board of the South Centre hold one of its meetings in the Philippines and enabling it to engage with high-level Philippine officials and academia, thereby further strengthening the working relationship

between the Board of the South Centre and the Philippines as one of the founding member States of the South Centre.

Dr. Ramos-Shahani was a shining exemplar of the modern feminist leader and mentor in the course of her life and career both nationally and internationally. She showcased what is best and noteworthy among developing country political leaders and intellectuals, holding true to principled positions on all issues; morality in government; carrying out the duties and responsibilities of a true nationalist; promoting effective South-South cooperation; and serving as a mentor in her professional and academic life to future generations of leaders.