

**STATEMENT**  
*Department of Foreign Affairs*

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**STATEMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY ALBERT F. DEL ROSARIO ON THE SCARBOROUGH SHOAL ISSUE**

14 April 2012

As of last night, the following observations were made:

- that the number of white Chinese civilian ships had been reduced to one; and
- all the Chinese fishing vessels had left the lagoon.

Ambassador Ma Keping and I had been trying to reach an understanding on the Chinese fishing vessels along the path of our providing a gesture of goodwill in the spirit of the Years of Friendly Exchanges launched in Beijing last April 11 and previously in Manila on March 20.

I had stated that we would be willing to allow the Chinese boats to return to China following the confiscation of their harvest of endangered species by our authorities. There was no clear agreement as Ambassador Ma had asserted that Chinese fishing vessels would be subject to inspection by their own authorities.

We had later learned that the Chinese fishing vessels had left the lagoon, a development which we had been working towards except for our not being able to confiscate their illegal harvest pursuant to the Fisheries Code, which was regrettable.

Somewhat later, the second white Chinese civilian ship had decided to leave the area so that only one white Chinese ship remained.

The meeting with Ambassador Ma last night resulted in a stalemate as we had demanded of one another that the other nation's ship be first to leave the area.

We will continue to monitor the situation in coordination with concerned agencies. END