

STATEMENT

H.E. LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN

Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, New York

General Debate

Second Preparatory Committee Meeting of the 2015 NPT Review Conference

Geneva, Switzerland

22 April 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Let me applaud you on your election as Chairman of this very important Preparatory Committee Meeting which comes at a time when the world is being threatened by crises and challenges we have all been trying to avoid.

Regional Challenges

Mr. Chairman,

Recent developments in the Middle East and in the Korean Peninsula not only pose threats to international peace and security, but to the credibility and effectiveness of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as well.

As we have stressed many times, the failure to convene the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and All Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in 2012, in accordance with the 2010 NPT Review Conference Outcome Document, may have very profound implications on what we would like to achieve soonest on NPT.

While some may argue that the issue on the Middle East is but one component of the 2010 NPT RevCon Outcome Document, the Philippines wishes to underscore that this specific provision is very crucial to the point that if we are not careful in handling the issue, it may unravel what has been agreed, including those in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The Philippines reiterates its encouragements for the United Nations Secretary-General and the three co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, as well as the Facilitator and the countries in the region, to continue to exert their utmost efforts for the referenced conference to be held at the soonest time possible, following the elements agreed to and included in the 2010 NPT RevCon Outcome Document.

On a broader appreciation, it can be said that if the NPT and subsequent agreements like the 13 practical steps agreed in the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and the action plan adopted by consensus in the 2010 NPT Review Conference, continue to escape the fullest implementation, we are thereby weakening seriously the Treaty itself while we amass worrying concerns of not achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We hope that we can all muster the political will in this PrepCom to provide an appropriate push to the convening of the Middle East Conference. We look forward to the presentation by the Facilitator of the Middle East Conference, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, during this session.

The Philippines is also deeply concerned over persistent aggressive stance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to launch its nuclear arsenals.

We call for sobriety among all stakeholders and for the easing of tension in the region to avoid the loss of innocent lives. We also join calls on the DPRK to desist from continuing such provocative actions and to abandon all nuclear weapons and programs.

In our own backyard, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) still await the signature and ratification of the P-5 on the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty. While ASEAN welcomes continued consultations with the nuclear weapon states, we would like to see their accession to the Protocol as soon as possible.

NPT and International Humanitarian Law

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines has always maintained that nuclear weapons are illegal under international law, including the international humanitarian law. Of all the weapons ever conceived, nuclear weapons are inherently indiscriminate, far beyond proportionality, unimaginable in unnecessary suffering, and inescapably and grievously harmful to the environment. It is a weapon where the notion of control is meaningless and the idea of military necessity absurd.

The issue of operational readiness or accidental nuclear war and the issue of catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are inextricably intertwined. These will possibly be the two most critical issues for human survival over the short term.

The use of nuclear weapons may come also about by inadvertence. The other possible causes of a catastrophic nuclear weapons exchange could be via malfunction, misinformation or miscalculation. It is our responsibility to take efforts to prevent such incidents from happening.

Of course, the surest way to avoid such accidents, miscalculation, or inadvertence is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The “Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions” of the 2010 NPT RevCon Outcome Document states:

“The Conference expresses deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”

NPT States Parties underscored their deep concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and that any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be inconsistent with fundamental rules of international humanitarian law, as stated in the Chairman’s factual summary for the first PrepCom for the 2015 NPT RevCon.

It is for these reasons that the Philippines welcomes the international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons which was hosted by Norway last March. The conference concluded that the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapon use would be unacceptable and urged States to begin the work to outlaw these weapons. We also welcome the follow-up meeting to be hosted by Mexico at a future date.

Implementing Commitments, Reviewing Progress

There is no doubt that prospects are bleak as progress in nuclear disarmament is currently stalled, especially with unfavorable regional developments.

It is in our collective interest to ensure that the Conclusions and Recommendations for Follow-on Actions of the 2010 NPT RevCon Outcome Document are implemented.

While we are in the thick of preparatory work for the 2015 NPT RevCon, the Philippines wishes to reiterate that integral in the preparatory work is to strive to implement all the action points contained in the 64-point action plan.

The Philippines reiterates the need to have a definitive timeframe in the implementation of commitments by nuclear weapon states, as contained in Actions 3 and 5.

The Philippines welcomes the New START Treaty as its full implementation would serve as a good catalyst for progress. While both sides have shared information on the initial efforts undertaken such as inspections and information sharing since the Treaty's entry into force in February 2011, concrete reciprocal reductions they intend to make under specific timetables would send a strong signal to the international community that they remain firmly committed to reductions.

We would also welcome a fresh round of bilateral negotiations between the US and Russia on further nuclear weapon reductions.

In this session of our preparatory work, the Philippines also looks forward to the report by the nuclear weapon states on their disarmament undertakings as stated in Action 5.

The Philippines also hopes to hear from the nuclear weapon states on the ongoing P5 conference. Discussions could hopefully move beyond confidence building and go into real and substantive issues.

Nuclear Weapons Convention

Mr. Chairman,

Now may also be the time to set in motion negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention (NWC). Some argue that a NWC would move the focus away from the NPT. On the contrary, it could get the ball rolling as it ensures full implementation of the NPT. In fact, Article 6 of the Treaty precisely calls for that Convention.

We welcome the statement of delegations informing us of their actions to have signed or acceded, or yet to sign and accede to international instruments relating to nuclear security or nuclear materials. The international rules-based regime and the rule of law are very close to the hearts of the Philippine Delegation and to the Philippines.

A NWC could provide a way for a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory direction towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. An international conference can be held in the near future that will set the parameters for the elimination of nuclear weapons and prohibit their production, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and provide for the destruction of such weapons within a specified timeframe or timeline.

The upcoming High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament would be a good opportunity to consider extensively the NWC and to drum up support for such a Convention.

In closing, the Philippines looks forward to a productive preparatory session that will not only review progress made over the last two years, but one that will also pave the way forward through new ideas and solutions to our present challenges.

Thank you.