



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. EVAN P. GARCIA
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**

**On the Occasion of the
High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly
on Nuclear Disarmament**

**26 September 2013
Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters
New York**

**PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Thank you, Mr. President.

The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Philippines also associates with the statement by The Netherlands on behalf of the Non Proliferation Disarmament Initiative and with the statement by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

It is with great honor for the Philippines to speak at this historic meeting on an issue that is most important to my country and that is most crucial for international peace and security.

In April 2000, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on the need for a "reaffirmation of political commitment at the highest levels" to reduce the dangers that arise both from existing nuclear weapons and from further proliferation.

Thirteen years later, we find ourselves taking heed of his call – thanks to the initiative of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the strong backing of over a hundred UN Member States.

This high-level meeting could not have come at a better time.

Three years after the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which my country was privileged to chair, and two years before the next Review session, we find that progress in the nuclear disarmament agenda - an agenda that we ourselves set - remains stalled.

The fact that 95 percent of the world today is nuclear weapon-free, yet there remain over 17,000 nuclear weapons in a handful of States, sounds like a big oxymoron to many.

Assertions on deterrence are now archaic and the refusal of some States to set a definitive timeline for the total elimination of nuclear weapons in favor of a "step-by-step" approach has become synonymous to foot dragging.

While we fully appreciate bilateral efforts aimed at reducing the stockpile of nuclear weapons, it is high time that multilateral, comprehensive, and continuing efforts should commence soonest aimed at finally establishing a regime of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

We regret the postponement of the International Conference on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This conference should be convened without any further delay.

Nuclear Weapons: Inhumane and Illegal

The survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been relentless in their call to the rest of the world that humanity and nuclear weapons cannot co-exist.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed us the great devastation that nuclear weapons could inflict on mankind. How much more proof do we need to be convinced of the inhumanity of these weapons?

Let us not let the memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki fade and let us not wait for another nuclear explosion to happen.

The debate on the usefulness of nuclear weapons should have been long over and the case for criminalizing the possession of such weapons must now find life in law either by treaty or court opinion.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document expressed "its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed the need for all States at all time to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law".

Mr. President,

The task ahead of us requires more than just meeting at the highest levels to move the nuclear disarmament agenda forward. But it is a crucial step that would necessitate follow on concrete actions on the part of States, especially those that are currently in possession of nuclear weapons.

It is for this reason that the Philippines supports the NAM-sponsored resolution that lays down a number of steps that we could collectively undertake in the coming years.

These include the immediate start of negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention (NWC) that is universal, inclusive and comprehensive. While there exist a number of treaties and agreements to deal with nuclear disarmament, the Philippines believes the NWC is that one missing piece of the puzzle that would finally take us to our goal of nuclear zero.

The Philippines also supports efforts on disarmament education. Our work here today and of previous decades would hopefully get the ball rolling for our children and the younger generation to ultimately achieve our goal. But first, they must know and they must be informed.

In closing, the Philippines remains committed to the cause of nuclear disarmament and will persistently lend a strong and active voice until we have achieved a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.