



PHILIPPINES

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PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

by

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General Debate of the First Committee
68th Session of the General Assembly

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Conference Room 3, Conference Building
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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, the Philippines wishes to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee for the 68th session of the General Assembly. The Philippines assures you and the members of your bureau of our full support and cooperation throughout the work of the Committee.

The Philippines associates itself with the statements delivered by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

This year's session is indeed special as it comes on the heels of the historic High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. The Philippines welcomes the successful convening of the High Level Meeting as it provided an excellent opportunity for States to reflect upon their roles and responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, as well as the challenges and the ways forward in achieving the long-sought goal of nuclear abolition. Now is the time for States to take action on the words delivered in the meeting.

The Philippines also welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly last April and the Treaty's opening for signature in June. The proliferation of conventional arms has contributed to violence and instability in many parts of the world, including in the Philippines. As such, the Philippines signed the ATT last September 25, the first in Southeast Asia, to fulfill our country's commitment to promoting international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines is supportive of multilateral efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and sees the imperative for a harmonized response by the international community.

The Philippines lends its support to all initiatives consistent with its policy of promoting nuclear disarmament, preventing nuclear non-proliferation, and putting an end to the flow of illicit weapons.

In our quest for a nuclear weapon-free world, it is crucial to sustain the momentum created by the 2010 NPT Review Conference by fully implementing its 64-point action plan, including the agreement on the Middle East, particularly the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

We need to reaffirm certain principles and agreements, but we must act now and do what we already agreed on in order to fulfill our obligations under the NPT.

The outcome of the 2nd PrepCom for the 2015 NPT RevCon in Geneva did not advance some of the issues forward and highlighted the challenges for advancing the agenda throughout the new review cycle. We urge all delegations to be flexible so that the next PrepCom will produce a positive outcome.

Moreover, the next Review Conference will need to make significant advances on a range of critical NPT issues, especially on nuclear disarmament, in order to sustain the credibility and integrity of the Treaty.

One of the most important initiatives arising from the 2nd PrepCom, and one which the Philippines supported, is the joint statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons delivered by South Africa on behalf of 80 States. The Philippines believes that addressing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is an absolute necessity and this should guide our work and actions for the Review Cycle of the NPT and beyond.

In this regard, the Philippines welcomes the announcement by Mexico to host a follow-up conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in February. The Philippines looks forward to participating in the Mexico Conference to continue discussions on this topic.

The Philippines welcomes the outcome of the 8th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty held last month which produced a Final Declaration. We laud the governments of Guinea-Bissau and Iraq for their recent ratification of the CTBT. We urge the remaining eight Annex 2 States to follow suit without delay.

The Philippines also welcomes President Obama's renewed call to action for U.S. ratification of the CTBT in a speech in Berlin last June.

The Philippines likewise welcomes the announcement of Thailand on its intention to ratify the Treaty.

The voluntary nuclear test moratorium has become an established norm. But the challenge remains on how we can move from voluntary to mandatory moratorium. Only the CTBT's entry into force will make this possible.

The establishment of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) is crucial to our goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. With millions of Filipinos living and working in areas where nuclear weapons exist and where the nuclear threat persists, it is imperative for us to promote the establishment of these zones to protect our nationals.

With three months to go before we conclude the year, we remain hopeful that a Conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, attended by all States of the region, will be convened.

The Philippines reiterates its call to all relevant actors to continue consultations to ensure that the Conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East is held at the soonest possible time.

The Philippines recognizes the tireless efforts of Undersecretary of State, Ambassador Jaako Laajava, and welcomes his latest initiative to convene a pre-conference planning session this month in Switzerland with the three co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East to move the process of convening a Conference forward. The Philippines hopes that this meeting will yield positive results.

The Philippines welcomes the latest decision of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to create an informal working group to produce a robust program of work. It is our fervent hope that this Group would fulfill its mandate and finally bring the Conference back on track to start long-delayed disarmament negotiations. The Philippines calls on all members of the Conference to show the much-needed political will and flexibility in the work of the CD.

A revitalization of the Conference, as well as its enlargement, are imperative and the Philippines supports the position of the 39-strong CD Informal Group of Observer States on these issues.

On the core issues of the CD, the Philippines sees great potential in the various initiatives that have been proposed, including draft resolutions on commencing work on Fissile Materials as well as on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Such proposals afford the opportunity for the world community to begin work and have the advantage of being inclusive.

The Philippines also welcomes the recent outcome of the open-ended working group (OEWG) to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The OEWG process proved that we are not lacking in options to move forward. The challenge is to find and agree on the best route to take.

We urge the international community to focus on common grounds and not on differences so that we could finally get the momentum going.

Mr. Chairman,

In the area of conventional weapons, the Philippines welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly in April this year. The Philippines sincerely thanks the President of the Final UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty,

Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia, for his tireless efforts in guiding the negotiations and for his diplomatic skills which made it possible to adopt an instrument.

If applied in good faith, the ATT will help strengthen a legally binding international regime on the transfer of conventional arms including small arms and light weapons. We also wish to recognize the excellent work undertaken by the previous President of the Conference, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina.

The Philippines has sought to strengthen its bilateral and international partnerships including with the European Union (EU), the UN Interregional Crime and Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (CSCAP) in addressing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) concerns through the promotion of the CBRN Center of Excellence (CoE) initiative in Southeast Asia. The Regional Secretariat of the CBRN Risk Mitigation Center of Excellence was officially launched in Manila on 6 March 2013. As the host country of the CBRN CoE, the Philippines is committed to supporting capacity building in the Southeast Asian region to address the CBRN threat.

The Philippines is an active member of the Nuclear Security Summit, Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Most recently, the Philippines joined the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and other Materials of Mass Destruction (GP). The Philippines is in fact the first Southeast Asian country to join the Global Partnership and hopes others will follow suit.

Given the considerable interest and numerous programs in the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and CBRN fields, it is important to ensure coordination among the said programs to avoid duplication and overlap.

At the regional level, the Philippines has played a proactive role in advancing the implementation of the UN Security Council 1540 resolution and major disarmament agreements. The Philippines has been at the forefront of efforts in ASEAN to strengthen cooperation on non-proliferation and disarmament issues by hosting the 5th ASEAN Regional Forum on Inter-Sessional Forum on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament from 4 to 5 June 2013 in Manila.

The BWC is a useful framework for advancing biosecurity/biosafety cooperation. The inter-relation between biosecurity/biosafety and overall public health concerns particularly with respect to the activities of the World Health Organization and the World Animal Health Organization also need to be further explored.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines welcomes the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Conventions. The Philippines also welcomes the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 2118 to implement and abide by the Framework for the Elimination of Syrian

Chemical Weapons between the Russian Federation and the United States to ensure the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles in the soonest and safest manner.

The Philippines is proud and honored to be able to contribute to the global discourse on conventional weapons. The Philippines served as the President of the 2012 Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). My delegation will table the CCW resolution and we look forward to the support of all delegations to ensure its adoption once again by consensus.

As universalization of the CCW is a priority of the Philippine Government, States that have not yet already done so are urged to accede to the CCW and its Protocols.

In closing, throughout our history the Philippines has shown its desire and capacity to pursue peace. Many of our efforts are pursued not in isolation, but with regional and international partners. The relationships we foster with others are grounded on collaboration, cooperation and building a peaceful and secure environment.

Let me assure you once again, Mr. Chairman, of the Philippines full support and cooperation as we undertake our work in the First Committee in the next four weeks.

Thank you.