

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

**Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the UN and Other
International Organizations in Vienna**

**General Debate
1st Meeting of the Preparatory Commission of the NPT
Delivered by H.E. Maria Zeneida Angara Collinson
02-12 May 2017**

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Philippine Delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of the First Preparatory Committee Meeting of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We look forward to working closely with other States Parties prior to and during this First Preparatory Committee Meeting, as well as in the two PrepComms in the lead up to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

My delegation is confident that under your able leadership, this meeting will better prepare us for 2020.

The Philippines reaffirms its strong commitment to the NPT and acknowledges its paramount importance and contribution to global peace and security throughout the years. At a time when the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies is being bolstered instead of reduced, the Treaty's relevance is challenged and it is up to its States Parties to make it work.

The Philippines is firmly committed to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons as enshrined in the Philippine Constitution. As an active member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, currently chaired by the Philippines, we are party to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone Treaty or the Bangkok Treaty, which aims to create a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Southeast Asian region.

Our experience in the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone is proof of the viability of such an arrangement. The ASEAN principles of consensus, goodwill, and cooperation, which have contributed to its success, can serve as examples for future nuclear weapons-free-zones.

Mr. Chair,

Although consensus was not achieved at the 2015 NPT RevCon, the Philippines remains confident that the Treaty, with balanced and effective implementation of

commitments across all three pillars, will take us closer to achieve our objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We see an opportunity to preserve the gains of the 2010 NPT Review Conference by revisiting its Outcome Document and the 64-Point Action Plan and pursue implementation with more vigor to once and for all break the deadlock in nuclear disarmament negotiations.

It is of utmost importance that States Parties take stock of the factors that led to the failure of the 2015 NPT RevCon and build upon the gains of successful Review Conferences to guide us as we work towards a successful Review Conference three years from now.

Nuclear Disarmament

Of the three pillars, the Philippines is most concerned about the continued lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments.

My delegation cannot overemphasize Action Points 3 and 5 of the 64-Point Action Plan which state that “...*the nuclear weapon States commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons...*” and “*The nuclear weapon States commit to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament...*” On the contrary, nuclear weapon modernization programs continue unabated and nuclear weapon States refuse to discuss concrete nuclear disarmament initiatives until they have determined that conditions are ripe for such an undertaking.

In a little over a month from now, many of us will once again gather in New York at the Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading to their Total Elimination.

The Philippines strongly supports this Conference. We believe that a future nuclear ban treaty will not supplant, but rather reinforce, the NPT, particularly the nuclear disarmament pillar.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

The Philippines notes with grave concern recent events which constitute a threat to global peace and security.

We refer to the heightening of tensions in the Korean Peninsula, brought about by the continued defiance of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, as manifested in its multiple nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches in the past few years.

We call on the DPRK and all other parties to take the necessary steps towards the de-escalation of tensions in the Korean Peninsula. We call on the DPRK to return immediately to the NPT and implement its earlier safeguards agreement with the IAEA by allowing access to its facilities by IAEA safeguards inspectors.

We also call on all Member States, who have not yet done so, to accede to the NPT and conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

The Philippines also lends its strong support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and calls on all concerned parties to take concrete steps to jumpstart plans of convening a Conference on the Middle East as soon as possible.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

The Philippines attaches great importance to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as a catalyst for contributing to the Sustainable Development Agenda and my country's own development goals in the field of health, agriculture, industry, and water management.

The Philippines also underscores the leading role of the IAEA, particularly its technical cooperation programme, in making available platforms for Member States, especially those from developing countries, to harness nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Furthermore, as the Philippines continues to voice its concerns over the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and reiterates the urgency of highlighting this as a powerful argument against the continued existence of nuclear weapons, we call on all NPT States Parties to be mindful that they should under no circumstances consider the utilization of nuclear technology for anything other than for peaceful uses.

In closing, Mr. Chair,

I wish to quote from our previous statement at the First Preparatory Commission for the 2015 Review Conference five years ago when we said that “the only way to ensure the prevention of a nuclear holocaust is to take away the nuclear option from the hands of men who are so fallible”. We also said back then that we must “strive with even greater effort during this review cycle, especially on the pillars of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation”.

These words are as relevant today as they were in 2012. In light of many recent events, which undermine the global non-proliferation regime which our predecessors sought to build, my delegation calls on all other participants to this Preparatory Commission meeting to keep these events in mind, as we prepare for the next review cycle.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.