STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations

at

the Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons
of the
First Committee

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Mr. Chairman,

The elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. The international community must remain committed to ridding the world of nuclear weapons because a global norm or an agreed objective for their total elimination already exists. World leaders have already spoken through their various joint declarations and individual statements delivered in international forums or before global audiences. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) itself, the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference in the so-called 13 Practical Steps, and the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, taken together, made it unequivocally clear that there exists the common objective of creating a world without nuclear weapons. The task before us then is simply to implement, with a stronger sense of urgency, this agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines urges the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to now convert their commitments into action. Among these commitments are in Actions 3, 5, and 21 of the "Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on action" of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Action 3 says that: "In implementing the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the nuclear-weapons States commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures".

In this regard, the Philippine commends the US and the Russian Federation for ratifying New START and hopes that even deeper cuts will be agreed upon in the near future. It is hoped that this disarmament process would eventually involve the other NWS.

Action 5 highlights the NWS' commitment to "accelerate concrete progress" leading to nuclear disarmament as specified in the 13 Practical Steps of the 2000 Review Conference. Among others, it also called upon the NWS to reduce the stockpiles of all types of nuclear weapons, regardless of type or location, and diminish further the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies.

Action 21 encourages the NWS to agree on a standard form of reporting to determine appropriate reporting intervals. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is invited to establish a publicly accessible repository, which shall include the information provided by the NWS. The Philippines is looking forward to the NWS undertaking these actions as well as the Secretary-General setting up the repository so that States will know and see the progress being made towards the objective of totally eliminating nuclear arms.

The Philippines is also concerned with tactical nuclear weapons. These devices, could easily be smuggled through porous borders and be used by terrorists and other Non-State Actors to devastating and horrific effect. There must be serious discussions on this type of weapon during the next NPT Review Cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. In this regard, we urge the few countries that have remained outside the NPT to heed to the call for the universal application of the Treaty.

States must now also seriously consider the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention whether this be done in the CD or elsewhere. Such a convention has been included in the Secretary-General's 5-point action plan and referred to in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
The Philippines strongly supports the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and would like to see the treaty enter into force as soon as possible. In this regard, the Philippines urges the remaining 9 Annex 2 States to ratify the treaty. The Philippines likewise enjoins non-Annex 2 States that have yet to ratify the treaty to do so. The Philippines welcomes Indonesia's and the United States' intention to ratify the treaty and hopes they would do so at the soonest possible time. Furthermore, the Philippines welcomes the positive outcome of the recently concluded Article XIV Conference.

The Philippines sees the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices as a key component and an essential step that must be undertaken in terms of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is hoped that negotiations on this can begin in the CD, but if that body remains ineffectual, then the Philippines agrees with those States that have called for finding alternative means and venues.

As a contribution to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, the Philippines stresses the importance of nuclear weapon free zones and hopes that the NWS will adhere and accede to the respective protocols of these zones, especially that of the Bangkok Treaty. In this regard, the Philippines commends the NWS for their positive interaction with the ASEAN in direct consultations last August and this October 2011. My delegation hopes that Member States would support the resolution on the Bangkok Treaty that has been tabled during this 66th UNGA.

The emergence and development of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and the Negative Security Assurances they offer are tangible and effective opportunities to advance the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. ASEAN, as mentioned, is advancing the SEANFWZ vis-a-vis the NWS, and is also initiating cooperation with other NWFZs such as the Tlateloco Treaty regime through OPANAL.

The Philippines puts a premium on the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East and emphasizes the importance of having a successful conference in 2012. To this end the Philippines urges the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East Resolution and the Secretary-General to undertake sonest the necessary actions such as appointing a facilitator that will be acceptable to all States in the region and to designate a host government for the 2012 Conference. Lack of progress in this regard may adversely affect the next NPT Review Cycle which is scheduled to begin next year with the first Preparatory Committee Meeting to be held in Vienna.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, the Philippines, in its statement in the General Debate held during the opening week of the 66th UNGA last September emphasized the importance of a rules-based norm in terms of the conduct of our international relations. I wish to point out that this rules-based approach can also apply to the issue of nuclear weapons. The Philippines strongly feels that the use of nuclear weapons is an inhumane act contrary to and in violation of international humanitarian law. My delegation wishes to refer to the 64-point Action Plan of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT RevCon that expresses a 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.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.