PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

by

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General Debate of the First Committee
67th Session of the General Assembly

12 October 2012
Conference Room 1
UNHQ
Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines extends our warmest congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. It is a pleasure and source of pride for my country to see a close neighbor and friend chairing this very important Committee.

The Philippines assures you and the members of your bureau of our full support and cooperation throughout the work of the Committee for the 67th session of the General Assembly.

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

This year has been an extraordinarily hectic and challenging time in the field of disarmament.

After the successful NPT Review Conference in 2010, we got back down to business in April and commenced the preparatory work for the NPT Review Conference for 2015.

In July, we strived but failed to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty.

The disappointing ending to that month-long work did not, however, put a damper on our resolve to fulfill our commitments to global disarmament as we regrouped and successfully concluded the Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects in early September.

Amidst this heavy workload, the Philippines commends all States for their hard work, tireless efforts and undeterred commitment to move forward.

For we all know that much work remains to be done. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines lends its support to all these 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, the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, with its 64 Action Points, remains our guide.

In this regard, we welcome the successful outcome of the 1st PrepCom for the 2015 NPT RevCon as it reaffirms the action plans we committed to undertake in 2012. The 1st PrepCom carried some issues forward and highlighted new opportunities for advancing the agenda throughout the new review cycle.

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

One of the most important initiatives arising from the 1st PrepCom, and one which the Philippines supported, is the 16-country statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. The statement called on nuclear weapon states to give increasing attention to their commitment to comply with international law and humanitarian law.

The Philippines also welcomes the outcome of the 6th CTBT Ministerial Meeting which produced a joint statement that called for the entry into force of the Treaty. We laud Indonesia for its recent ratification of the CTBT and we continue to urge the remaining eight Annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty.

The Philippines likewise welcomes the announcement of Iraq and Thailand on their intention to ratify the Treaty and we hope that they would do so at the soonest possible time.

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

As new challenges and potential conflicts threaten the peace in the Asian region, it is also imperative that the five nuclear weapon states resolve their outstanding issues and sign the Protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) at the soonest possible time.

The Philippines considers the last minute reservations made by France, the United Kingdom and Russia before acceding to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty as a temporary setback in our efforts for the full and effective implementation of the Treaty.
In this regard, the Philippines calls for further consultations with the nuclear weapon states regarding these reservations.

Meanwhile, the Philippines is hopeful that the Helsinki Process will push through as planned, through the convening of the 2012 International Conference in the Middle East in December, to be attended by all States of the region.

We commend the Finnish government for making preparations to host the event as well as appointing Undersecretary Jaako Laajava as facilitator for this process.

The Philippines reiterates its call to all relevant actors to continue consultations to ensure that the 2012 Conference becomes a reality.

My country wishes to underscore that the Conference will only be the beginning of a long and difficult process for the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. But it has to happen this year as this will have serious implications on other initiatives in the fields of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Philippines also believes that the 2012 Conference and the peace process in the Middle East should, and can, proceed without one waiting for the other.

The Philippines continues to view with concern and disappointment the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). It is high time that the CD adopts a Program of Work. A revitalization of the Conference is called for and this is a common position of the 39-strong CD Informal Group of Observer States which the Philippines helped establish.

It is also imperative that the CD open discussions on the enlargement of the Conference. It is indeed an anachronism that the CD continues to maintain a restricted membership, if its raison d'être is to negotiate on behalf of the global community. Limited membership is but symptomatic of the malaise and inherent limitations of the status quo.

The CD should thus appoint a Special Rapporteur to Review the Issue of Membership.

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.
Mr. Chairman,

In the area of conventional weapons, the Philippines commends Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina for his work on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). But our work is not yet done and the world is awaiting our next move. The Philippines cannot emphasize enough that the future ATT is necessary to regulate the trade in conventional arms.

In this regard, the Philippines stands ready to support a draft resolution that calls for the convening of another Conference early next year. It is our hope that by then, the time is ripe for flexibility among all of us to reach an agreement on the remaining contentious issues.

The Philippines is proud and honored to be able to contribute to the global discourse on conventional weapons. The Philippines will serve as the President of the 2012 Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Earlier this year, the CCW re-opened discussions on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines, and continued its important work on other inhumane weapons particularly Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and on Explosive Remnants of War.

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.

Synergies with other related treaties such as the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions need to be explored, such as integrated provision of victim assistance to persons effected by the weapons covered by the three conventions. More effort needs to be exerted to prevent the employment of IEDs which are increasingly becoming the weapon of choice by non-state actors all over the world. Their usage and users must be stigmatized.

The Philippines is actively engaged in advancing Biosecurity and Biosafety cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region, and had just concluded a successful series of workshops on Biosecurity in cooperation with the United States and Australia in the context of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The Philippines also is working closely with its ASEAN partners and other friends through cooperation with the European Union and the G-8 Global Partnership on Weapons of Mass Destruction and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear concerns.

Given the considerable interest and numerous programs in the WMD/ CBRN field, it is important to ensure coordination among the said programs to avoid duplication and overlap.

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.

In closing, the Philippines throughout its history has shown its desire and capacity to pursue peace. Many of our efforts are done not in isolation, but with the assistance and expertise of countries worldwide. The relationships we foster with other countries and organizations are grounded in collaboration, cooperation and building a peaceful and secure environment within the region and internationally.

We have started collaborations with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, among many endeavors, an undertaking that we hope to continue in many years to come. We see the importance of taking a regional approach to peace and security, something that we believe the Regional Centre espouses and aims to fulfill.

In the future, the Philippines hopes to see a greater and wider role for the Centre as countries in the Asia Pacific region work towards lasting peace.

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 two months.

Thank you.