PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

H.E. Undersecretary Ariel Y. Abadilla
Deputy Foreign Minister

at the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

26 September 2016
Trusteeship Council Chamber

This year’s commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons comes at a most opportune time as the world is witnessing renewed momentum on global efforts towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

It also comes at a time when urgent actions are needed to rid the world of these weapons in light of the persistent threats of terrorism and violent extremism and challenges to the global non-proliferation regime.

Nuclear disarmament has been on the agenda of this world body since its early days. More than seven decades later, there remain thousands of nuclear weapons in the global arsenal.

While the numbers have gone down since its peak two decades ago, the fact remains that a single atomic bomb alone would wreak havoc on human life, on the environment; not for a brief moment, but for years to come.

The threat and the risks are real – especially when one country continues to defy calls to halt its testing and development of nuclear weapons, when terrorists scramble to get their hands on these weapons, and when natural disasters threaten the safety of nuclear facilities.

With nuclear weapons, there are simply no guarantees of safety and security.

Mr. President,

For our existing global nuclear disarmament architecture to be effective, we must look at the weaknesses that must be addressed, gaps that need to be filled, and complementarities that must be pursued.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been and will remain to be the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.
The Philippines has persistently called for its universality and for the balance implementation of its three pillars that will finally allow us to achieve the concrete and time-bound objectives we have committed ourselves to under the Treaty.

An overwhelming majority of Member States recently took a stand in Geneva, at the Open-Ended Working Group to Take Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, aimed at advancing our collective efforts towards moving forward on nuclear disarmament.

There is no better way to mark this day and reaffirm our commitment to achieve that noble goal than through concrete, bold, and immediate actions.

We have opportunities to do so at the upcoming work of the First Committee in October, at the first NPT Preparatory Committee meeting in 2017, and at a General Assembly conference next year to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

In all these, the Philippines believes dialogue and diplomacy will be the key in bridging the wide differences on the way forward.

There are, indeed, many routes to the destination. What is imperative is that we take those crucial steps now.

Thank you.