Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Philippines aligns itself with the intervention made by the Non-Aligned Movement.

The current review cycle marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, presenting an opportunity to look at the gains achieved, particularly on how the NPT has made possible the exchange of nuclear energy, science and technology to meet development goals. The Philippines is pleased that this meeting is taking place in Vienna, enabling us to experience first-hand the contributions of the Vienna-based international organizations to the NPT and the broader non-proliferation regime. In particular, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has discharged its mandate of accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. It has contributed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and is poised to play a critical role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Philippines’ fruitful cooperation with the IAEA spans almost six decades and has enabled the Philippines to harness nuclear science and technology for development through the years. The recent 3rd Philippine Nuclear Congress\(^1\), under the theme “Meeting Challenges through Nuclear Science and Technology for Sustainable Growth”, graced by no less than IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano, presented an opportunity for the Philippines to reflect on this cooperation and to look forward to the impact of wider and broader application of nuclear science and technology in our country’s quest for sustainable growth.

On achieving **zero hunger**, the collaborative research work of Filipino scientists on radiation applications in agriculture resulted in the successful development of a plant growth promoter (PGP) through the irradiation of carrageenan, a natural polymer from seaweed. The use of the PGP has led to significant improvement

\(^1\) December 2015
in the yield and health of crops such as rice, mungbean, and peanut. During field testing, PGPs were proven capable of increasing the yield of rice by up to 65% and making the crops more resilient, whether against strong typhoons or the ravages of tungro\(^2\) infestation. Experiments also showed an increase of up to ten times the yield for normal practices in mungbean, and up to twice the average yield for peanut. In the future, we expect this product to be made available in large volumes to rice farmers and to the private sector.\(^3\)

On **clean water and sanitation**, the Philippines was one of three pioneer countries in the IAEA Water Availability Enhancement or IWA\^E project. Thanks to funding assistance from the IAEA, the Government adopted the integration of isotope techniques in the national groundwater assessment program.

On **clean and affordable energy**, the Philippines, in collaboration with the IAEA and the International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation which co-sponsored the Conference, hosted the *Regional Conference on Prospects of Nuclear Energy in the Asia-Pacific Region* last year. The Conference drew over a hundred participants from 15 countries and re-ignited public discussions on a nuclear power programme as a long term option in our pursuit of affordable and clean energy. In August this year, the Philippines will host the *Asia Cooperation Dialogue Conference Towards Energy Security, Sustainability and Resiliency* which will tackle, among others, the emerging rule of nuclear energy. Through close cooperation with the IAEA, we expect to formulate the national position on a nuclear power programme within the year.

On the **environment**, the Philippines, in collaboration with local and international partners, has used nuclear analytical techniques for air pollution studies in Metro Manila. Air pollution caused by particulates in the atmosphere is of great concern globally, as well as in the Philippines. Black carbon, which forms much of the fine air particulate pollutants in Metro Manila, and lead particulates are serious threats to public health. Continuous air pollution monitoring, through the application of nuclear analytical techniques, have generated basic data for improved air quality management. Three new monitoring stations are expected to be established in Taguig, Makati and Valenzuela.

I am also pleased to share that the Philippines has been re-designated as an *IAEA Collaborating Center for Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Studies* for the period 2016-2020. The Philippines is ready host trainees from other IAEA member states on receptor binding assay (RBA), which measures the toxin that causes paralytic shellfish poisoning.

\(^2\) Tungro is one of the most destructive virus diseases of rice.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines recognizes the importance of strengthening the global nuclear safety regime and takes this opportunity to acknowledge the role of the IAEA in enhancing the global nuclear safety framework, and, in promoting nuclear safety worldwide.

In cooperation with the IAEA, the Philippines is establishing a real time nationwide environmental radiation monitoring network to enhance our capability to cope with nuclear or radiological emergencies. We look forward to the IAEA’s initiatives to strengthen emergency preparedness and response (EPR), including the implementation of the active exercise program to test EPR at the international and national levels. We welcome progress in the development of effective public communication strategies in EPR.

Further, this delegation is optimistic that the draft legislative bill - "Comprehensive Nuclear and Radiation Safety Regulation Act", currently categorized as a priority bill of the Department of Science and Technology, will be passed by the 17th Philippine Congress. The bill would ensure the effective separation of functions between a regulatory body and the body concerned with the promotion and utilization of nuclear energy.

As the current chair of ASEAN, the Philippines notes that there are opportunities for further strengthening and enhancing safety architecture in our part of the world. Recognizing the importance of regional cooperation in regulatory control, the Philippines supports the ASEAN Regulatory Network, the ASEANTOM, and will take concrete steps to enhance cooperation between the ASEANTOM and the IAEA in pursuit of the network’s goals and objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines notes that the overall objective of a State’s nuclear security regime is the protection of persons, property, society, and the environment from malicious acts involving nuclear and other radioactive material. The Philippines recognizes the critical importance of nuclear security and considers it as an "enabler" rather than a constraint in the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.
In this context, we reiterate our commitment to the principles laid out in the Joint Communiqué of the 4th Nuclear Security Summit and to the Ministerial Declaration in the recent International Conference on Nuclear Security.  

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The Philippines is of the view that the recent Nuclear Security Conference enabled states to formulate and exchange views on future directions and priorities for nuclear security and how these may evolve. We look forward to how inputs from the Conference could inform the concrete programmes in the IAEA Nuclear Security Plan 2018-2021.

During the Conference, this delegation shared its national experiences and achievements in strengthening nuclear security and underscored the importance of international cooperation, with the IAEA playing a key role. In partnership with the IAEA and some Member States, the Philippines has installed security alarm systems for facilities with high-risk radioactive sources and disposed of vulnerable or disused sources and repatriated these to their origin. We have also developed a national strategy for the detection of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials at border, installed twenty (20) Radiation Portal Monitors (RPMs) at ports in Manila and Cebu, and successfully interdicted contaminated finished products from import shipment. We continue to participate in the IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database and report any loss, theft, and incident related to illicit nuclear and radioactive materials. In addition, the Philippines has been supporting the State Level Safeguards Approach since the IAEA has drawn broader conclusion for the Philippines in 2013 as published in the Safeguards Implementation Report. Safeguards Agreement compliant verification activities carried out at the Philippine Research Reactor (PRR-1) and National Location Outside Facilities indicate that the Philippines does not have undeclared presence, production, or processing of nuclear material.

Mr. Chairman,

As a founding member of the United Nations, an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Interpol and the Global Initiative for Combating Nuclear Terrorism (GCINT), the Philippines believes in a holistic approach in dealing with the nuclear security issue. Addressing the threat of nuclear terrorism and proliferation will also assist in creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the objectives of the NPT. Nuclear Disarmament, non-proliferation, nuclear security and safety should, therefore, go hand-in-hand.

In closing, the Philippines expresses its continued support to the IAEA, under the leadership of DG Yukiya Amano, and joins other States here in recognizing the Agency’s significant role in promoting Atoms for Peace and Development, and its unparalleled role in enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to global peace, health and prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.