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# PHILIPPINES

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## STATEMENT

by

**H.E. MR. HILARIO G. DAVIDE, JR.**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative of the Philippines  
to the United Nations

at

the General Debate  
of the  
**First Committee**

63<sup>rd</sup> Session, General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines congratulates you for your well-deserved election to and assumption of the Chairmanship of the First Committee and also the other members of the Bureau for their equally well-deserved election. Forthwith let me take this opportunity to assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Philippines in the work of the First Committee to ensure the success of this session.

The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the statement delivered by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "We have the means and the capacity to deal with our problems, if only we can find the political will." He was correct, and his stirring words find more relevance today as the world faces a confluence of crises some of which were never expected before. As to the issue at hand, the Member States of the United Nations do, indeed, have the capability to rid our planet of the weapons that we falsely believe protect us, but whose very existence has led and will continue to lead to humankind's ruin and complete obliteration. Each and every Member State must have that **political will** so that, together, we can move forward in the complex field of disarmament and finally be able to rid our generation and those to follow of these weapons whose potential to destroy our fellow humans and our ecosystem is as certain as the rising of the sun.

For the Philippines, its main concern remains to be the proliferation and the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons (SALWs). SALWs are easily acquired and easily transported and smuggled because of their small size, and easily used with minimum training. Given their mass spread and proliferation, SALWs have killed and maimed a great number of combatants and innocent civilians alike. SALWs are easily used by criminal elements of society to commit crimes against persons and property, which would gravely affect peace and security. SALWs worsen conflicts and, thus, stunt economic development and limit the prospects for sustained growth. Furthermore, conflicts where SALWs are prevalent can cause the displacements of entire populations, thereby causing refugee crises.

Many developing countries are particularly vulnerable to and culpable for the illicit trafficking of these weapons, which have fuelled and prolonged various conflicts. Thus, the Philippines emphasizes the importance of the early and full implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Philippines welcomes the positive outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS-3), which considered the national, regional and global implementation of the Program of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

In view of the trans-border nature of the illicit trade in SALWs, States should make every effort to develop mechanisms to foster information-sharing. The Philippines, for instance, shares evidentiary information through official channels on the basis of agreements such as the Agreement on Information Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures signed with the Governments of Malaysia and Indonesia. The Philippines also believes that the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and

Disarmament in Asia could play a significant role in promoting sub-regional and regional cooperation in the area of SALWs.

In another front, the Philippines recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact caused by landmines and cluster munitions upon innocent civilians long after a conflict has ended and therefore voices its support for the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on their Destruction and welcomes the outcome of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Convention which was held in the Dead Sea from 18-22 November 2007. The Philippines participated meaningfully in the Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in Dublin, 19-30 May 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

The world faces an even greater threat with the further development and improvement of certain types of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons must be eliminated for the survival of mankind. This should be done through multilaterally agreed solutions in keeping with the UN Charter. Nuclear Weapon States must lead by example and remove these types of weapons from their respective arsenals. The elimination of nuclear stockpiles will deter those countries from acquiring them. Furthermore, the dismantling of nuclear stockpiles would eliminate the possibility of an accidental nuclear launch. It also prevents terrorists and other Non-State Actors from acquiring them.

The Philippines is gravely concerned over the lack of progress in the past several Review Conferences of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as reaffirmed through the decisions and resolution adopted by the Review and Extension Conference of 1995 and in accordance with the 13 practical steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference in order to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, as called for under article VI of the NPT. Like many others, the Philippines expresses disappointment over the failure of the last NPT Review Conference in 2005. The Philippines hopes that States Parties will show flexibility and political will to ensure the success of the 2010 Review Conference. In relation to this Conference, which will set the course for the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it will be the turn of Asia, in particular Southeast Asia, to assume and hold the Presidency of the NPT Review Conference. The Philippines will field a qualified candidate for the Presidency who will ably steer negotiations and lead the Review Conference to a favorable conclusion.

The Philippines believes in the necessity of universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and calls upon the remaining nine States whose ratifications are necessary for the Treaty to enter into force to delay no further. The Philippines is proud to be a contributor to the CTBTO Preparatory Committee by having three of the facilities that form part of the International Monitoring System, namely, two seismological monitoring stations and one radionuclide station. Furthermore, the Philippines hosted a regional workshop in Manila in June 2007 to promote the CTBTO PrepCom's efforts to expand universal support for the treaty.

The Constitution of the Philippines no less states in Section 8 of Article II thereof that the Philippines "adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from Nuclear Weapons in its territory." Conformably thereto, the Philippines, together with the ASEAN Member

States, established the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and recognizes the importance of other nuclear-weapons free zones and their contributions to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and international peace and security. My delegation reiterates the invitation to the Nuclear Weapon States to adhere to these various zones including, in particular the SEANWFZ, by signing the Protocol of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Biological and chemical weapons are just as lethal as nuclear weapons and if unleashed can cause untold sufferings upon their victims. The Philippines welcomes the successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention or BWC. The Philippines recognizes the importance of strengthening the BWC through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol and universal adherence to the Convention. On Chemical Weapons, the Philippines recognizes the significance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and calls on States to meet the deadlines, as extended by the Conference of State Parties, on the destruction of these terrifying and horrific weapons. The Philippines also calls on those few remaining States not party to the CWC to sign and ratify the Convention without delay.

In conclusion, the Philippines supports the convening of a Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament and would also like to see the reconvening of the Open-Ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of the preparatory committee for SSOD-4.

Let me stress the urgency of achieving success in our work during our current session, to be attained if Member States exercise the necessary political will and continue to encourage and depend on multilateral processes.

Thank you.