

PHILIPPINES
Statement at the 58th IAEA General Conference
Delivered by the Hon. Dr. Amelia P. Guevarra,
Undersecretary, Department of Science and Technology

23 September 2014

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my Government, I congratulate you on your election as President of the 58th Annual Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. I would like to assure you, the members of your Bureau and the Secretariat of the full support of the Philippine Delegation in the successful accomplishment of your important task.

The Philippines likewise welcomes the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti , the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Vanuatu into the family of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Nuclear Applications and Technical Cooperation

Mr. President,

In its cooperation with the IAEA, the Philippines aims to create and maintain a reservoir of scientific and technological know-how, providing world-class solutions that empower Filipinos to attain higher productivity and better quality of life. This cooperation is especially evident in the area of nuclear applications.

As part of our participation in this conference, we wish to showcase the accomplishments of the Philippines in nuclear science, technology, innovation and safety to an international audience, and more particularly, to the IAEA's Member States.

With the theme "The Philippines: Moving Forward With Nuclear Science And Technology", the Philippine Exhibit highlights how the country applies the IAEA's "Atoms for Peace" mandate to its own national development program through the Philippine government's efforts in increasing agricultural productivity, enhancing industrial competitiveness, ensuring accessible healthcare and providing nuclear services to ensure safety to the public and integrity of the environment. We invite delegations to visit the Philippine Exhibit at the VIC Rotunda.

Nuclear techniques enhance agricultural productivity. By developing precision farming methods using radioisotopes and stable isotope tracers, our scientists found that we can increase fertilizer utilization efficiency in rice and corn by 70% and improve water use efficiency by 25%. These data give us confidence to update decades-old recommended levels of fertilizer and water inputs in agricultural production. Last year, the PNRI trained Cambodian agricultural scientists on the assessment of nutrient and fertilizer management in rice production. Plant growth promoters from irradiated carrageenan increased the yield of mungbean by 300% , and that of peanut by 350%. Field test on rice sprayed with plant growth promoters showed no signs of tungro virus infestation.

On improving industry competitiveness, the electron beam irradiation facility, which will be inaugurated in December this year, will open new applications that will create new products and improve quality of industrial materials. The new quarantine treatment against the mango pulp weevil using gamma radiation developed by PNRI will enhance the export competitiveness of the Philippine Super Mango.

On providing better access to clean and safe drinking water, the Philippines takes a pioneering role as one of three pilot countries participating in the IAEA Water Availability Enhancement Project or IWAVE. The project aims to enhance national capabilities to assess the availability, quality, and sustainability of water resources. The IWAVE project is integrated with the groundwater resource and vulnerability assessment project of the Philippine Government where the isotope hydrology techniques complement the hydrogeological techniques for a more effective groundwater assessment. The project sites are two water critical regions in the country.

On ensuring accessible health care through modern nuclear diagnostic tests and treatment, the PNRI has established the first Tc-99m generator plant in the Philippines with the assistance of the IAEA. A new medical cyclotron service facility is being constructed by the private sector in cooperation with the Department of Health further modernizing nuclear medicine in the country.

The Philippines continues its research work and technology transfer initiatives on harmful algal blooms (HABs) , and shares its expertise with other IAEA Member States. The PNRI has been designated as

an IAEA Collaborating Center on HABs Studies in 2005 and 2010. The Philippines hosted the first regional coordination meeting of the IAEA Project, *“Supporting the Use of Receptor Binding Assay (RBA) to Reduce the Adverse Impacts of Harmful Algal Toxins on Seafood Safety”* in June 2014, with 17 participants from seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting assessed the technical gaps and constraints for each country’s marine environment monitoring programs on red tide and the possible cooperative solutions to these problems.

Nuclear Safety

Mr. President,

The need for a reliable source of energy that can sustain development and save the environment fuels the interest in nuclear energy. However, confidence in the use of nuclear energy hinges on the continuous improvement and strengthening of safety and security regimes for nuclear facilities.

The Philippines supports the Agency’s work in strengthening the global nuclear safety regime, in particular, in the efficient and effective implementation of international legal instruments, in developing safety standards, in enhancing national safety infrastructures, in coordinating international emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, and in promoting a nuclear safety culture worldwide.

We are pleased with the progress made in the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, particularly in the safety

assessment of nuclear power plants, the conduct of IAEA's peer review services, and emergency preparedness and response. We look forward to the release of the IAEA Comprehensive Report on the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident.

In the home front, we avail of the Agency's expertise in strengthening our own nuclear safety infrastructure and regulatory framework under our national technical cooperation (TC) projects. At the regional level, we share our experiences on nuclear safety through the IAEA regional projects and networks (ANSN).

We thank the EU for assisting the Philippines enhance the competence of the nuclear regulatory body on nuclear safety under the EC-Instrument for Nuclear Security Cooperation (INSC) project.

We are collaborating with the USA on the development of our nuclear emergency support center , and enhancing the Philippine capability on emergency preparedness and response , especially on atmospheric plume modeling, risk reduction, incident assessment, and crisis management.

Nuclear Security

Mr. President,

The Philippine commitment to strengthening nuclear security stems from the recognition that nuclear security, alongside with nuclear safety, is integral to the continued development and enjoyment of the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Through its continued cooperation with the international community, the Philippines has made advances in our nuclear security infrastructure and technical capacities. With the assistance of the IAEA, a National Nuclear Security Support Centre is being established in support of the National Nuclear Security Plan..

The Philippines is requesting for an International Nuclear Security Advisory Service (INSServ) mission focusing on nuclear security at a major public event to assist the government prepare for the APEC Heads of States Meeting in the Philippines in late 2015.

Our achievements in the various aspects of nuclear security would not have been possible without the cooperation of IAEA, our Partner States, the EU , and other organizations.

Safeguards

Mr. President,

A major challenge brought about by a nuclear renaissance is the increasing risk of nuclear proliferation. The conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols and providing the Agency with tools and resources to effectively implement a credible verification system are crucial in reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation, thereby contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore appreciate the Agency's efforts in strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of safeguards implementation.

The Philippines shares the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. We take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to realizing the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in a comprehensive manner. We believe that there should be equal progress in all three pillars of the Treaty, namely non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The 6th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, held in Tokyo in July 2014 and co-chaired by Japan, the Philippines and Australia, affirmed that the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT is a significant step toward the shared goal of “a world without nuclear weapons.” The conclusion of at least two recent international conferences that no adequate humanitarian response would be possible during a nuclear detonation reinforced the importance for States to make concrete progress towards this shared objective.

Within the United Nations and other relevant avenues, we continue to support efforts to keep the twin issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation on the agenda.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

As more countries look at the prospects of injecting nuclear power to meet their increasing need for energy, and as demand for technical cooperation from developing countries continue to increase to meet their development needs, the Agency will continue to play a vital

role in enabling developing countries to use science and technology for development and for maintaining international peace and security. The Agency can only do this with strong partnerships with the Member States.

In closing, Mr. President, let me reiterate the continuing cooperation and commitment of the Philippines to the objectives of the Agency, as we meet challenges and opportunities in ensuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in pursuing the path to a nuclear weapons-free world.

Thank you.