

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

DOST SECRETARY FORTUNATO DE LA PEÑA 65TH IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

Mr. President,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,
Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

Warm greetings from Manila!

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the 65th General Conference. My delegation also extends its appreciation to the Director General and his hard-working team at the Secretariat for the excellent arrangements for this meeting, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

As the world continues to grapple with the devastation wrought by COVID-19, with developing countries disproportionately affected, the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology offer us solutions -- not just in the detection, monitoring and response to the disease, as well as prevention of future outbreaks, but also in global economic recovery, by supporting industries, ensuring better management of natural resources, promoting global health, contributing to food security, and providing clean energy solutions.

In this regard, the Philippines attaches utmost importance to the Agency's research and development activities in the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, as well as their deployment to Member States through the Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme, as these activities support our national development efforts, including the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are grateful for the Agency's support particularly on the following:

- a. Establishment of the Philippine Research Reactor Subcritical Assembly for Training, Education and Research (SATER), which resulted in the advancement of local nuclear training and research activities in the area of reactor physics and engineering.
- b. The sustained operation of our electron beam facility resulted in increased utilization of ionizing radiation benefiting different sectors of society and advancing the field of experts in the country. One such application is the use of radiation grafted materials for wastewater treatment.
- c. The use of isotopic techniques for food safety and security, clean water and for promoting infant and young children nutrition as well as the measurement of ultra-trace radionuclides in coral cores to reconstruct pathways and past impacts of nuclear activities.

I also wish to express that the Philippines remains grateful to the Agency as well as to its extrabudgetary donors for the IAEA's COVID-19 assistance to the Philippines, which

makes use of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques to detect and characterize the disease.

Mr. President,

The Philippines appreciates the IAEA's comprehensive assistance to Member States embarking on or expanding their nuclear power programmes, based on the Milestones Approach. The Philippine Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee (NEP-IAC) continues to study the adoption of a national position on a possible nuclear energy program, in light of the recommendations of the INIR mission in 2018 and the Integrated Work Plan in 2019.

We are pleased to participate in the Agency's Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) project and privileged to be one of the three Member States in the pilot implementation of the NUClear TEChnology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics) project in the Asia Pacific Region., and commend the Director General for identifying peaceful nuclear solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

Mr. President,

The Philippines considers the Agency's safeguards and verification function as the heart of the global nuclear non-proliferation agenda, as it provides the international community assurances that nuclear material remains in peaceful uses. The Philippines takes this opportunity to reiterate its principled position that the world should be free of nuclear weapons, and that their total elimination is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. We look forward to discussing this further during the upcoming NPT Review Conference and the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW next year.

The Philippines likewise thanks the Agency for its continued assistance to Member States in nuclear safety and security, including through the issuance of guidance documents, peer and advisory missions, and training activities. In connection with this, I am pleased to announce that the Philippines has ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM), which entered into force on 16 June 2021. We look forward to the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the A/CPPNM in March 2022.

Finally, Mr. President, the Philippines values and welcomes the significant contributions of female scientists in "accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world?." In this regard, we commend and support the Director General's goal to achieve gender parity in the IAEA by 2025 as well as the launch of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

Thank you and I wish everyone a productive General Conference.