



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES



GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT

**68th Regular Session
of the
International Atomic Energy Agency
General Conference**

**Plenary Meeting Hall, Vienna International Center
Vienna, Austria**

16-20 September 2024

To be delivered by:

**Undersecretary (Vice Minister) Sharon S. Garin
Head of Delegation**

Mister President,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,
Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

1. On behalf of the Republic of the Philippines, I would like to extend our congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over the 68th Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference. We are confident that under your able leadership, this conference will continue to uphold the shared values and objectives that have long guided the Agency.

2. The Philippines recognizes the transformative power of atomic energy for sustainable development and commend the Agency for its continued delivery of assistance in this regard. We are now actively working toward the establishment of an independent nuclear regulatory authority. Underpinning this is the facilitation of a comprehensive legislation that encompasses the various principles and guidelines of nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation, along with the ratification of the various nuclear safety-related conventions as priority.

3. This is a landmark year for our country with the release of our nuclear energy roadmap which charts our way forward throughout the Milestones

approach. We aim to have commercially operational nuclear power plants by 2032, with at least 1,200 megawatts initially entering the country's power mix to gradually increase to 4,800 megawatts by 2050. Driving this work is the Nuclear Energy Programme-Interagency Committee (NEP-IAC) led by the Department of Energy, which brings together a whole-of-government approach to the integration of nuclear power. This November, the Philippines is also set to host the International Nuclear Supply Chain Forum in Manila which will bring together government and private sector stakeholders to discuss partnership opportunities in nuclear energy. We very much warmly welcome participants to this forum.

5. In addition, the Philippines is also preparing for the upcoming Follow-Up Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review Mission (INIR) Mission in December this year. This will assess the results of all the work done by the NEP-IAC after the INIR Mission for Phase I last 2018. The NEP-IAC through its six sub-committees simultaneously implements the undertakings as guided by the IAEA's recommendations.

Mr. President,

6. The Philippines reaffirms its strong support for the peaceful uses of atomic energy while ensuring nuclear safety, security, and non-proliferation. Our country's long-standing position is that the pillar of the peaceful uses of atomic energy should be co-equal, and not ancillary to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is in this vein that we recognize the inextricable link between the Agency's work and the various pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

7. During the Second Preparatory Committee for the 11th Review Conference of the NPT held last month in Geneva, the Philippines along with 28 like-minded States Parties, submitted a landmark working paper titled, "Upscaling the Non-Power Applications of Nuclear Energy." The main message is that non-power applications of atomic energy help us achieve our sustainable development goals, and, like power applications, should receive adequate and proportional recognition, promotion and support from both government and industry. We are pleased to note that "non-power", a term traditionally used only in engagements at the IAEA, is now being used more prominently in the NPT Review Cycle.

8. Driving this message are the tangible projects that the Agency has supported in food and agriculture, human health and nutrition, water resource management, biotechnology, nanotechnology, environment, industry, knowledge management, education and training, and other fields. The Philippine government, in cooperation with industry partners, is thus investing heavily in upscaling nuclear applications:

a. In food and agriculture: We are working on commercializing the carrageenan plant growth promoter, which can lead to a 19% increase in farmer income. Through the assistance of the government, an industry partner was able to establish a commercial electron-beam facility for food and pharmaceutical products - the first of its kind in the country.

b. In health and medicine: We are establishing the Nuclear Medicine Research and Innovation Center and Program, a public-private partnership program aimed at making cancer diagnosis more accessible and affordable for our people.

c. In environment: We are one of the pilot countries under the IAEA's NUTEC Plastics initiative which seeks to introduce novel technology in plastics upcycling through nuclear techniques. We are pleased to note that one of our private sector partners is manufacturing furniture made from recycled plastic obtained using nuclear techniques. We are now working with various stakeholders to further scale up the project in the hopes that it will touch multiple sectors of society.

d. In education: We have successfully integrated nuclear science in several secondary and tertiary education programs. We are also pleased to note that the first International Nuclear Science Olympiad (INSO) for secondary students was successfully conducted last month in New Clark City, Philippines. Fifty-five (55) students from fourteen (14) countries competed in two-days of intensive examinations in nuclear science. Thirty-seven (37) of them received medals for distinction. We hope that through these efforts, the benefits of nuclear science will become more known to the next generation—those who will carry the ideals of peaceful uses of atomic energy. We express our full support to Malaysia as INSO's next host in 2025 and encourage more engagement from Member States.

9. The Philippines looks forward to the Agency's initiatives that promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology. Among these is the International Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications to be held this November in Vienna. We express our support for the Co-Chairs, Ghana and Finland, and hope that the Conference will help mainstream both the power and non-power applications of atomic energy.

Finally, Mr. President,

10. We would like to highlight the leading role played by women throughout the development of our nuclear programme and applications projects. NEP-IAC enjoys the participation of women in all its committees. The Philippine Nuclear Research Institute has been enjoying gender parity for several decades, especially in its top leadership and technical positions. Last

year, the Philippines' first and only research reactor, designed and operated by Filipino women, started operations. In our use of atomic energy to achieve sustainable development, we are pleased to note that gender equality is naturally at the forefront.

Thank you, Mr. President.
