

PHILIPPINES
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General Conference of the
International Atomic Energy Agency
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Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Philippines, I congratulate you on your election as President of the 59th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. My delegation assures you, the members of your Bureau and the Secretariat of our full support in the successful accomplishment of your task ahead.

The Philippines welcomes Turkmenistan, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados into the International Atomic Energy Agency.

NUCLEAR APPLICATIONS AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Mr. President,

The Philippines attaches great importance to the contribution of nuclear science, technology and applications to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including our own development goals. In this regard, the Philippines lauds the active involvement of the Agency in the deliberations in the post-2015 development agenda, where it highlighted the inclusion of science and technology, and in particular, strong national science, technology and

innovation institutions in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) framework. Likewise, the Philippines takes note with appreciation that 13 of the 17 new Sustainable Development Goals relate directly to the Agency's area of competence.

The Philippines places high priority on the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme since it serves as the primary vehicle for the peaceful uses of nuclear techniques which has benefitted Member States across all regions.

Our Electron Beam Irradiation Facility was established with the assistance of the IAEA, as well as the support of the Governments of Japan and the United States. Inaugurated in December 2014, the facility is now fully operational initially handling the grafting of abaca fibers to produce metal adsorbents and honey alginate for wound dressing. Through the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, my country is promoting the use of this facility to various industries.

The Philippines has successfully demonstrated the use of radioisotopes and stable isotopes to determine the best practice for fertilizer and water application in the production of rice and corn. Best practices based on these studies increase fertilizer utilization by up to 70%, improve crop water use efficiency and minimize losses by 25%. Similar studies are now being replicated in the production of coffee and sugarcane.

The Philippines appreciates its selection as a pilot country, along with Indonesia, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates, for the project on "Supporting Sustainability and Networking of National Nuclear Institutions in Asia and the Pacific Region."

The project seeks to reach out and develop the youth's interest in nuclear science and technology by adopting the best practices in

science education for secondary schools in the region and using a compendium of resources and activities developed by the IAEA for high school teachers and students. Beyond raising awareness of nuclear concepts and application, the project also intends to encourage more students to eventually engage in science, engineering and mathematics.

VISIT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO THE PHILIPPINES

During his visit to the Philippines in January this year, the Director General witnessed first hand the country's latest advances in nuclear science and technology, through his visits of the Electron Beam Irradiation Facility, the Technetium-99m Generator Facility, the Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry Laboratory, and the newly constructed medical cyclotron, the second in the country. He also interacted with students, teachers and officials of the two pilot schools implementing the IAEA outreach program.

This December, we look forward to welcoming the Director General as the Guest of Honor during the 3rd Philippine Nuclear Congress. The Congress, with the theme, "Meeting Challenges through Nuclear Science and Technology for Sustainable Growth," will provide a useful platform for the exchange of information on the current state of global, regional and national applications in nuclear science and technology for development and inclusive growth.

IAEA WATER AVAILABILITY ENHANCEMENT (IWAVE)

The Philippines also takes pride in being one of the three countries, alongside Oman and Costa Rica, in the pioneering project

called IWAVE, or IAEA Water Availability Enhancement (IWAVE) which was funded through the PUI. Implemented by the National Water Resources Board in collaboration with the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the IWAVE Philippine Pilot Project is now integrated with the groundwater resource and vulnerability assessment project of the Philippine government in two water critical regions of the country with plans to integrate isotope investigations in all areas to be monitored in the future. With most major outcomes achieved as the project enters its final implementation stage, the Philippines would like to commend the Agency for an excellent partnership beginning in 2010. IWAVE has strengthened our national capacity in assessing and managing water resources, thus facilitating better access to clean and safe drinking water.

RENOVATION OF THE NUCLEAR APPLICATIONS LABORATORIES (ReNuAL)

On the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories (ReNuAL), my delegation supports the Director General's call to modernize and renovate the eight laboratories of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications in Seibersdorf to enable them to meet the growing and evolving needs of Member States. As a country that has benefited immensely from access to these laboratories, we are working towards an appropriate contribution for this much-needed renovation which we shall announce at a later time.

STRENGTHENING THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

The Philippines has been doing its fair share in strengthening the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency. Besides participating in fellowships, scientific visits, consultancies and experts missions, the Philippines also hosts training courses, workshops and scientific fellows. Indeed, before the end of the first half of 2015, the Philippines would have hosted at least eight (8) regional meetings, workshops and training courses.

On funding for the Technical Cooperation Program, the Philippines adds its voice to the call for adequate resources and timely contributions from Member States. Along with increasing benefits and demand comes the responsibility of Member States to ensure that resources are available through their full and timely payments.

NUCLEAR SAFETY AND NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. President,

The Philippines supports the Agency's work in strengthening the global nuclear safety regime, enhancing the global nuclear safety framework, and indeed, in promoting nuclear safety worldwide.

We welcome the approval by the Board of Governors in March of six new Safety Requirements to be established as Agency Safety Standards.

We further support the establishment of the new Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee (EPRReSC). The Philippines wishes to actively participate in the work of this Committee.

The Philippines commends the Agency for the report on the Fukushima Daiichi accident. We understand that the report is the result

of an extensive international collaborative effort involving five working groups, 180 experts from 42 Member States, including the Philippines.

The Philippines attaches great importance to nuclear safety for the promotion of nuclear energy. We note that interest in introducing nuclear power has not diminished since the Fukushima Daiichi accident and that several countries are in the process of establishing the necessary nuclear infrastructure following a national decision to develop a nuclear power program.

While no national decision has been made in the Philippines, nuclear power remains under consideration as a long-term alternative source of energy. From this perspective, we continue to inform and educate our people on the benefits of nuclear energy.

We further look forward to joining other Member States who are considering nuclear power in the upcoming project cycle beginning in 2016 under the technical cooperation project on “Assessing the Development of a Nuclear Power Programme.” Moreover, we urge the Secretariat to continue assisting Member States embarking or planning to embark on a nuclear power programme, to ensure that the global safety regime is maintained, if not strengthened.

Jointly with the IAEA, the Philippine Government, through the PNRI, is establishing an on-line environmental radiation monitoring system comprising initially of five monitoring stations. The number of stations will reach 16 covering the whole country at the end of the project, thus enhancing the capability of the country to cope with nuclear or radiological emergency.

Subscribing to the basic principle and requirement for a separate nuclear regulatory body, the Philippine government is working towards the passage of a new law creating a separate Philippine Nuclear

Regulatory Commission. We thank the IAEA for providing a venue for members of the Philippine House of Representatives to exchange views with IAEA legal experts on the requisite legislative and legal framework to ensure safety in the use of nuclear and radioactive materials.

The Philippines fully supports a global nuclear liability regime based on treaty relations among all states that might be affected by a nuclear accident, and is committed to take actions appropriate to become a member of the regime.

The coming entry into force of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage is a valuable additional step towards establishing a global nuclear liability regime, and the Philippines will be working towards the promotion of the ratification of the Convention and become a Contracting Party in due course.

NUCLEAR SECURITY

Mr. President,

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' participation in the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC) enables us to contribute to the establishment of internationally agreed nuclear security guidance through the development of the Nuclear Security Series.

The Philippines is also an active partner in the implementation of the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INNSP). In partnership with the Agency, the Philippines convened a National Workshop on the

Nuclear Security Information Management System in late 2014 and a national Workshop on Threat Assessment and Design Basis Threat in April this year to strengthen cooperation among our government agencies in the field of nuclear security.

Last year, the Philippines joined 34 other States in subscribing to the Joint Statement on Strengthening Nuclear Security Implementation, under which we undertake to meet the intent of the essential elements of a nuclear security regime and commit to the effective and sustainable implementation of its principles.

Mr. President,

The Philippines is hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Summit this November, which will be attended by 21 Heads of Economies. The Joint Action Plan between the Philippines and the IAEA, in cooperation with the Department of Energy of the United States through its National Nuclear Security Administration, would greatly enhance the capability of our national intelligence and security agencies and of the PNRI in instituting nuclear security measures for the November APEC summit, as well as in raising the level of our emergency preparedness and response. The Philippines thanks the IAEA, the Governments of the United States and Canada, and the EU for assisting us build and develop our nuclear security capacity.

In order to sustain the nuclear security activities in the Philippines, the PNRI is setting up its Nuclear Security Support Center with the assistance of the IAEA. A radiation portal monitor for training frontline and border control officers is being provided by the European Commission Joint Research Center and the US DOE.

We further thank the Canadian government for extending its assistance to the Philippines in upgrading the physical protection system of the Philippine Research Reactor under a Memorandum of Understanding between the PNRI and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.

SAFEGUARDS AND VERIFICATION

Mr. President,

Under its Constitution, the Philippines adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons within its territory. From this policy emanates the Philippines' goals of promoting a nuclear weapon-free world and maintaining international and regional peace and stability.

From this perspective, the Philippines is committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of the global nuclear management regime. As a State Party to the Treaty, the Philippines advocates the balanced implementation of the Treaty's three pillars namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the Philippines and the 9 other member states are committed to maintain and preserve the Southeast Asian region as a nuclear-weapons-free zone, a region free of all weapons of mass destruction.

With our ASEAN partners, the Philippines commends the effort by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States, and the High Representative of the European Union for

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) in reaching a comprehensive agreement on 14 July 2015. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), while not a perfect document, is testament to the collective desire for the promotion of regional and international security, stability and ultimately, peace. It is an important mechanism and therefore, we call on the States involved and on the international community to help maintain the positive momentum for long-term peace that this historic Agreement engenders.

In this regard, the Philippines welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 2231 endorsing JCPOA on 20 July 2015. Recognizing the central role of the Agency in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Philippines adds its voice to the universal call for full compliance of the Agreement and the resolution of outstanding and remaining issues. Indeed, in our region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), during the 48th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur on August 4, has agreed to explore ways to formalize relations between ASEAN and the IAEA.

With our ASEAN partners, the Philippines expresses its grave concern over recent developments in the Korean Peninsula including the recent ballistic missile launches.

The Philippines strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards as soon as possible. Likewise, the Philippines calls upon the DPRK to cooperate with the Agency in the implementation of comprehensive safeguards.

The Philippines further encourages the DPRK to fully comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and

commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, and calls for the creation of necessary conditions for the early resumption of the Talks and continuous inter-Korean dialogue, which would help pave the way for the complete and verifiable de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

CONCLUSION

In closing, Mr. President, as the Agency prepares for its 60th anniversary in 2017, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to the goals and objectives of the Agency and assures the Agency of its full support in its major programmes. The Philippines further looks forward to the Agency's continuing support in fulfilling its statutory function of seeking "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world."

Thank you, Mr. President.