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PHILIPPINES

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOSE EDUARDO MALAYA III
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO
THE OPCW AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

My delegation wishes to join other States Parties in congratulating H.E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast of the Netherlands on his election as Chairperson of the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Fifth Review Conference).

The delegation of the Republic of the Philippines assures you of its full support for the successful completion of the Fifth Review Conference. We have full confidence that under your leadership you will ably facilitate an objective assessment of the past five years of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and provide a vision for the next five years.

My delegation appreciates the tireless work and wise stewardship of H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing, Permanent Representative of Estonia and Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, for putting into our hands the draft provisional text that will be the focus of work for this Conference. We are grateful for the consultative and inclusivity approach which allowed various regional groups and individual delegations to take part in the substantive discussions in preparation for this Conference.

The draft provisional text has drawn together carefully crafted proposals of States Parties which aim to make the Convention relevant and responsive to the needs of its Member States as they chart the way to the future of the Convention. We thank Ambassador Kuusing for his trust on the Philippines, as Asia Group Coordinator, and for allowing us to facilitate informal consultations within our group with a view to compromising language on many parts of the provisional text.

My delegation would also like to express its appreciation for the dedication and hard work of the Technical Secretariat, headed by the equally dedicated Director-General Fernando Arias, in providing full support to the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group.



The Philippines reiterates its commitment to working for the achievement of the object and purpose of the Convention, and its strong support for measures which aim to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of its provisions, essential to the enhancement of international peace and security.

This Fifth Review Conference comes 26 years after the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Having had set the legal norms towards eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, the Convention has managed to reach the status of a highly effective multilateral instrument for disarmament.

However, the Convention continues to face substantial challenges. Universality and complete destruction of all categories of chemical weapons stockpiles remains a concern. No new States have signed up or acceded since the Fourth Review Conference. The OPCW must continue to explore ways to achieve universal adherence to the Convention. The Philippines firmly believes that the complexity of new and emerging threats calls for stronger efforts in ensuring that universality of the Convention is achieved.

The Philippines welcomes the progress report on the status of the destruction activities of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles - an assurance that these are not at a standstill. The Philippines looks forward to the complete destruction of the remaining declared chemical weapons stockpile by the sole possessor State Party this year.

The destruction of chemical weapons, elimination of all categories of chemical weapons—old chemical weapons, abandoned chemical weapons and chemical weapons stockpiles—and prevention of their re-emergence should be the top priority of the OPCW. Considering that the States Parties destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles is almost complete, the OPCW should also focus on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and avoiding the risk of their proliferation, including preventing the possibility of their use by any State and non-State actors.

Beyond disarmament, the Convention also aims to promote the safe and peaceful use of chemicals for the growth and development of its Members' economies. The OPCW should therefore be at the forefront of research and discourse in science and technology, as these impact the possible development of chemical weapons. It is also important to promote international cooperation through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry.

Capacity building must remain a key element in the work of the OPCW, and its effectiveness and efficiency should be further enhanced. The newly inaugurated OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology will more fully enable the OPCW to realise this objective. The Philippines congratulates the OPCW Technical Secretariat, for this very significant accomplishment, and all States Parties that contributed in order to achieve this endeavour.

The Philippines is fully supportive of the OPCW's programmes, services, and projects that foster the exchange of information, equipment, and chemicals consistent with the peaceful uses of chemistry which are beneficial to all mankind. The Philippines, in particular, is keen to pursue initiatives that can assist our country in strengthening its capabilities in countering chemical weapons threats.

At a practical level, the Philippines continues to benefit from capacity-building programmes organised and conducted by the OPCW. For the past two years alone, more than 50 Filipinos from various Philippine government agencies, the academe and the chemical industry participated in various capacity-building activities and programmes of the Technical Secretariat, both in-person and online.

The expertise that the OPCW has generously shared with the Philippines supports the government's efforts in developing policies and initiatives to ensure that not only can the Philippines take prompt action and provide effective assistance during an actual instance of a chemical terrorist attack, but also build valuable capability to deter such acts.

Most importantly, we emphasise that the networks and linkages provided by trainings and other capacity-building activities conducted and funded by the OPCW allow Filipino experts from the government, the academe and non-government institutions to enhance their skills and knowledge that benefit the country and our people. Only through people-to-people exchanges, such as these that are undertaken under the OPCW framework, can the Philippines ensure it is at par with the rest of the world in managing the fast developments in the chemical industry.

Furthermore, we would like to express our interest in having a Philippine laboratory to be accredited as an OPCW designated laboratory. It is in this vein, that the Philippines is keen to pursue initiatives that can assist our country in strengthening the capabilities of its chemical laboratories and encourages the provision of trainings that will upgrade the skills of our experts in chemical analysis, synthesis, and reporting.

The OPCW is on the threshold of a new era of work. The Philippines believes that today more than ever the OPCW is faced with challenges that are the result of the increasingly complex world we find ourselves in, where States and industries are drawn closer together, where multilateral approaches to international peace and security continually strengthen national endeavours and vice versa, and the rapid pace of technology makes it possible that instability in one part of the world affects even those countries that are farthest from the source of chemical weapons threats.

As such, we call on all States Parties to continue the work of the OPCW in a spirit of a cooperative endeavour. We believe that the OPCW is strong only insofar as all States Parties are able to reach a level of trust with each other and as a result, agree on the basis of consensus how to move forward as a group in these challenging times. We also believe that as States Parties to the Convention, we have a shared objective of ensuring our collective security against chemical weapons in all its forms.

Mr Chairperson, we should transcend our differences and commit to upholding justice, respecting human rights, and maintaining international peace and security.

I request that this statement be made an official document of the Fifth Review Conference and posted in the OPCW website.

Thank you.