

**Statement of the  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
At the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference  
delivered by  
H.E. JAIME VICTOR B. LEDDA,  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons  
22 November 2018, The Hague**

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We join other delegations in wishing Your Excellency, Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, as the Chairperson for the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.

The Delegation of the Republic of the Philippines assures Your Excellency of its full support for the successful completion of the 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.

Allow me also to extend our expression of support to Director-General Fernando Arias and the members of the Technical Secretariat, who continue to work under the most challenging situations in order to ensure that the world remains free of the use and threat of use of chemical weapons, an objective that proves to be a daunting task in the face of the increasing threat of terrorist groups.

We also wish to join other delegations in thanking Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia for his excellent work as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference; Ambassador Jana Reinišová of the Czech Republic for facilitating the current Executive Council meetings this year; and Ambassador Yun-young Lee of the Republic of Korea for chairing the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

The Philippines strongly believes that international cooperation in the elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons remain a continuing urgent concern. The efforts of former Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü to widen the OPCW's reach by tapping regional groups, and in particular ASEAN, is commendable, as we explore wider and more inclusive cooperation to ensure our shared security. For these efforts, the Philippines also wishes to extend its appreciation to Director-General Üzümcü and his team.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Philippines takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions. We reiterate in this forum that the use of chemical

weapons anywhere and by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and must be condemned.

This is a core belief that the Philippines shares with the Members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the CWC and China. As such, we subscribe to the statement read by Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of Venezuela in behalf of NAM CWC and China.

Mr. Chairperson,

At a very practical level, the Philippines continues to benefit from capacity building programs organized and conducted by the OPCW. In 2017 alone, there were 26 Filipino experts who successfully completed training programs from the OPCW, and 9 in the first half of 2018. Since 2014 until the first half of 2018, the Philippines had fielded a total of 127 Filipino experts in various OPCW trainings and activities.

The expertise that the OPCW has generously shared with the Philippines supports the government's efforts, through the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC), which is the country's National Authority, 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 emphasize that the networks and linkages provided by trainings and other capacity-building activities conducted and funded by the OPCW allow Filipino experts from government, academic and non-government institutions to enhance their skills and knowledge that are hoped to 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.

As such, the Philippines supports and invests in a strong OPCW and to this end has conscientiously paid its assessed contributions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Philippines has closely followed the developments occurring in the OPCW. It is in this vein that we wish to express our concern in the issues raised about the 2019 Programme and Budget, a concern shared by many States Parties.

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 CWC States Parties, we have a shared objective of ensuring our collective security against chemical weapons in all its forms.

Because of the rapid pace of technology, the Philippines believes that instability in one part of the world will affect even those countries that are farthest from the source of

chemical weapons threats. As such, we call on all 193 States Parties to continue the work of the OPCW in a spirit of cooperative endeavor.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Philippines wishes to affirm its support to two issues that has been discussed in the OPCW. First, we support the increase in the representation of the Asia Group in the Executive Council. We wish to express our concern that such a big group as the Asia Group, composed of 56 States, is only allotted nine (9) seats in the Executive Council, where important issues and decisions are taken up, with 1 additional seat rotating between Asia and GRULAC. The Asia Group is the biggest group in the OPCW, but is allocated the same number of seats as the Africa Group—with 52 Member States and 9 EC seats, and less than the seats provided for the WEOG, which has 10 EC seats for 29 Member States. We believe that such a situation must be rectified. The increase in representation at the Executive Council will correctly reflect the realities of the diversity of challenges affecting Asia today and identify appropriate decisions and policies emanating from the OPCW in response to these challenges.

Second, the Philippines supports the recognition that toxic chemicals targeting the central nervous system (CNS) or so-called "incapacitating chemical agents" (ICAs) for law enforcement purposes are a serious threat to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We wish to inform the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference that the Philippines does not possess ICAs for law enforcement purposes. As such, the Philippines has co-sponsored the Joint Paper spearheaded by Australia and supported by a total of 39 countries. We call on other States Parties that had not done so to support this Joint Paper to ensure that threats on the use of ICAs, even for law enforcement purposes, are not allowed.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OPCW is on the brink of a new era of work. The Philippines believes that today, as never before, 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 endeavors and vice versa, and where challenges to state authority abound from groups and individuals with motives to destabilize legitimate governments. The Philippines wishes to look for the avenues for international and regional cooperation to respond to these challenges.

I request that this Statement be issued as an official document of the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.

Thank you.