

**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF H.E. JOSE EDUARDO MALAYA, III,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE
OPCW
AT THE 97TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE OPCW
6-9 July 2021**

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Firstly, I wish to welcome, H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. The Philippine Delegation gives its full support to the successful conduct of the 97th Session of the Council under Ambassador Bellouki's leadership.

I also reiterate my Delegation's full support for the work of the OPCW under the strong leadership of Director-General Fernando Arias and express appreciation for the dedication of the Technical Secretariat that has not wavered amidst the challenges that continue to be felt due to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As this is my first Executive Council Meeting, I also wish to assure all the Members of the Executive Council that the Philippines will continue to actively participate in the work of the Council to ensure that the collective decisions that emanate from this Body are based on objective and necessary information, as well as transparent, cooperative and open exchanges of perspectives. It is my hope that, together, we can continue to ensure that the twin goals of global disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will be achieved.

Mr. Chairperson,

Along with other disarmament and non-proliferation treaties that the country has signed, the Philippines believes that the CWC's vital role in the creation of international norms prohibiting weapons of mass destruction is the only effective way to ensure international and regional peace and security and as such, is key to the country's pursuit of growth and development.

Given this framework, the Philippines is supportive of the initiative to convene Executive Council Meetings or sessions in emergency situations to ensure business continuity in the work of the OPCW. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that, despite the challenges posed by situations that may limit how the usual work can be done, the Executive Council must continue to discharge its duties and responsibilities.

The Philippines commends the work of the various facilitation mechanisms, which has made dialogue with all States Parties more inclusive, more grass-roots and, despite the challenges, more accessible. We urge all States Parties to continue to cooperate and collaborate in these mechanisms of dialogue.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Philippines does not possess, produce nor use chemical weapons and chemicals that may be weaponized, even for law enforcement purposes. As such, we continue to pledge our support for the decision on the central-nervous system acting chemicals, as the Philippines believes that these kinds of chemicals cannot be compatible with the CWC.

Mr. Chairperson,

The abundance of chemicals due to advances in science and technology holds much promise to developing countries such as the Philippines, which has a growing chemical industry. Along with the promise of growth and development, the challenges posed to peace, security and safety by chemicals that may be weaponized and used indiscriminately by anyone and anywhere is a real risk that no country can afford.

The Philippines condemns the use of weapons of mass destruction by any individual, group or country in order to advance an ideology, implement a policy, or undertake a government objective. There can be no noble reason for such deplorable action, which strikes against the very heart of humanity.

I request that this statement be made an official document of the 97th Session of the Executive Council and be posted in the website.

Maraming salamat.