

**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF H.E. JOSE EDUARDO MALAYA III,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
TO THE OPCW,
AT THE 99TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
8-11 March 2022**

Madame Chairperson
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates and Friends

We join other delegations in welcoming H.E. Ambassador Eniola Olaitan Ajayi as the Chairperson of the Executive Council, and assure her of the Philippine delegation's full support in her stewardship of the 99th Session of the Executive Council.

We also thank Director-General Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat for their hard work and dedication since the last session of the Executive Council amidst the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Allow us also to convey our appreciation to the Members of the Executive Council for their sustained efforts to achieve consensus on issues of urgent concerns despite attendant challenges.

Though this is our last Executive Council meeting, my delegation and I take this opportunity to assure the Council that the Philippines will remain actively engaged as a State Party and as Coordinator of the Asia Group in our collective endeavor to make our world safe and free from the horrors of chemical weapons and to ensure that all countries reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Madame Chairperson,

We are gathered at turbulent times of unprecedented challenges to the world community. While still addressing the global health crisis which is now on its second year, the security landscape has dramatically shifted. We here in The Hague, the international city dedicated to peace and justice, cannot help but wonder if the U.N. system and international law have failed us in this latest, most grave of threats to peace.

A week ago, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. called on the international community *"to reaffirm by more than words its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes,"* along the lines of the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes which provides the legal framework for recourse to diplomacy, dialogue and rule of law.

Moreover, as we monitor the recent grim developments, we also need to remain vigilant and ensure that civilians are unharmed and protected, and international humanitarian law observed. We should further ensure that no chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are ever used.

While the mechanisms and institutions for international peace and security require rebuilding, all nations need to look back, reexamine and rededicate ourselves to the ideals of the U.N. Charter, notably the cornerstone principles of no threat or use of force and the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

In the context of this session, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have full faith in the letter and spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its implementation and we also believe in strong regulatory institutions that fulfill the mandate of the OPCW, as these are crucial to peace, security and development.

As a developing country with a substantial number of its citizens working and residing overseas, the Philippines is deeply conscious of the crucial importance of cooperation on the global and regional level on matters that can only be effectively addressed through collaborative efforts.

Given this framework, the Philippines supports the initiative to enable Executive Council meeting or session to take place in emergency situations to ensure 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 be able to continue to discharge its duties and responsibilities. We also support other initiatives that are meant to ensure that the OPCW will have the resources and qualified staff to effectively discharge its mandate.

Madame Chairperson,

As current events have reminded us, peace is fragile, and the tranquility and the normal joyful lives of people can be lost at an instant.

Thus, as we undertake our deliberations at this session, let us keep in mind what brought us together as signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention and other disarmament treaties, and work earnestly to realize the noble aspiration best expressed by the Greek Aeschylus -- to "tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world."

I request that this statement be made an official document of the 99th Session of the Executive Council and be posted in the OPCW website.

Thank you. Maraming salamat.