

STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

13th Session of the Conference of States Parties (CSP-13)

By H.E. Ambassador Romeo A. Arguelles

Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines
to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
The Hague, 3 December 2008

MR. CHAIRMAN,

FIRST AND FOREMOST, CONGRATULATIONS AMBASSADOR SHIBUYA, ON HIS ELECTION AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THIS YEAR'S SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES. AMBASSADOR SHIBUYA'S DIPLOMATIC SKILLS AND LONG YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WILL ASSURE US OF A SUCCESSFUL MEETING. I WISH TO ASSURE THE CHAIR OF THE FULL COOPERATION OF MY DELEGATION IN REACHING A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THIS CONFERENCE.

MY DELEGATION'S CONGRATULATIONS ALSO GO TO AMBASSADOR ABUELGASIM ABDELWAHID SHIEKH IDRIS OF SUDAN FOR HIS EXCELLENT AND VERY ABLE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EXTEND MY DEEPEST APPRECIATION AND CONGRATULATIONS TO AMBASSADOR OKSANA TOMOVA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SLOVAKIA TO THE OPCW, AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, FOR HER DEDICATED WORK IN GUIDING US THROUGH IMPORTANT CORE ISSUES OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION.

AS THE FORMER CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I UNDERSTAND THE RIGORS THAT AMBASSADOR TOMOVA MAY HAVE

GONE THROUGH AND I TRULY COMMEND HER FOR HER VERY ABLE LEADERSHIP.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

MY DELEGATION LAUDS THE CONTINUOUS HARD WORK OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, AMBASSADOR ROGELIO PFIRTER, FOR ENSURING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF, AND UNIVERSAL ADHERENCE TO, THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION.

MY DELEGATION ALSO WISHES TO EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION FOR HIS INCESSANT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE WORK OF THE OPCW AND CWC IN VARIOUS REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORA.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

MY DELEGATION IS ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE WITH A RENEWED ENTHUSIASM IN ENGAGING THE OPCW IN OUR NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS.

I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THAT WITH ME, AS PART OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION, ARE HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR). THE DENR IS THE INCOMING CWC NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES. IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS, TO DATE, SERVED AS THE PHILIPPINE CWC NATIONAL AUTHORITY, IN AN *AD HOC* CAPACITY.

IT IS ENVISIONED THAT RIGHT AFTER THIS CONFERENCE, THE NECESSARY STEPS TO FORMALLY TURN OVER THE CWC-NA TO THE DENR WILL IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE.

IT MAY BE RECALLED THAT OUR DRAFT NATIONAL CWC IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION WAS SUBMITTED TO THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS TWO YEARS AGO, WHILE WE HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THE CONCERN THAT SOME COUNTRIES, INCLUDING OURS, HAVE YET TO ENACT AN IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION, ALLOW ME TO ASSURE YOU THAT THE COMMITMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES REMAINS STEADFAST.

THE PHILIPPINES WILL SOON RE-VISIT ITS DRAFT NATIONAL LEGISLATION WITH THE AIM OF REFINING IT AND SECURING ITS PASSAGE IN CONGRESS. IN THESE RENEWED EFFORTS, WE MAY SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF AMBASSADOR SANTIAGO OÑATE LABORDE, THE OPCW LEGAL ADVISER, AND HIS TEAM, NOT ONLY IN FINALIZING THE TEXT OF OUR DRAFT LEGISLATION BUT ALSO IN BRIEFING OUR LAWMAKERS. WE WILL FURTHER COORDINATE WITH THE OPCW IN THIS REGARD.

WE ALSO TAKE NOTE OF THE EU REPRESENTATION ON THIS MATTER. WE APPRECIATE THE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE OF THE EU AND WILL BEAR IT IN OUR MINDS AS WE IDENTIFY OUR SPECIFIC AREAS OF NEED.

AT THIS JUNCTURE, ALLOW ME TO RECALL, WITH GRATITUDE, THE ASSISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN IN AN INDUSTRY-OUTREACH SEMINAR HELD IN MANILA LAST YEAR. IT WAS A WELL-ATTENDED SEMINAR, WITH THE PHILIPPINE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY PLAYERS WELL REPRESENTED. MANY OF OUR CURRENT EFFORTS STEM FROM THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS SEMINAR.

MY DELEGATION ALSO WISHES TO COMMEND THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH FOR ITS HOSTING OF THE SIXTH ASIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING ON 4-6 NOVEMBER. SUCH REGIONAL MEETINGS HAVE ALWAYS PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN FURTHER ENLIGHTENING RELEVANT OFFICIALS OF OUR COUNTRY AND THE REGION WE ARE IN ON THE STIPULATIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE CWC.

FURTHER, MY DELEGATION IS OPTIMISTIC THAT OUR MEETING, WITHIN THIS WEEK, WITH AMBASSADOR KALIMI MUGAMBI MWORIA, DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE BRANCH, WILL AID US IN MUTUALLY IDENTIFYING AREAS OF COOPERATION, SUITABLE FOR THE PHILIPPINES.

INDEED, WE HOPE TO COME BACK TO THIS SAME FORUM NEXT YEAR WITH SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO REPORT.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE PHILIPPINES CALLS FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL CHEMICAL WEAPONS BY POSSESSOR STATES PARTIES AND REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF ALL TYPES OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, IN LINE WITH THE FIRST PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPH OF THE CONVENTION.

MY DELEGATION JOINS IN THE EXPRESSION OF CONCERN THAT MAJOR POSSESSORS ARE FALLING BEHIND THEIR DESTRUCTION DEADLINES, WHILE WE DO NOT DOUBT THE COMMITMENT OF ANY CWC STATE PARTY, WE URGE POSSESSOR STATES TO ADHERE TO THE DEADLINE SET FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

MY DELEGATION WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS SATISFACTION THAT 184 NATIONS, OR 98% OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION, HAVE NOW JOINED THE OPCW.

THIS DELEGATION WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND ITS CONGRATULATIONS AND WARM WELCOME TO THE STATES OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU FOR ACCEDING TO THE CONVENTION THIS YEAR.

THIS DELEGATION ALSO CONGRATULATES LEBANON BY DEPOSITING ITS INSTRUMENT OF ACCESSION TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC) THIS YEAR.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CONVENTION IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE CONVENTION AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY.

IN THIS REGARD, MY DELEGATION CONGRATULATES THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT FOR ITS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CONVENTION AND WE URGE IT TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TOWARDS THIS END.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

BEFORE I CONCLUDE, ALLOW ME TO RECALL THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE WHILE ALSO RECALLING A PROCEDURAL CONCERN THAT THE PHILIPPINES RAISED IN ITS STATEMENT DURING THE REVIEW CONFERENCE (REFERENCE: RC-2/NAT.21 DATED 18 APRIL 2008).

THIS DELEGATION ADHERES TO THE BASIC UNIVERSALLY-ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE THAT MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, OR NEGOTIATIONS AMONG STATES PARTIES SHOULD REMAIN “OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE.”

WE SHALL WORK TOWARDS THE SUCCESS OF THIS CONFERENCE, GUIDED BY THOSE BASIC WORKING PRINCIPLES AND WE CALL ON THIS CONFERENCE TO ADHERE TO THESE PRINCIPLES IN THE DELIBERATION OF ITS AGENDA.

FINALLY, MR. CHAIRMAN,

BE ASSURED THAT YOU HAVE MY DELEGATION’S AND MY COUNTRY’S SUPPORT. TOGETHER, WE WILL WORK TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL CSP-13.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.