

**Statement of the
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
at the 22nd Session of the Conference of States Parties
delivered by
H.E. JAIME VICTOR B. LEDDA
Permanent Representative
to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
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Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The delegation of the Republic of the Philippines warmly congratulates Your Excellency, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco, as the Chairperson of the Twenty Second Session of the Conference of States Parties. We express our full confidence in Your Excellency's leadership to bring this year's proceedings to its successful conclusion and outcome.

Allow me to extend our sincerest thanks to Ambassador Dr. Cristoph Israng of Germany for his outstanding role as Chairman of last year's session of the Conference of States Parties.

We are also very pleased to acknowledge the different Vice Chairs and committee officials who have been designated by the States Parties for ensuring the smooth conduct of our meetings.

The Philippine delegation wishes to express as well its highest regard to the Director General, His Excellency Ahmet Uzumcu, and the officers and personnel of the OPCW Technical Secretariat for their invaluable work and dedicated efforts towards the full implementation of the Convention and the promotion of a world free from chemical weapons.

We also commend the respective experts of the Scientific Advisory Board and the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, the Open-Ended Working Groups on Future Priorities and on Terrorism and Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors and their respective chairpersons for their admirable drive in coordinating participation, facilitating discussions and channeling constructive results from these committees.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm the Philippines' commitment to the objectives of the CWC for its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation. We express concern over the existence and use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, because of the grave threat they pose to international peace and security.

The Philippines urges States who have yet to sign or ratify the Convention to do so without delay as universality is crucial to its success. The Philippine delegation also joins the call for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and appreciates

the serious work undertaken by all States Parties, the OPCW Technical Secretariat and other stakeholders, moving together to achieve these goals.

The Philippine delegation congratulates the Russian Federation on its complete destruction of all declared chemical weapon stockpiles as verified by the OPCW.

The Philippine delegation likewise declares that the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the CWC, legal norms and practice of the international community.

The Philippines thus subscribes to the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement CWC Member States and China as delivered by Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of Venezuela. We thank Her Excellency very much for the incredible attention that the NAM Chair has undertaken for this purpose.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Philippines remains committed to the implementation of the Convention and the work of the OPCW. Through the Philippine National Authority, the Anti-Terrorism Council of the Office of the President, it is now up to date in its obligations of annual declarations of Schedule 3 chemicals pursuant to Article VI of the Convention. It has also resolved the transfer discrepancies for 2014 to 2015.

The Philippine delegation wishes to reassure that it continues to actively work for the enactment of domestic laws for the implementation of the CWC. Representatives from my country have recently participated in the Stakeholder Forum for States parties in Asia on the adoption of national implementing legislation.

I would like to personally acknowledge Atty. Manalastas, Officer-in-Charge of the Anti-Terrorism Council, Program Management Center and Head of the Secretariat of the Philippine National Authority for his deliberate efforts and notable strides regarding the Philippines' involvement in the OPCW.

The Philippines continues to build its capability to respond to any chemical attack by establishing additional CBRN units, training of personnel and providing the necessary equipment. In this connection, the Philippine National Authority is coordinating with the OPCW regarding the country's hosting of a Chemical First Responders Course next year.

The Philippine National Authority continues to actively collaborate with other government agencies, academe and the chemical industry. Several Filipino professionals from relevant fields have participated in courses organized by the OPCW. The Philippine delegation cannot overemphasize the importance of these capacity-building programs that will enable the country to develop that state of readiness to take action promptly and to provide the required assistance when faced with the threat or the actual use of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

In 2017, the Philippines had the honor and privilege to be the Chair of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Nations, on its 50th anniversary, with the theme “Partnering for Change, Engaging the World,” with peace and stability in the region and ASEAN: a model for regionalism, a global player, among its priorities. In its capacity as Chair, the Philippines, together with other ASEAN members, have taken steps to underscore the Convention’s significance, the important role and contribution of the OPCW to international peace and stability and the need for greater awareness for chemical safety and security in the region.

In this regard, the Philippine delegation is pleased to cite the ASEAN Statement commemorating the 20th anniversary of the OPCW which this representation was able to initiate with my colleagues in the ASEAN Committee in The Hague.

I am also pleased to mention that, earlier this month in Manila, the East Asia Summit Leaders issued a Statement on Chemical Weapons during the 12th East Asia Summit Leaders Meeting acting on a resolution proposed by the United States of America. In that resolution, the leaders from ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States of America reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of destruction and non-proliferation of chemical weapons, the assistance and protection of states threatened by the use of these toxic weapons and the pursuit of chemistry for peaceful purposes. The commitment expressed by these leaders reflect the increasing relevance and recognition of this issue in a world endangered by the threat of lawless, terrorist groups and individuals who may use chemical weapons for their despicable aims.

The Philippine delegation sincerely appreciates the references made by Director General Uzumcu to these statements by ASEAN and the East Asia Summit Leaders in his remarks delivered on the occasions of the OPCW anniversary last April and the 22nd Session of the Conference of States Parties. We are indeed encouraged by the visits of the Director General to Southeast Asia, his meeting with the Permanent Representatives of ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners in Jakarta and his continuing engagement with the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Committee in The Hague. These initiatives will definitely lead towards promoting networks and cooperation, to further improving regional capacity against chemical weapons in Southeast Asia and to establishing stronger links between ASEAN and OPCW. The Philippine delegation is thus very hopeful for the growth of these relations and I want to thank Director General Uzumcu for his personal involvement in these efforts.

The Philippine delegation is optimistic for the future of ASEAN and OPCW relations and we look forward to enhancing these relations with the incoming Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain whom we warmly congratulate for his election.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, we respectfully submit this Statement as an official document of this Conference and kindly request its posting in the external website of the OPCW.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.