



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Eighteenth Session
2 – 5 December 2013

C-18/NAT.18
3 December 2013
ENGLISH only

PHILIPPINES

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JAIME VICTOR B. LEDDA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE OPCW AT THE
EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

My delegation wishes to join the other States Parties in congratulating Ambassador Dr Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali of Iraq on his election as Chairperson of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Ambassador Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, you have our full support in ensuring the success of this year's Conference.

Please allow me to extend my delegation's congratulations and appreciation to outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Peter Goosen of South Africa, for his outstanding work as Chairman of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Our congratulations also go out to the newly-elected Vice- Chairpersons of the Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 in recognition of the relevance of the Organisation in these sensitive times as it painstakingly works to achieve complete disarmament of chemical weapons.

The Philippines congratulates Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü and the personnel of the Technical Secretariat for doing a commendable job in meeting the goals that the Chemical Weapons Convention has set out to achieve.

My delegation would also like to congratulate Director-General Üzümcü on his re-election for a second term. Director-General Üzümcü has guided the Organisation through many challenging times. The successes that the Organisation has achieved, particularly in 2013, are attributable to the excellent leadership and diplomatic skills of Director-General Üzümcü.

A crucial step towards reaching the goal of complete destruction of chemical weapons is achieving universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Philippines warmly welcomes the new members to the Convention, the Republic of Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, whose membership has brought an increase in the total number of States Parties to the Convention to 190 States.



The Philippines associates itself with the statement of His Excellency S.A. Araghchi, Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Convention and China.

My delegation joins the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties and China in urging States, which are not members of the Convention, to join at the earliest time possible. My delegation supports the diplomatic initiatives being undertaken by the OPCW towards obtaining the membership of those States which are not States Parties to the Convention.

The Philippines, together with the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties and China, also note that some States Parties are still in the process of achieving complete destruction of their chemical weapons far beyond the final extended deadline of complete destruction of 29 April 2012.

My delegation calls on these possessor States to complete the destruction of their chemical weapons in the shortest time possible. The delay brought about by non-compliance with the final extended deadline undermines the integrity of the Convention.

The Philippines further notes that the continuing presence of chemical weapons, in whatever region of the world, poses a grave threat to international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that we, as States Parties to the Convention, should enhance our efforts to complete chemical weapons disarmament.

At this juncture, my delegation would like to commend the efforts being undertaken by the current Executive Council Chairman, His Excellency Olexander Horin, Ambassador of Ukraine, following the work of his predecessors, Her Excellency Bhaswati Mukherjee, former Ambassador of India, and His Excellency Peter Goosen, Ambassador of South Africa, in guiding the Executive Council through the most difficult period that the Convention has ever faced since it came into force 16 years ago.

The challenge of non-compliance with the final extended deadline by some possessor States, as well as the challenge of responsiveness to the calls of the international community for chemical weapons disarmament in a sensitive region of the world where innocent lives were affected by the presence of these chemical weapons, were met head on and resolved and continue to be resolved through the competence of the Executive Council guided by the diplomatic skills of its Chairpersons.

The Philippines would also like to commend the special meetings being conducted by the Executive Council to address the concerns of Syria as a new member of the Convention. My delegation wishes to emphasise the importance of adopting decisions that are in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

My delegation notes that the timelines which have been set for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons are ambitious, but this should not warrant the adoption of measures that are not in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

The Philippines remains firm in its commitment to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. My delegation would like to thank the OPCW for sponsoring capacity-building training to our National Authority personnel and for conducting a technical assistance visit in August of this year.

The Anti-Terrorism Council of the Office of the President, as the Philippine National Authority, is actively engaged in activities related to Philippine obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In the area of national implementation I am pleased to inform the Conference that the Philippine National Authority is working on the passage of the Chemical Weapons Prohibition Act which was filed on 2 September 2013 in the Upper and Lower Houses of the Philippine Congress. The members of congress who were sponsors of the draft legislation met with representatives from the Technical Secretariat during their visit to Manila on 15 and 16 August 2013.

Although a legislative framework is still not in place, the Philippine National Authority continues to actively engage other government agencies and the private sector in gathering information which will be the source for submission of its annual declarations. In this regard, a partial declaration on Schedule 1 Chemicals is being prepared by the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and National Resources. With respect to importation of chemicals, the Bureau of Customs has been able to compile an initial list of companies that are importing chemicals which are included in the Schedule List of Chemicals under the Convention. These import companies have given information voluntarily through the encouragement of the Program Management Center, which is the Secretariat of the Philippine National Authority.

With respect to outreach programmes, the Philippine National Authority is conducting a workshop on chemical safety and security training for various stakeholders in the chemical industry from 3 to 6 December 2013. The workshop is being sponsored by the United States Department of State and Sandia National Laboratories.

My delegation would like to reassure the Conference that the Philippines remains steadfast in its commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention. All initiatives are being made by this Representation, together with the Philippine National Authority, to bolster this commitment.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation to the Organisation and its personnel for their expression of solidarity with the Philippines, especially for the victims of typhoon Haiyan.

Mr. Chairman,

Once again, the Philippines wishes to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Conference, and would like to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to ensuring the success of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties.

I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Conference.

Thank you.

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