

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

**Delivered by Col. Jose Embang Jr.,
CBRN National Focal Point and Philippine Representative
during the General Debate of the
Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of
Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction
7 November 2016, Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Philippines conveys its congratulations on your well-deserved election as the President of the 8th Review Conference, and its appreciation for the extensive preparations and inter-session activities leading to this Conference. The Philippines also takes this opportunity to express its support for your Presidency.

The Philippines associates itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) delivered by Venezuela, the statement of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction delivered by Japan, and the statement of ASEAN to be delivered by the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Forty-one years after its entry into force in 1975, the Convention remains highly-relevant as the first treaty to effectively prohibit an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, and as an important pillar of the global architecture against weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, the Philippines notes the progress made on promoting the Convention since the 7th Review Conference. We recognize efforts to pursue the universalization of the Convention. Since 2011, ten (10) States have joined the Convention, increasing the number of State Parties from 165 to 177. We welcome the record number of CBM (Confidence Building Measure) notifications registered in 2015, and take the view that while this is important in appreciating the norms-building mandate of the Convention, we should continue to build on CBMs to further develop compliance mechanisms under the Convention. We appreciate the work of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in the monitoring of our collective efforts and the invaluable contributions of scholars and scientists to the inter-session process. We appreciate the role of the Sponsorship Program in enabling developing countries to participate in the various meetings. We join other State Parties in

calling for the full development of the database system which had been initialized for the purpose of facilitating cooperation and assistance.

The Philippines attaches great importance to strengthening the implementation of the Convention, in the context of our strong national position on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

The Philippine government has been actively engaged in advancing the biosecurity and biosafety cooperation agenda in the Asia Pacific region with its international partners. The Philippines is now an active member of the Nuclear Security Summit, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Proliferation Security Initiative, and the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Other Materials of Mass Destruction. This web of partnerships synergizes its national implementation of the Convention as well as bilateral and regional engagements on CBRN issues.

In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in particular the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Philippines has co-chaired since 2009, with the United States and Australia, workshops on the themes of bio-threat reduction, bio-risk management, disease surveillance, detection, preparedness and response. Since 2013, the Philippines has served as the host of the EU CBRN Center of Excellence in Southeast Asia.

The Philippines' National CBRN Action Plan uses a unified approach to build the capacity of the country to counter act the risks associated with CBRN materials, whether these are of natural, accidental or intentional/criminal origin. It establishes priority actions for enhancing capabilities to predict, prevent, prepare for, and perform mitigating activities on CBRN incidents and disasters and to conduct post-action activities. In this context, the government has implemented a package of administrative measures to support the strategic framework for policy and operational coordination among relevant agencies and stakeholders.

Based on our national experience, the Philippines is of the view that we should endeavor to foster closer collaboration and synergy between and among international organisations such as INTERPOL, World Customs Organization, World Health Organization (WHO), World Organization for Animal Health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as biosecurity and biosafety are cross-cutting issues that necessitate a holistic and coordinated response.

To conclude, Mr. President, the Philippines wishes to reiterate that it is fully committed to support all efforts to implement the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner, and to ensure the success of this Conference. END