

STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Philippine Delegation, I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the 71st session of the First Committee, and assure you and the Bureau of our active and constructive engagement as we work together towards realizing our shared goal of achieving international peace and security.

As we begin the work ahead of us at the First Committee, the Philippines continues to be guided by its clear and principled position articulated almost seven decades ago, at the birth of this esteemed institution, by UN General Assembly President Carlos P Romulo when he pressed Member States that a comprehensive agreement on nuclear disarmament could, and should, be reached through the United Nations.

Since that time, the world has put in place many instruments and platforms that serve as stepping stones towards this goal -- the CoD, the SSOD, the NPT, the establishment of nuclear weapons-free zones in some parts of the world, the CTBT, the IAEA.

These instruments and platforms allow us to articulate and crystallize the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the threats that existing nuclear weapons arsenals pose to the very existence of the human race, the overwhelming sentiment by the international community to achieve a global zero, and the roadblocks that remain in the path towards that goal.

In all of this, the same message is reasserted: nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons are the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of nuclear weapons.

The Philippines shares in the deep disappointment over the lack of progress at the nuclear disarmament negotiating table in recent years, and the unwillingness of nuclear weapons states to work to fill the gaps, address the weaknesses, and pursue complementarities -- issues that, when finally addressed by said states, will render, once and for all, the existing global nuclear disarmament architecture effective.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite these setbacks, the Philippines remains hopeful that we can achieve the goal of a nuclear-free world.

Toward this end, we reaffirm our commitment to do our part in working with the international community to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda.

On this note, the Philippines aligns itself with the commitments of ASEAN, articulated yesterday by my esteemed colleague from Myanmar, to actively participate in the work of the First Committee, including on preparations for the next NPT review cycle, the proposed conference to negotiate a nuclear ban treaty, and the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Philippines, along with ASEAN, will stand resolute in preserving our region free from nuclear weapons and from all other weapons of mass destruction. We will forge ahead with our talks with the nuclear weapons states to resolve all outstanding issues relating to their signing and ratifying the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty.

We also encourage the full support of all Member States, particularly the Nuclear Weapon States, for the ASEAN-sponsored UN General Assembly Resolution on the SEANWFZ Treaty in this session. We look forward to the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on the SEANWFZ Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Last week, the Philippines co-organized with the missions of Morocco and Georgia, in our capacity as members of the Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance, and in cooperation with UNICRI, a high-level side event titled "CBRN Risk Mitigation in the Context of Combatting Terrorism."

This side event was a manifestation of my country's commitment to advancing the work of promoting awareness about the threats to international peace and security posed by the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons, and capacitating states to counter these threats, especially against possible attacks by terrorists and extremists, and in the face of technological advances.

Through the platforms provided by the BWC, the CWC, the NPT and UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and by means of inclusive dialogue and cooperation between governments and stakeholders, the Philippines will continue to contribute to international efforts to fill in the gaps in the existing frameworks, in particular in addressing the role of non-state actors.

Mr. Chairman,

Our work here at the First Committee is a critical element in the grand design of inclusive growth as captured in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. These goals will only be achieved if we redirect much needed resources from manufacturing deadly weapons to efforts that will support and ensure the dignity of the person. More importantly, our SDGs will become a reality only in a world that is safe from the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that can wipe away the very existence of the human race.

Thank you.

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