

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

**BY H.E. MARIA CLEOFE R. NATIVIDAD
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General Debate

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Madam President,

1. I congratulate you on your election as President of this Conference. My delegation lends its full support to you, the members of your Bureau, and the Secretariat.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

2. The Philippines mourns the passing of Director General Yukiya Amano – a distinguished leader, a dedicated civil servant, and a dear friend of the Philippines. My sympathies are with his family and loved ones.
3. “Atoms for Peace and Development”- the late DG’s battle cry – guided the Agency in words and in action. Through this, the IAEA has bridged scientists and government policy makers towards the pursuit of the common good. It is “science diplomacy” at its truest – an enduring legacy of DG Amano.
4. The IAEA is the only nuclear watchdog of the world – providing service with utmost professionalism in monitoring commitments to global nuclear nonproliferation.
5. We commend the Agency for its independent safeguards verification and monitoring activities in Iran under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We join the resounding call of the community of nations for the JCPOA’s preservation. We support the remaining parties in the agreement’s full and effective implementation.
6. The IAEA can play an essential role in verifying the nuclear activities of the DPRK when a political agreement is reached. We acknowledge the expressed readiness of the Agency in this regard. Only through continued peaceful dialogue could we realize lasting peace and stability in a Korean Peninsula that is denuclearized completely, verifiably, and irreversibly.

Madam President,

7. The Agency has a statutory function to “encourage and assist research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses.” The Technical Cooperation Programme is the major vehicle through which the developing world benefits from this function.
8. The Country Programme Framework of the Philippines provides continued guidance in pursuing technology transfer and technical cooperation with the Agency, in support of our national development goals.
9. Here are a few milestones:
 - a. The Philippines has successfully moved towards the commercial adoption of the Carrageenan Plant Growth Promoter – the result of research using irradiation by scientists at the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute. This product increases rice and corn yield by an average of 20%. I invite all of you to visit the Philippine Booth and learn more about this revolutionary product.
 - b. Our water managers have already integrated isotope hydrology in water resource programs in the Philippines – a country that is vulnerable both to drought and to risks associated with ground water contamination due to typhoons.
 - c. The Philippines received the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) Mission in December 2018.
 - d. Expansion of commercial gamma irradiation facilities in the Philippines is making great strides. Once complete, these could accommodate the increasing demand for such services by the agricultural sector. In the near future, Vienna and hopefully the whole of Europe, would get to taste fresh, not just dried, Philippine mangoes.
 - e. Our work with the IAEA is unrelenting towards making nuclear medicine closer to poor Filipino cancer patients. The Philippines has commenced the development of a research agenda on nuclear medicine. Towards this end, the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute has embarked in establishing its first cyclotron facility.
10. The Philippines supports the implementation of IAEA regional projects towards contributing to Member States’ sustainable capacities. In 2018, the Philippines hosted seven (7) IAEA regional meetings and workshops. We also hosted 53 fellows and scientific visitors. Further, we continue to be a proud Collaborating Center for Harmful Algal Bloom Studies to improve seafood safety in developing island nations.
11. We participate actively in the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Asia, the Asian Nuclear Safety Network, and the Asian Network for Education in Nuclear Technology.

Madam President,

12. Nuclear innovations remain valuable as Member States seek science-based solutions to common problems. We have seen the increasing demands by Member States for the IAEA's Technical Cooperation projects. In this regard, the Technical Cooperation Fund should have sufficient, assured, and predictable resources. Balance should be struck in the allocation for the promotional and non-promotional activities of the Agency.
13. We congratulate Costa Rica and Japan, as Co-Chairs, the rest of Member States and the Secretariat for the successful Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology held last November 2018 in Vienna. We hope that a follow-up Conference could be held in 2023.

Madam President,

14. The Philippines welcomes the theme of this year's Scientific Forum: "A Decade of Action on Cancer Control and the Way Forward." Improvements in nuclear medicine should be harnessed to address the alarming rise of cancer incidence globally – with the burden most felt by low- and middle-income countries. Access by the poor to cancer control should be the priority. Strengthening the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) is necessary towards meeting the needs of Member States.
15. Dengue is the world's most common mosquito-borne disease - over half of world's entire population is at risk. This is an urgent public health concern that requires innovative solutions. We call upon the Agency to strengthen its activities to refine and validate the use of Sterile Insect Technique for the eradication of dengue-transmitting mosquitoes.
16. The Philippines supports gender equality and gender balance. We look forward to initiatives within the Agency to promote gender mainstreaming in its activities, and help ensure gender parity in the Secretariat, particularly at its leadership positions. We also support the promotion of equitable geographical representation in the Secretariat.

Madam President,

17. It is an understatement to say that the work of the Agency is relevant now more than ever. Member States should continue cooperative work, guided by the "Vienna spirit," towards ensuring that the IAEA fulfills its mandate to enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace and development.
18. Thank you.