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**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**



**NATIONAL STATEMENT**

**International Conference on Nuclear Security 2024: Shaping the Future**

Plenary Conference Hall, M Building Vienna International Center Vienna, Austria

20-24 May 2024

**Hon. Teodoro M. Gatchalian, Ph.D.**

Undersecretary, Department of Science and Technology

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Co-Presidents:

His Excellency Tim Watts, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia,

His Excellency Sungat Yessimkhanov, Vice Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan,

His Excellency Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),

1. I express the Philippine Delegation's appreciation for all your teams' efforts in preparation for this Conference. I also extend our thanks to the IAEA for its work in promoting nuclear security during the past four years. Please be assured of our delegation's full support for this Conference as we act to shape the future of nuclear security.

2. Our delegation aligns itself with the Joint Statement delivered by the Co-Presidents of this Conference. We would like to deliver the following in our national capacity:

3. The Philippines is pleased to be among the thirteen (13) countries since ICONS 2020 to have ratified the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). The past four years have seen the creation of our country's Nuclear Energy Programme Interagency Committee, the adoption of a National Position on Nuclear Energy, signing a key civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States, and the ongoing crafting of a comprehensive nuclear law and roadmap for nuclear energy. The Philippines is preparing itself for the next stage of the Milestones Approach.

4. Throughout our growing engagement with nuclear energy, the IAEA expertise has been indispensable. We thank the IAEA for its technical assistance to ensure that our laws and programmes align with international standards, particularly through the Legislative Mission conducted in 2023, the upcoming Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review this year, the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP) Program and the Nuclear Security Series. We also had the privilege to host key capacity-building activities such as last year's Regional Workshop on Establishing and Operating a National Nuclear Security Support Center. As a nation embarking on nuclear energy, the Philippines aims to learn from and apply these valuable resources to ensure that our nuclear programme is safe and secure.

5. While our archipelagic nation has a relatively small amount of nuclear material, and despite challenges in border security and trade, we reaffirm our commitment to observe the highest standards of nuclear security of all nuclear and other radioactive material in our territory. This commitment stems from the principle that "the responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State." We place great importance on our role in ensuring that the world is secure from threats that may emanate from nuclear technology falling into unintended end-users and used for unintended end-use. We thus emphasize the importance of nuclear security and its role in contributing to the three co-equal and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: (1) nuclear disarmament, (2) non-proliferation, and (3) the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

These pillars are the foundation of the shared commitment of Nuclear Weapons States and Non-Nuclear Weapons States in our collective efforts toward a near future without nuclear weapons—or we may not have any future to speak of at all.

6. Mitigating the risk of nuclear proliferation and terrorism remains a critical priority for us in our region, Southeast Asia. Issues of transnational crime often necessitate strengthened border security, including trade-related activities, and coordinated action among regional partners. The Philippines believes that cultivating a robust nuclear security culture reinforces the implementation of the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ). We remain wholly committed to strengthening nuclear security in cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other relevant regional fora.

7. As a developing country, we strongly echo the belief that nuclear security measures should never hamper national development and international cooperation in advancing the peaceful applications of nuclear energy—an inalienable right of States, especially those that need it most. The Philippines, for its part, is taking an active role in the application of nuclear technology in plastics recycling, health, agriculture, food security, industry, and education. We strive to ensure that nuclear energy's benefits are equally felt by all, especially women and the youth. This is why we are set to host the first International Nuclear Science Olympiad for secondary students this July. Furthermore, the Philippines, through its Department of Science and Technology is proud to present the following papers to the Conference, (1) "Achieving Gender Parity in a State's Nuclear Security Regime: A Case Study of the Philippines" and (2) "Assessing Progress Towards Compliance On The Implementation Of The A/CPPNM In The Philippine's Nuclear Security Regime For Nuclear Material And Nuclear Facilities Using The Oak Ridge Research National Laboratory (ORNL) Self-assessment Tool". It is our strong belief that initiatives like these implant the idea of nuclear security in the next generation of leaders that will carry our work forward.

8. In this same spirit, Co-Presidents, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, and Dear Colleagues, I encourage us all to devote ourselves to a forward-looking approach to shaping the future of nuclear security as a global community.

Thank you.