

Philippine Statement

Minister Jesus S. Domingo
2009 BTWC Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 24 August 2009

The Philippine Delegation would like to thank our Chairman, Ambassador Marius Grinius and the BTWC Implementation Support Unit for the organization of the 2009 Meeting of Experts, and to the States Parties and Organizations which have provided assistance to the Meeting and its delegations. This year's theme, which highlights Article X of the BTWC and international cooperation in biological science, disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment, is indeed a timely and vital one. Indeed, our Delegation fully shares the concerns of the global community over current world disease challenges and threats, and urges the disarmament community, through the BTWC Process, to play its part in defending humanity from this insidious danger. Our delegation subscribes to the statement and document issued by the Delegation of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties, and urges the BWTC Community to develop an effective mechanism for the implementation of Article X.

Our annual Expert Meeting is an unparalleled opportunity to be updated on the latest developments in the BTWC Community, to network and to share cooperation opportunities. We are grateful to the ISU and the Governments of Indonesia, Norway, Great Britain, Canada and Japan for their activities and making available in advance their background and working papers on the UNOG website. Our delegation is particularly appreciative of the efforts of Indonesia who in collaboration with Norway recently organized a workshop on the BTWC and Global Health, and of the cooperation of the ISU and World Health Organization in holding a workshop on Article X and International Health Regulations last Friday. We also look forward to tomorrow's launch of the European Union's BTWC Joint Action Program under the Swedish Presidency.

Just briefly, the Philippine Delegation would like to update the body on recent national and regional developments with regard to the promotion of the BTWC. Last May, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and VERTIC jointly held a Legal Seminar on the Drafting of a National Implementing BWTC Law for the Philippines in Manila, which brought together all key government stakeholders. We were able to come up with a draft law, and are hopeful that this will be passed by our National Congress in its coming sessions. Our delegation would like to thank VERTIC for its support, and look forward to close and continuing collaboration for the passage and implementation of our BTWC law and the related Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) Law.

The recently-organized Philippine Biosafety & Biosecurity Association (PhBBA) led the organization and hosting of the 4th Asia Pacific Biosafety Association Scientific Conference last April in Manila. Our efforts in Biosafety and Biosecurity have in particular benefited from the assistance of the United States' Biosecurity Engagement Program, (BEP), we wish to thank the US Departments of State and Energy, Sandia National Laboratories, and the American Biological Safety Association for their support. The Philippines had also served as host of the ASEAN Regional Forum Workshop on Biological Threat Reduction" last June. We will have the honor of making a detailed presentation on our national and regional efforts later this week in the course of our Meeting.

As the Philippines is President-elect of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) RevCom, the Philippine Government is keen to leverage this unique opportunity to advance the synergy of international cooperation in all disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regimes and processes. We firmly believe that progress in one field will indeed have positive implications for other areas of disarmament. The recent passage of the Conference on Disarmament's Work Program, the successful outcome of the 2009 NPT PrepCom, and the groundbreaking pronouncements of President Barack Obama and other world leaders certainly augur well for us all. Strengthened collaboration for the advancement of the BTWC between and among the UN and other bodies- particularly the Office of Disarmament Affairs / BTWC ISU, WHO, FAO and OIE, regional organizations such as Southeast Asia's ASEAN, academic, scientific and professional organizations, and the private sector is for our mutual advantage.

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Our Delegation is appreciative of the hard work of our Chairman, Ambassador Grinius, and the intrepid BTWC Implementation Support Unit, Richard, Piers and Ngoc - they have provided all of us the needed support and encouragement for the advancement of our Convention.

We look forward to the success of our Meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.