

*As of 4 December 2017*

## **Republic of the Philippines**

Statement to be delivered by  
**H.E. MARIA TERESA T. ALMOJUELA**  
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines  
to the United Nations in Geneva

### **Meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

4-8 December

(Agenda Item 5 – General Debate)

1. The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered by Venezuela on behalf of NAM, and the ASEAN Statement. We wish to thank the delegation of India for nominating such a distinguished and experienced diplomat to chair the MSP. I congratulate you, Amb. Gill, as well as the members of your Bureau and assure you of my delegation's full support.
2. The Philippines is mindful of the mandate given by the 8th BWC Review Conference for the 2017 MSP and looks forward to constructive discussions in this Meeting towards reaching consensus on an intersessional process. The proposals from the NAM and depository states, the Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States are good bases for our work these next few days.
3. Biological and Toxin weapons is a weapon of mass destruction that once unleashed, knows no borders especially in our globalized and interconnected world. A threat of this kind to one is a threat to all humanity. The Ebola outbreak a few years ago made it evident that we need to improve international cooperation as well as preparedness, response, and assistance capabilities so that should another outbreak occur, deliberate or not, our countries are able to respond effectively. Rapid advances in life sciences and the risks of diversion, and access by non-state actors to biological weapons also add urgency in our work in this regard.

4. In such a context, the Philippine delegation believes that States Parties must endeavor at this Meeting to advance our work of strengthening the implementation of the Convention at the national, regional and global levels.
5. We recognize the valuable collaboration between States Parties and international organizations and other institutions across different regions to improve capacities and address gaps in preparedness response and assistance at the operational level.
6. In this regard the Philippines strongly supports proposals to have focused discussions on International Cooperation and Preparedness, Response and Assistance in the inter-sessional process. We support efforts to foster greater synergies between and among international organizations such as Interpol, World Customs Organisation, World Health Organization, World Organisation on Animal Health and the Food and Agriculture Organisation as biosecurity and biosafety are cross-cutting issues that require holistic and coordinated responses.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Philippines attaches high importance to the Convention, in line with our national position on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The Philippines is part of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and is actively engaged in promoting the biosecurity agenda in the Asia Pacific region. The Regional Secretariat of the CBRN Center of Excellence network in Southeast Asia was established in Manila in 2013. In March this year, the Philippines together with Indonesia and Malaysia held a workshop to prepare a biorisk communication plan. In 2018, the Philippines will host a regional workshop on CBRN Risk Mitigation within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum, which will build upon previous activities on this subject. The Philippines is also co-organizing an International Joint Bioterrorism Workshop in early 2018. This workshop will focus on the interaction between the public health and security sectors.
8. On the national level, the Philippines implements a CBRN National Action Plan with a unified approach to build our capacity to respond to the risks associated with CBRN materials, whether they are natural, accidental, or intentional. We are finalizing a national list of Biological Materials of Concern (BMC) and corresponding regulations. We are

working on legislation on the BWC. We made a submission on CBMs to the ISU this year.

Mr. Chairman

9. My delegation recognizes the excellent work of the ISU as Secretariat of the Convention and the need to ensure its financial sustainability. We also emphasize the continuing value of the Sponsorship Programme in facilitating the participation of capital-based experts in the BWC meetings.
10. In closing, my delegation would like to encourage all States Parties to approach the discussions in a positive spirit to ensure that we will come to an agreement on an ISP that is balanced, pragmatic and reflective our collective resolve to implement the Convention. I thank you Mr. Chairman.