

**UNCHANGING PRINCIPLES IN CHANGING TIMES:  
TRANSFORMING COMMITMENT INTO ACTION**

**H.E. DR. ALBERTO G. ROMULO**

Secretary of Foreign Affairs

General Debate, 2010 Review Conference of the  
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty  
3 May 2010, United Nations, New York

His Excellency, Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, President of the Review  
Conference;

His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations;  
Distinguished Delegates, Good Morning.

**Changed New World, Same Old Fears**

The Cold War has long ended, but its tragic legacy of fear and mistrust abounds and lingers. A wave of democracy and hope has since swept the world. But weapons of mass destruction continue to pose grave threats to humanity. Advances in technology and communication have brought nations closer. Yet mistrust and suspicions have kept their peoples apart.

We have indeed changed the world, but the threat to our future remains undiminished. Nuclear weapons have slipped the cordons of the nuclear powers and into the arsenals of countries which bode ill for peace. Non-state actors have shown ruthlessness and blatant disregard for life which becomes even more frightening with the thought they might one day wield nuclear armaments.

Since 1968, the non-proliferation treaty has been the reason John F. Kennedy's nightmare vision of 15 to 20 nuclear states has been avoided. Instead, there are less than 10 - the original 5 plus probably four to five more. It is these additions that makes urgent the imperative to close the treaty loopholes that makes it possible for countries to legally acquire bomb-making skills and equipment under the guise of civilian nuclear program.

That is the challenge and opportunity before us in this historic conference.

In our changed world, a danger to one is a danger to all. No nation can remain unaffected by the events in any other country or another region

***Nothing conceived by man can match nuclear weapons in its sheer destructive force – it is the most inhumane weapon ever created.***

***Deliberately weilding these weapons would be catastrophic. Unleashing its power by accident would be beyond tragic. It is perhaps by sheer luck that neither have befallen us.***

***But how long will our luck hold out? In this race between cooperation and catasptrophe, we all know who the clear winner should be.***

### **Our Resolution on the Middle East**

***No nation or its people can be safe from these weapons.***

***For a country like the Philippines, with over a tenth of its nationals spread across the globe, the dangers posed by nuclear weapons are particularly stark.***

***In the Middle East alone, there are two million Filipinos.***

***The Philippines firmly believes that promises made in past agreements must be kept. Among the most crucial of these promises is the need to realize the 1995 Resolution in the Middle East and the establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in that region.***

***Fulfilling the promise could help usher in peace and stability in a region that has known neither.***

### **Dialogue and Diplomacy Over Deterrence**

We will not be able to sustain our efforts towards nuclear disarmament unless fundamental changes are made on how some nations address their security concerns.

Finding comfort in deterrence has been a great hindrance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Many states still live under the protection of decades-old nuclear umbrellas. Others are giving in to the temptation of having their own nuclear protective parasols.

For lasting peace and security, we must replace deterrence with diplomacy.

With the historic changes in our world, Cold War adversaries should now be disarmament disciples.

Others who possess these weapons should abandon them now. And for those who hope to possess these weapons, do not give in to its siren call.

### **We are at a Turning Point**

The Review Conference meets at a time of renewed hope that major gains can be achieved in nuclear disarmament. Momentum is building behind efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. We are at a turning point.

**On the multilateral front**, nuclear disarmament is once again taking center stage on the agenda of the United Nations, through collective endeavors, and the vision of our Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

He shares with many of us the belief that the world is over-armed, and development is under-funded. He has pointed out that spending on weapons worldwide is now well above one trillion dollars a year – and rising.

Two weeks ago, General Assembly President Abdussalam Treki convened a special Thematic Debate on disarmament. It was a timely gathering and helped add momentum in favor of the success of the Review Conference.

Just last week, the States Parties and Signatories to nuclear weapons free zone agreements met here at the United Nations for the second time in five years and threw their strong support behind the success of our review conference.

At the Nuclear Security Summit last month in Washington, world leaders met to reinforce international cooperation on nuclear security and to reiterate their commitment to nuclear disarmament.

**On the bilateral front**, the United States and Russia sealed a new START Treaty – a huge leap in the right direction towards reduction, and hopefully, the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

***The United States and Russia has shown a willingness never before seen to reduce their arsenals. Their commitment provides a new opportunity – the first since these weapons ended World War II – to turn back the nuclear tide.***

**On the national front**, the recent policy changes adopted by the United States in its Nuclear Posture Review also helps set the stage for greater advancement towards a world without nuclear weapons.

In addition, the Philippines deeply appreciates the work undertaken by other groups, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the New Agenda Coalition, the De-

Alerting Group, and the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, for contributing to the a successful outcome for the this Review Conference.

### **Nuclear Disarmament**

The vast majority of states have adhered to the NPT. They have every justification to believe that the Nuclear Weapon States should not only take **greater disarmament measures**, but should offer **security guarantees** to enhance the global security climate.

What we need **are timelines and realistic and clearly defined benchmarks** for nuclear disarmament by the Nuclear Weapon States.

The **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty** (CTBT) is a crucial complement to the NPT. It must come into force. This is one of the 13 Practical Steps agreed upon by during the 2000 Review Conference, and this Review Conference must support the drive towards this critical objective.

Similarly, our Review Conference must help bolster the work of the **Conference on Disarmament** (CD), particularly on negotiations for a **Treaty on Fissile Materials** – a vital element of our global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

### **Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

We must also face the undeniable reality that proliferation is a danger to all. We must maximize our toolkit of international policies and mechanisms that address this danger, principally centered on the **International Atomic Energy Agency** (IAEA).

The IAEA's system of safeguards, with complete impartiality and without any double-standards must be respected. States that have not done so must adhere to the **additional protocols**.

As the vanguard of the non-proliferation regime, the IAEA should have a strong **nuclear verification** capability. We must address the need to strengthen the capacity of the IAEA for this indispensable purpose.

**Nuclear weapons free zones** further strengthen the nonproliferation and disarmament norm. We must strongly support the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones so that, one day, nuclear weapons will no longer be welcome in any corner of our world.

Towards this end, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, established the **Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone**. We encourage the Nuclear Weapon States and other partners with interests in the region to accede to the SEANWFZ treaty.

### **Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy**

The Philippines reaffirms the **inalienable right** of States Parties to develop, research, production and use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty. But claims to unqualified rights to nuclear energy, without adequate checks and safeguards, are dangerous, do not contribute to the cause of non-proliferation and should be seriously resisted and rejected.

Accordingly, the Philippines supports the IAEA's **technical cooperation** program for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which can be of vital importance for development.

In view of the global nuclear renaissance, with some sixty (60) countries now interested in nuclear power programs, **safety and security** considerations will also increase and should be commensurately addressed.

As one of the countries considering the inclusion of nuclear power in its energy mix, the Philippines recognizes the critical importance of nuclear security and considers it as an “enabler” rather than a constraint in the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In this regard, the Philippines reiterates its support for a multilateral approach to the **nuclear fuel cycle** that guarantees equal access, and that avoids any monopolistic control by any state or group of states, with the IAEA having a central role.

### **Strengthening of the NPT Regime**

The NPT is the heart of our global disarmament and non-proliferation aspirations. Yet, despite our lofty proclamations, the NPT does not have any **dedicated institutional support** of its own. Simple reason dictates that this situation be addressed, so that our peoples can see the seriousness of our collective commitment to attaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

***There are several proposals on how this can be done and these should be looked at and seriously considered during this Review Conference.***

### **Universality**

But perhaps more importantly, the NPT regime will be far stronger and more resilient when it has achieved **universality**. I reiterate our call for States that have not yet done so, to become States Parties to this crucial agreement.

I would also like to strongly encourage those who might be considering **leaving the NPT**, to exert every effort to work out what ever differences they may have with others over the Treaty or its interpretation.

### **Giving Life to the NPT**

The Philippines deeply appreciates the trust that has been placed on us to lead this critical gathering. We take on this responsibility firm in the belief that international peace and security is the concern of all, and that among the gravest threats facing our common humanity is the existence of nuclear weapons.

Every year, billions of dollars go to nuclear weapons research and arsenal maintenance, as much as \$30 billion, by some estimates.

For 2010, the World Food Program, the world's largest humanitarian organization, has projected a shortfall of 75% of its requirements. A fraction of what is spent on nuclear weapons could readily erase that shortfall.

When countries continue to spend lavishly on weapons of mass destruction, mortgaging our children's future and letting people die of disease and hunger, then clearly there is still much that we must do towards making our planet a free and peaceful world.

Here in the midst of new hope for a world free from nuclear weapons, we must continue to transform our words and our commitments into actions.

Thank you.