



Ninety-Sixth Session
9 - 12 March 2021

EC-96/NAT.60
9 March 2021
ENGLISH only

PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT BY MS LOLITA B. CAPCO CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I wish to take this opportunity to assure H.E. Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, as Chairperson of the Executive Council, of the Philippine delegation's full support for the successful completion of this session of the Executive Council ("the Council"). I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the hard work of the Technical Secretariat under the able leadership of Director-General Fernando Arias amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic continues to present challenges in the work of the OPCW, the Technical Secretariat has commendably discharged its duties to the best of its abilities.

The Philippines remains committed to the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our country believes that only with the collective commitment of all countries—more so all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention—towards international peace and stability can we all pursue sustainable growth and development. As such, the crucial role that the OPCW plays in ensuring that chemicals are not used as weapons against anyone, anywhere, anytime, and for any reason remains of paramount importance.

It is my distinct honour to inform the Council that the Philippines is now a State Party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), after having deposited the instrument of ratification to the United Nations in New York on 18 February 2021. Along with the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the country's ratification of the TPNW is indeed a step in the right direction in joining the international community in creating an international norm prohibiting weapons of mass destruction.

The agenda of the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Council continues to be highly relevant to us all. There is no doubt that discussions will continue to be in-depth and extensive. I therefore urge all Members of this Council to continue the debates and discussions in a spirit of transparency, openness, and cooperation.

May I request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Council and be posted on the OPCW website. *Maraming salamat po.*

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