

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

by

H.E. Ambassador EVAN P. GARCIA
Permanent Representative of the Philippines
to the United Nations in Geneva
and Head of the Philippine Delegation

to the

“12th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction”

03-07 December 2012, Geneva

His Excellency Matjaz Kovacic
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Mr. President,

The Philippine delegation congratulates you for your well-deserved election to the Presidency of the Meeting and pledges its support to you and your bureau. The Philippines also thanks the Swiss Government for its hosting of this Meeting and express our appreciation to the outgoing President, Minister Pak Sokhom of Cambodia for his leadership of the 11th MSP

We welcome this opportunity to join the international community in assessing the progress of the 2010 Cartagena Action Plan. The Philippines is proud to have played a pivotal role in the crafting of the four-year Cartagena Action Plan, a definitive road map that aims to mobilize States Parties and civil society in achieving the universalization of the APM Convention, complete destruction of remaining APM stockpiles, clearance of mine-affected areas and provision of assistance for victims of APMs.

Mr. President,

The Philippines has sought to abide by the spirit and intent of the Cartagena Action Plan and is honoured to have served as the Co-Rapporteur for APM Stockpile Destruction in 2010 and as Co-Chair in 2011.

In its capacity as President of the 2012 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW-MSP), the Philippines played a leading role in promoting wider adherence not only to the CCW Convention but also to the APM Convention and Amended Protocol II to the CCW Convention which deals primarily with APMs, Booby-traps and their Devices.

The CCW can be considered an important complement to the APM Convention as it covers Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). The recent CCW-MSP provided an opportunity to assess the progress in addressing these issues and to discuss the related issue of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) that is outside the purview of the APM Convention. The 2012 Experts Meeting on MOTAPM demonstrated the real and potential humanitarian harm wrought by anti-vehicle mines and the need for more work to be undertaken in this area.

Mr. President,

As a ratifying State to the APM Convention, the Philippine Government has faithfully fulfilled its commitment not to engage in the production, use or stockpiling of APMs and annually submits its compliance report pursuant to Article 7 of the APM Convention.

The Philippine Government also welcomes the breakthrough in our peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), as evidenced by the signing of the Framework Agreement. This historic milestone can be attributed in part to confidence building among all concerned parties achieved through the APM Convention. The bridging efforts of peace activists, the International and Philippine Campaigns to Ban Landmines (ICBL/PCBL), the *Fondation Suisse De Deminage* (FSD) and Geneva Call are to be recognized and lauded. The Deed of Commitment signed by the MILF to adhere to the norms of the APM Convention played a pivotal role in moving the peace process forward.

With the renewed spirit of goodwill and cooperation brought about by the Framework Agreement, the PCBL and FSD, with support from the European Union (EU) will work with the Philippine Government and the MILF to reduce the threat from Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in conflict-affected areas. The agreement setting forth the project was signed in 2010, but was only made possible now. The project will identify and clear suspected hazardous areas in 21 municipalities in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines, covering a total of over 450 thousand hectares inhabited by over 814 thousand people or indirect beneficiaries.

Despite this promising development, the Philippine Government continues to view with grave concern the continued indiscriminate deployment of APMS by other Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) in direct contravention of the APM Convention. Their actions have caused untold harm and suffering to military personnel and innocent civilians in the Philippines. For 2012, the Munitions Control Center of the Armed Forces of the Philippines reported 29 incidents involving the deployment of APMs by NSAGs. In these incidents, there were 43 dead while 153 were injured.

Mr. President,

Although significant strides have been attained in raising greater global awareness of the destructive nature of APMs and in addressing this deadly scourge, the Philippines views with concern the inadequate funding for programs relating to destruction of APM stockpiles, clearance of mine-affected areas, and provision of assistance for victims APMs.

The Philippines calls on the international community to consider devoting more resources in ensuring the sustainability of these programs. Such resources could encompass increased voluntary financial contributions from States Parties and private sector, provision of specialized mine clearance and destruction equipment and deployment of trained experts to mine-affected areas.

The Philippines is also of the view that since victim assistance and rehabilitation is a commonality shared by the APM Convention and other humanitarian disarmament treaties such as the CCW Convention and the Cluster Munitions Convention, closer coordination and networking should be encouraged.

Mr. President,

As 2015 nears, the global community is debating what should replace the Millennium Development Goals and discussion have been taking place on the humanitarian, security and disarmament dimensions of such goals. The Philippines believes that positive contributions could be made to this debate through the framework of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

With the deadline for the complete implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan also fast approaching, a formidable challenge that confronts all States Parties is to ensure that the 67 action points enumerated in the Plan are fully realized. This goal can only be achieved through the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. Thank you.