



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS, GENEVA

NV-EPG-462-2020

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Geneva Branch - Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention (APLC) Secretariat and with reference to the ongoing virtual 18th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (18MSP APMBC), has the honor to transmit the attached statement of the Philippines to Agenda Item 7 on General Exchange of Views. This Mission requests the APLC Secretariat to upload this statement to the Convention's website.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Geneva Branch - APLC Secretariat the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 17 November 2020

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS (GENEVA BRANCH)

APLC Secretariat Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (Geneva Branch)
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PHILIPPINES

NATIONAL STATEMENT

Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Land Mine Convention

15-19 November 2020

The Philippines congratulates the Chair for his election and thanks him and the Implementation Support Unit for ensuring the continuity of the work of the States Parties to the Convention during this challenging year.

The Philippines takes this opportunity to stress its commitment to the Convention's aims and principles. The Philippines completed the elimination of all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines in 1998 and has consistently pursued a policy of immediate disposal of any such weapons found in inspections and field operations. During the Review Conference in Oslo last year, the Philippines renewed its commitment to the Convention and to the implementation of its Oslo Action Plan towards a mine-free world by 2025.

The Philippines remains firm in its adherence to the principles of International Humanitarian Law in general and of the Convention in particular, even as it addresses threats from armed non-state actors that continue to indiscriminately use weapons in violation of these principles.

It is known to the international community that the New People's Army has continued to use weapons that cause superfluous injuries in its terroristic activities. Its use of improvised explosive devices with anti-personnel characteristics is well-documented, including those with anti-handling devices that trigger explosions upon attempt by explosive ordinance disposal teams to defuse them. These devices are intended against first responders and are therefore victim-activated – a clear violation of the principles of the Convention.

In addressing these threats, the Philippines has pursued an inclusive whole-of-society approach that brings together state security forces and agencies, civil society groups including the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines, and grassroots communities. In several instances, cooperation among communities and authorities have led to successful operations against these destructive weapons.

The Philippines supports the strengthening of a normative framework against the use of mines by armed non-state actors, including terrorist groups such as the New People's Army.

The Philippines supports global initiatives to address the social and development challenges posed by mines, including through robust international cooperation and assistance under the Convention.

The Philippines actively participates in regional efforts through its engagement with the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMMM) Plus' Experts Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA). In September, the Philippines participated in ARMAC's Online Regional Training on Quality Management in Mine Action, which enhanced regional quality management processes on mine action.

In its international engagements, the Philippines consistently stresses the importance of strong national ownership of mine action, including reducing the affected states' reliance on foreign technical expertise. Equally important for the Philippines is the centrality of mine victims in the Convention's work on clearance and risk education. The balanced participation of women and men, and all stakeholders, is crucial in this regard.

The Philippines will continue to constructively participate in the furthering the aims of, and implementing the Convention.