

STATEMENT OF H.E. JOCELYN BATOON-GARCIA
4th Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel
Mine Ban Convention
Agenda Item 6: Renewal of Political Commitment
Oslo, Norway
29 November 2019

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Allow me at the outset to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Kingdom of Norway for hosting the Fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We wish to commend in particular the leadership of Ambassador Hans Brattskar, President of the Review Conference, as well as the members of the Convention's Coordination Committee and the Implementation Support Unit.

Mr. President,

The Philippines has been a State Party to the Mine Ban Convention since 2000 and to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and other Devices since 1997. We have sought to adhere faithfully to our obligations under these landmark agreements, having eliminated all of our stockpiles of anti-personnel mines since 1998 and consistently pursued a policy of immediate disposal of any such weapons found in inspections and field operations. Cognizant of the grave humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons, we have strongly upheld that these cannot find a place in the present and future operational requirements of our armed forces, even as we face security challenges from insurgent, terrorists, and other armed non-state groups.

Mr. President,

Even as we have disavowed the use of anti-personnel landmines, the danger remains from the unabated deployment of such weapons by armed non-state actors, posing grave and indiscriminate risks not just to our security forces but to civilians as well. We are pleased to note that the proposed way forward in this Review Conference continues to address this issue squarely and unequivocally condemns the use of landmines by any actor.

We welcome the stated priority of strengthening a normative framework against the use of landmines by armed non-state actors. We are hopeful that future counter-measures also consider the factors that enable insurgent and terrorist groups to acquire the equipment and technical know-how for improvising these weapons, as for example, the flow of funds from illicit activities.

Mr. President,

The Philippines recognizes that the universalization and strengthened implementation of the Mine Ban Convention are integral pillars of the global peace and security framework. We express our gratitude to Norway as the President of this Review Conference for their leadership in paving the way for balanced and practical future courses of action, through the Oslo Action Plan and the Oslo Declaration on a Mine-Free World.

We welcome in particular the emphasis on strong national ownership of mine action, while also keeping the focus on effective international

cooperation and assistance. We recognize that effective action under the auspices of the Mine Ban Convention – from clearance to risk reduction - have cross-cutting benefits that extend to responses in other key issues such as Improvised Explosive Devices and Explosive Remnants of War, among others.

Mr. President,

The continued suffering endured by mine victims, not just from legacy contamination but from new instances of mine use, whether manufactured or improvised, reminds us that the Convention remains ever relevant. The realization of our common aspirations requires even more coordinated efforts, underpinned by the spirit of partnership and inclusiveness among all stakeholders – from States Parties, to international, regional and civil society organizations, to communities on the ground. We are confident that the outcomes of this Review Conference will reflect this spirit of collective action and present a viable way forward for the next five years.

We take this opportunity to re-commit ourselves to the Convention's noble objectives and assure this Conference that the Philippines will remain an active and willing partner in achieving the vision of a mine-free world.

Thank you.