



PHILIPPINES

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**Delivered by Col. Alejandro C. Manalo, Jr., MNSA (OS) PA,
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Munitions Control Center
during the
Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on
Cluster Munitions
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Mr. President,
Distinguished Guests, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for the honor of participating in this 8th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I wish to take this opportunity to highlight the Philippines' steadfast commitment to the global disarmament agenda, including for prohibitions on indiscriminate weapons that cause disproportionate,

unnecessary and long-term human suffering, such as cluster munitions.

Mr. President,

While the Philippines is not directly affected by the scourge of cluster munitions, it is all too familiar with the effects of indiscriminate weapons. As in the Battle of Marawi, we have seen how the use of improvised explosive devices and booby traps by terrorists have had a severe impact on our security forces and non-combatants alike, a situation greatly exacerbated by the presence of these weapons in an urban environment. On the other hand, despite the extreme situation caused by the terrorists, the Philippine government never contemplated using any such kinds of munitions. This is not to mention the substantial resources that have gone to clearing unexploded ordnance, to ensure that returning civilian communities do not suffer from their adverse effects.

Mr. President,

From these experiences stem our continued commitment to prohibit the use, local and foreign stockpiling, investment, production and transit of cluster munitions in our country. The Philippines also remains steadfast in its support for the regionalization and universalization of the Convention. I am thus very pleased to report on the progress we have made in moving closer to ratification, as the Certificates of Concurrence of agencies concerned, particularly the National Security Council, the Department of National Defense, the Department of Justice, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, have all been received and are currently being prepared for the signature of the President of the Republic of the Philippines and later on for concurrence by the Philippine Senate. We are very hopeful that our being a full-fledged State Party to the Convention is in the horizon.

Mr. President,

Recognizing the harmful effects of cluster munitions and similar weapons, including the hazards they present long after they have been used in armed conflict, we are optimistic that moving forward, the implementation of the Convention's provisions on international cooperation and assistance will be strengthened and expanded. Developing countries have borne the inordinate brunt of the deadly effects of these weapons, translating to heavier burdens in achieving economic and social progress. The Philippines expresses solidarity with its fellow developing countries most affected. We hope for the international community's continued efforts to ensure that means of support, especially in the aspects of clearance, capacity building and victim assistance, remain comprehensive and viable.

The Philippines looks forward to a fruitful and successful meeting ahead, and reiterates its active support and engagement in promoting the Convention's objectives.

Thank you.