

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

FORTUNATO DE LA PEÑA SECRETARY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY 64th IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,
Warm greetings from Manila!

1. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the 64th General Conference. I also congratulate Director General Grossi on his first GC since taking office. I thank the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this meeting. The Philippines also expresses solidarity with all States affected by COVID-19.
2. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy have time and time again risen up to meet the world's pressing and complex challenges. It is no surprise, therefore, that nuclear technology has stepped up to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19.
3. In this regard, I wish to express the Philippines' appreciation to the IAEA and to its donors for the Agency's COVID-19 assistance. I also welcome the Agency's forward-looking ZODIAC Initiative, which seeks to assist Member States improve preparedness for future pandemics.
4. We also recognize that economic recovery from COVID-19 will require a reliable and sustainable electricity supply. I am, therefore, pleased to announce that President Rodrigo Duterte signed in July an Executive Order which directs a study for the adoption of a national position on nuclear power. The Philippines appreciates the IAEA's comprehensive support in this important undertaking.

Mr President,

5. Allow me to provide a few highlights of the Philippines' fruitful cooperation with the IAEA in the past year, which shows the contribution of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to the attainment of our national sustainable development goals:
 - a. We use stable isotopic techniques for authentication of food products for food safety such as honey and vinegar. Results of the studies have been submitted to the relevant Philippine agencies for review and potential inclusion in policies on food and quality standards. We continue to use these techniques to characterize our groundwater resources in order to provide clean drinking water for Filipinos.
 - b. Upgrading of our irradiation facilities will be completed this year. These facilities support our agriculture industry, efforts on food safety, disaster relief efforts and in the development and upscaling of radiation grafted materials for water treatment and plastic recycling. In this regard, I am pleased to support DG Grossi's initiative, NuTEC Plastic, to address plastic pollution.
 - c. Finally, top universities have begun offering nuclear subjects in existing undergraduate and graduate programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics or STEM. We continue to support the Agency's efforts to encourage more women in nuclear.
6. As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty this year, the Philippines underscores the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as enshrined in Article IV of the Treaty.

Thank you, Mr President.