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STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations

at

the Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery
of the
First Committee

65th Session, UN General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines is pleased to address the First Committee on the important topic of the Disarmament Machinery. In this regard, the Philippines welcomes the resolution entitled "Follow-up to the High Level Meeting held on 24 September 2010 - Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations" introduced by Austria. It is important that this item be included in the agenda of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly.

On the Conference on Disarmament or CD, I wish to make the following points:

1. First and foremost, the CD must be expanded. The fact that there is still a divide between regular and observer membership in the CD is symptomatic of the weakness of the CD’s status quo. The CD, at the very least, should facilitate the re-opening of the expansion process to new full members, particularly for those States that have indicated an interest. In this regard, the Philippines calls on the CD to appoint a special coordinator/rapporteur for the expansion issue.

2. The Philippines urges the CD membership to agree to at least realize a Program of Work. It is recognized that the States, which have blocked the Program are concerned over the emphasis on the issue of the FMCT, thus a constructive way forward would be to come up with a balanced Work Program without elaborating on the specifics.

On the United Nations Disarmament Commission or UNDC, I wish to make the following points:

1. The UNDC remains a vital mechanism in the field of disarmament. The Philippines reaffirms UNDC’s importance and continuing relevance, given its universal membership and its ability to submit substantial recommendations on urgent disarmament issues to the UN General Assembly.

2. The Philippines looks forward to having substantive discussions and agreements on the three agenda items for the 2011 UNDC substantive session, namely:
   a. Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons;
   b. Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade; and
   c. Practical confidence building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

3. The Philippines urges Member States to fully utilize the UNDC and calls for enhanced cooperation between the First Committee, the CD, and the UNDC.

On other aspects of the Disarmament Machinery, I wish to make the following points:
1. The role of the Special Advisory Board to the UN Secretary-General should be examined. The Philippines recommends that the board also have a dialogue with member States to obtain the benefit of their thinking and expertise on disarmament. It was unfortunate that the board did not dialogue with NPT States Parties in preparation for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

2. The Philippines believes in the importance of enhancing Disarmament Education and the related need to increase support for UNIDIR. The Philippines appreciates current efforts such as the Disarmament Fellowship program, and views it as a confidence building measure among disarmament and security stakeholders in government. Thus, there should be more emphasis on Disarmament Education programs for actual disarmament practitioners such as diplomats, military officers, and the like, especially in the developing world. Most existing programs target academicians and civil society. It may be more efficient and effective to educate government practitioners and to encourage networking and fellowship among such practitioners.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.