PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting to the
2020 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation
of Nuclear Weapons
Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations, Geneva

CLUSTER 3 SPECIFIC ISSUE:
STRENGTHENED REVIEW PROCESS

Mr. Chair,

The Philippines is a strong proponent of a Strengthened Review Process. The NPT will be 50 years old in 2020. It is but natural and timely for us to review and see how the process can be improved and if the current methods are still responsive to the needs of States Parties. My delegation firmly believes that we must strive to improve our working methods and processes to ensure the long term viability and vitality of this treaty that we have all referred to in the past week as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. This belief is borne out of our experience in leading this process in 2010 given the overall and holistic perspective the presidency entails.

Mr. Chair,

Many papers have been presented on this in the past, the Canadian paper among them in 2010, which talked about establishing a Chair’s circle consisting of past RevCon Presidents and a dedicated secretariat. The Chair’s circle would lead to the establishment of some form of institutional memory given that we as diplomats rotate in and out of various portfolios. There was also the suggestion of shortening the PrepComs from two weeks to one and the possibility of calling for emergency meetings in case a situation would need the immediate attention of States Parties. All these remain to be good ideas and States should consider them for the overall health of our treaty. This matter was heavily discussed and considered in the lead up to and during the 2010 RevCon. It was supported by the Philippine presidency, as we saw merit in it. Unfortunately, it fell by the way
side, as this issue often does, given the importance and more pressing nature of other matters that had to be dealt with at a given time. We must stop putting off discussions on this. To cite a comparable organization, the Human Rights Council is concentrating on improving its methods of work and organizing its work program because these have become too unwieldy and unfocused. The same goes for the NPT, we need to refocus the review process and strengthen our internal mechanisms. Another issue in 2010 behind the Strengthened Review Process not gaining any traction was the financial implications of such reforms. In this era of zero budget growth and cutbacks, we are prompted to find ways of doing more with less. If we put our minds to it, we shall be able to continue supporting this treaty without the need to increase financial contributions.

The NPD paper therefore is very timely, as it provides us with a way forward with its recommendation of establishing a working group. This working group, which we could agree to create, can discuss all the issues I previously mentioned and other ideas that we come up with in the future. What is important is to begin a conversation. The Philippines has observed that the consultations in the past days have indicated the interest among delegations to continue this conversation on the scope of work of such a working group.

In the meantime and as a stop-gap measure, the Philippines would like to suggest that UNODA in New York dedicate one person to purely NPT matters. This would allow for the start of building the necessary institutional memory that our treaty so badly requires. My delegation would have preferred a dedicated ISU, but given what has happened to other ISUs here in Geneva, this may not be a popular way forward. Hence, the simple suggestion to just re-task one official from UNODA in New York to work exclusively on NPT matters.

I thank you Mr. Chair.