

Prepared Statement of Honorable LAMBERTO B SILLONA, Assistant Secretary for Acquisition, Installations and Logistics, Department of National Defense, Republic of the Philippines, for the Second Review Conference on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, in Cartagena, Columbia, 29 November – 4 December 2009.

From the Filipino people, we bring to you our traditional greetings of "Mabuhay at Manigong Bagong Taon." Long Live and may the coming New Year be prosperous to one and all.

Madam President:

On behalf of the Republic of the Philippines and its people and government, our humble representation express to you our sincere congratulations for your deserved election as President of this Review Conference. Yours is an unenviable job. But it is also an honoured one, for you represent the collective aspirations of everyone present here to make this world a little bit safer from the reckless and indiscriminate use of land mines and the shared commitment for a mine-free world. Our commendations are with you, Madam President.

We would like also to add our voices to those who have expressed their sincere gratitude to the Columbian government for its remarkable hosting of this momentous event, made more memorable by the gracious hospitality of the Columbian people.

Madam President, the Republic of the Philippines is proud to be one of the first state-parties to have acceded to and signed the "Convention on the Prohibition on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, and of their Destruction" on 03 December 1997. And we are even more proud when our Congress ratified the Convention on 15 February 2000, two years after our Department of National Defense and all its instrumentalities, to include the Armed Forces of the Philippines, completed the destruction of all anti-personnel landmines in our military stockpiles.

On 18 July 1998, the Department of National Defense, through the Armed Forces of the Philippines, completed the destruction of all known landmine stockpiles in the Philippines. Since then, the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines have never acquired, stockpiled, transferred, used, or have under its jurisdiction and control, any anti-personnel landmine in all its form. Moreover, as part of our sustainable Mine Awareness Education Program, the Armed Forces of the Philippines regularly conducts Training and Bomb Threat Prevention Seminars to both our military and civilian personnel to insure they have the knowledge to protect themselves against the scourge of land mines and similar munitions. We have also organized an Oversight Committee in our Department of National Defense that will ensure compliance of our defense and military organizations to all agreements on disarmament the Philippines has acceded to.

To date, three identical bills are undergoing extensive debates in both houses of our Congress which will be consolidated into the omnibus Philippine Comprehensive Law on Land Mines. We, in the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, have communicated to our

Congress our full endorsement of the enactment of the bills into an enabling law which we hope will serve as the state policy for the Philippines' compliance to the Ottawa Treaty, and as its main advocacy for the total ban on land mines and similar munitions.

In conclusion, Madam President, I wish to reiterate that since the Philippines has destroyed all its stockpiles of land mines in 1998, it has not procured, stockpiled, used or transferred landmines, and intends to remain so.

Thank you, Madam President and, once again, I say Mabuhay to everyone.