

04 February 2010 - The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) welcomed the concurrence by the Senate on the Protocol on the application of safeguards in connection with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on February 1.

In its committee report on January 21, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee approved Senate Resolution 1542, which proposed that the Senate concurs with the President's ratification of the Protocol Additional to the Agreement between the Philippines and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT.

The Senate plenary approved the Resolution concurring with the Protocol last Monday, February 1.

The Senate's concurrence is timely as the Philippines will assume the Presidency of the 2010 NPT Review Conference in May this year. It is a reaffirmation of the country's commitment to the NPT's objectives and processes.

The Philippines signed the Protocol on September 30, 1997 in Vienna, Austria.

The Protocol complements the safeguard system designed to aid the IAEA in verifying undeclared and declared nuclear materials and to give the IAEA the ability to provide credible assurance that State Parties to the NPT honor their legal obligations to neither produce nuclear weapons nor to use nuclear materials and facilities for the production of nuclear weapons.

The Protocol is also envisioned to strengthen confidence-building measures in promoting nuclear transparency between nations as well as strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, which would contribute to global nuclear non-proliferation goals.

Under the Protocol, the IAEA shall have the right to access specific information regarding the utilization and application of nuclear materials and facilities by the Philippines.

The NPT entered into force in 1970 and was extended indefinitely in 1995. It calls for a review to be held every five years to assess the operation and implementation of the Treaty.

The President-elect in this year's Review Conference to be held from May 3 to 28 at the United Nations headquarters in New York is Philippine Ambassador Libran N. Cabactulan, a career diplomat and an experienced negotiator.

An essential cornerstone in the global pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and which the Philippines has long advocated for, the Treaty was designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to further the goal of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, and to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In preparation for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Philippines hosted in Makati City on February 1-2 a Workshop on the NPT, which brought together many stakeholders featuring top NPT negotiators to encourage in-depth discussions on the many challenges and issues facing the NPT regime and possibly find the solutions to these problems. END