

2 February 2010 - A two-day workshop on nuclear disarmament hosted by the Philippines has boosted the chances for success of a key nuclear disarmament meeting at the United Nations in May.

The Philippine Government, with the support of international partners, hosted a two-day workshop entitled, "Working Towards a Successful 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference", at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati on February 1-2.

According to Ambassador Libran N. Cabactulan, President-elect of the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a large number of participants cited the importance of the Workshop in helping facilitate better understanding of how best to succeed in the upcoming Review Conference.

"The delegates, made up of nuclear experts and negotiators from governments, international organizations, think tanks and NGOs, cited our initiative of holding this Workshop as an important contribution to the 2010 Review Conference," Ambassador Cabactulan said.

The issues to be taken up at the Review Conference are of great importance and of some level of complexity, he said. For this reason "initial discussions and deliberations in an informal atmosphere and in a non-attribution basis even before formal negotiations begin can contribute to the success of the Review Conference," he added.

"While there was broad recognition that there will be many challenges, there was also recognition that the Philippine Workshop and others like it will boost the chances of success in the Review Conference," Ambassador Cabactulan emphasized.

The President-elect said that the participants were able to exchange views on these issues and share their insights and ideas on how these challenges might be addressed.

"These views vary, as you can imagine. States still have different ideas, particularly on disarmament. What is significant is that there is increasingly greater convergence on some of these ideas," he said.

Also important, according to Ambassador Cabactulan "is that this Workshop and others like it provide the opportunity for participants to reiterate their commitments and obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly the obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons."

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