Mr. President, distinguished delegates, good afternoon.

The Philippines is pleased to see and join other States Parties to the TPNW and our non-government partners, five years after concluding negotiations, and a year after the treaty’s entry into force. I also extend a special welcome to the Observer States joining us today. We look forward to working with all of you towards our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

As the 53rd ratifying State, our presence here today reaffirms our commitment to the principles and spirit of this landmark document, our adherence to the provision in our Constitution prohibiting the presence of nuclear weapons in Philippine territory, and our obligations as a State Party to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone.

The TPNW strengthens the global regime for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, inspired by our collective desire to prevent the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. It lays down the legal framework for their total elimination and fills in the gap to outlaw all weapons of mass destruction, which has, until its entry into force, excluded nuclear weapons.

The Treaty responds to Article 6 of the NPT that calls for “effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” It also operationalizes Action 1 of the 64-point Action Plan from the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which calls on NPT States Parties to “pursue policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.”

We recognize the complementarity of the TPNW with the NPT, CTBT and the treaties establishing nuclear weapon free zones. We do not consider the TPNW to establish a parallel regime to the IAEA safeguards system or the CTBT verification regime.
The TPNW reaffirms the inalienable right of States to pursue the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for national progress, a vital need for developing countries in rebuilding their economies, especially after the pandemic.

Mr. President:

The humanitarian thrust of the TPNW becomes even more relevant today in the face of an increasingly insecure global security environment. We remain concerned about continued nuclear modernization, development and testing programs of the nuclear weapon and nuclear possessor States; the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament; the DPRK’s recent surge of ballistic missile tests and preparations for a possible nuclear test; Russia’s decision to raise the readiness status of its nuclear arsenal; the IAEA’s diminishing ability to verify the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear program and the lack of progress on the JCPOA talks; the UK’s decision to increase its nuclear stockpile limit; the lack of progress in the entry into force of the CTBT; *inter alia*.

The mission that we embark on today is clear: we must accelerate our efforts to rid our world of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons must not be used for resolving international disputes, nor in the security and military doctrine of any nation.

This First Meeting provides us the opportunity to act with wisdom, decisiveness and a renewed sense of purpose and urgency to reinvigorate the nuclear disarmament agenda.

Towards this end, the Philippines pledges to work with our partners to:
- Continue the call for general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control;
- Pursue the Treaty’s universalization;
- Support efforts to put in place a credible regime to verify the irreversible elimination of nuclear-weapons programmes;
- Encourage other non-nuclear weapons States to join, sign and accede to the Treaty as soon as possible;
- Assist State Parties in adhering to their obligations set forth in the Treaty;
- Support victims and communities affected by nuclear use or testing;
- Continue to raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and stress the urgency of acceding to the Treaty; and
- Take concrete steps to promote dialogue among States Parties, nuclear weapon States and those under their nuclear security umbrella, as well as nuclear possessor States as a pathway towards their accession to the TPNW.

Mr. President, the Philippine delegation assures you of its full support as you shepherd the work of this important meeting, and we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with everyone towards a fruitful outcome. Thank you.