Statement

by

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Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations

before the First Committee
of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
General Debate

New York, 10 October 2014

Please check against delivery
Mr. Chair,

1. Please accept my sincere congratulations on your election as chair of the First Committee. I also extend to the other members of the Bureau my sincere congratulations. My delegation is confident that, with you at the helm, the current session of the First Committee will conclude successfully.

2. Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We further align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of the Republic of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chair,

3 Next year, we will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. However, our world still faces varied and diverse threats. The widespread possession and deployment of various types of deadly weapons persist, even more worrisome, by non-state actors. Arms and armed conflicts remain the largest obstacle to global peace and security. They also hinder economic and social development.

4. Still, Thailand retains our hope and vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. We welcome the positive momentum created by the international conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We participated in those held in Nayarit and Oslo. We also look forward to participating actively in the forthcoming conference in Vienna later this year. It is our hope that these conferences will result in serious discussions leading to concrete outcomes.

Mr. Chair,

5. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are concrete confidence building measures. We hope for meaningful and conclusive consultations leading to the signing of the protocols to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, or the Bangkok Treaty. In the same vein, we also hope to see substantive progress in discussions on the Helsinki Conference. In order to preserve the credibility of the NPT, there need to be some progress to report on the WMDs-Free Zone in the Middle East at the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

6. The year 2015 will also mark the 70th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To honour the memory of those who perished, it is
our responsibility to educate the younger generation. Last month, Thailand joined Cuba and Mexico in co-hosting an event in Bangkok to observe the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. At that event, Thai youth contestants delivered short speeches on ‘A World Free of Nuclear Weapons’. One of the youths eloquently pointed out, “... A world without nuclear weapons is like a neighborhood where we can accept and understand that differences do exist, be able to appreciate it, and be able to come to agreeable terms without the use of force. A world where fear does not thrive nor control our actions.” It was a strong message. Perhaps this message will find resonance among us here today.

Mr. Chair,

7. Our steadfast commitment continues. Thailand seeks constantly to enhance our capacity to implement UNSC Resolution 1540. We recently established a national sub-committee comprising over 30 agencies concerned dedicated to improving coordination on non-proliferation. We also invited UN experts to brief our agencies at a workshop in Bangkok. Participants gained a clearer understanding of their distinct roles in non-proliferation efforts, made useful contacts and shared their unique perspectives on the difficulties of implementation. Workshops such as these substantially improve coordination. We hope to conduct more in the future.

Mr. Chair,

8. The Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit are all important non-proliferation initiatives. The Third NSS convened in The Hague in March 2014 adopted an important Communique. It stressed the importance of strengthening the nuclear security architecture and enhancing a nuclear security culture. The Thai delegation impressed upon the Summit the critical need to raise awareness on nuclear security. We also emphasized the need to close gaps in capacity and involve all stakeholders. We are pleased to have contributed to the Summit by hosting the last Sherpa meeting in Pattaya prior to the Summit.

9. We are mindful that nuclear energy and technology do have enormous benefits. However, the use of nuclear energy must be accompanied by adequate technical know-how and safeguards. Thailand encourages all countries to implement safeguards consistent with all relevant IAEA and other agreements. At the same time, we call upon the IAEA to continue to provide technical cooperation to requesting states.
10. The elimination of all WMDs also has to be comprehensive. Thailand renews our call for universal adherence to and strict implementation of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions.

Mr. Chair,

11. Thailand remains troubled by the continued proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We see the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) as the principal multilateral cooperation framework to address this common and widespread problem.

12. In less than three months the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will enter into force. Thailand hopes to become a State Party to the treaty in the very near future. Inter-agency consultations have been convened to review and assess existing frameworks and regulations. We wish the first preparatory conference and Meeting of States Parties every success. We hope to be participating as an observer.

Mr. Chair,

13. As one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Mine Ban Convention, Thailand has worked consistently for 15 years to fulfill our obligations on mine clearance, victim assistance and mine risk education. Thailand has been particularly active in the area of mine victim assistance. We stand ready to share our expertise and experience should there be interests from our friends and partners.

Mr. Chair,

14. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) must play a more active role. Thailand renews our appeal for an expansion of membership in order to inject dynamism and inclusiveness into the work of this important body.

15. Thailand recognises and commends the active and crucial role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). We thank outgoing Director Sharon Riggle for her untiring efforts and encourage the UNRCPD to continue to work closely with Members States.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.