Statement

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on behalf of ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

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

07 October 2014
Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, I have the honor to deliver the Group’s statement for the General Debate of the First Committee for this current session of the General Assembly.

ASEAN associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

ASEAN Member States congratulate you on your assumption as Chair of the First Committee and express our deep appreciation to you for your efforts to reach out to Member States ahead of the start of our session. We are assured that you will ably steer this Committee towards a more relevant and productive session at the backdrop of numerous crises currently faced by the international community.

**Nuclear Weapons and other WMDs**

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN Member States are unwavering in our commitment to achieve the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Forty-four years into our collective efforts towards realizing this goal, the global stockpile of nuclear weapons remains at alarmingly high levels.

We therefore welcome recent efforts by Member States to focus the spotlight once again on nuclear disarmament.

ASEAN Member States welcome the General Assembly Informal Ministerial Meeting to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held last 26 September, which further raised awareness on the crucial and urgent task of nuclear disarmament.

ASEAN Member States express continued support to two annual resolutions entitled, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons” by Malaysia and “Nuclear Disarmament” by Myanmar.

Both draft resolutions underscore the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by ASEAN Member States. Although there are different views on the approaches towards our common goal, ASEAN sincerely hopes that Member States will continue to lend their support to these resolutions.

ASEAN Member States also strongly support substantive and robust discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons that are intended to provide a
comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons both on human beings and the environment.

We welcome the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons that were held in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit, Mexico, and we look forward to a more substantive outcome in the upcoming meeting in Vienna, Austria in December.

These discussions, while academic and fact-based, may eventually lead to the establishment of a legal framework to effectively abolish these deadly weapons. ASEAN Member States call on the Nuclear Weapons States to be engaged in these discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

To support the realization of the objective of the Treaty of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and the ASEAN Charter, we envisage the significance of the full adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the region.

We also call on the remaining Annex 2 States, whose signature and ratification are crucial for the CTBT to enter into force, to do so as soon as possible.

On the Conference on Disarmament (CD), while convinced that it has the central role in negotiating disarmament agreements, ASEAN Member States are deeply disappointed over the continued lack of progress in its work.

We reiterate our call for the expansion of the membership in the CD in order to make the body more representative.

**Regional Security**

In our neighborhood, ASEAN Member States reaffirm our commitment to preserve Southeast Asia as a nuclear weapon–free zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter.

We further reaffirm our commitment to uphold the SEANWFZ Treaty and underline the importance of its full and effective implementation and the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

We reiterate our commitment to work closely with the Nuclear Weapon States on the early signing and ratification of the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty without reservations. We also acknowledge the need to work closely with the NWS to address our concerns over their proposed reservations to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty.

We thus look forward to the working level meeting between ASEAN Member States and the NWS at the margins of the First Committee session in the coming weeks.
ASEAN Member States underline the importance of peace, security and stability in the Korean Peninsula. We reaffirm our support for all efforts to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, including creating conducive environment for the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

ASEAN Member States are concerned over the recent rise of violence committed by terrorist and extremist organizations as well as radical groups. With the persistent threats of terrorism worldwide, it is crucial than ever to ensure that extremist movements gain no access to WMDs.

ASEAN Member States reiterate our support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We hope to see substantial progress regarding the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs through the convening of the Conference on the Middle East before the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

With only six months left before the next Review Conference, we are concerned that we have fallen way behind the commitments we agreed on at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, starting with the failure to convene the 2012 Conference on the Middle East.

ASEAN Member States call for the full implementation of the 64-point Action Plan adopted in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

ASEAN Member States support negotiations between E3/EU+3 and Iran to conclude a comprehensive nuclear agreement at an early date. In this regard, we welcome the extension of nuclear talks until 24 November 2014 under the framework of the Joint Plan of Action agreed on 24 November last year.

Recognizing the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we agree to explore ways to formalize relations between ASEAN and the IAEA.

**Conventional Weapons**

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN Member States support the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in All Its Aspects to curb the proliferation of these deadly weapons that claimed millions of lives worldwide.

ASEAN Member States also note the fiftieth ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its eventual entry into force on 24 December 2014.
We wish to underscore, however, the right and authority of every sovereign state to the use of conventional weapons, proportionately, to protect its internal security and territorial integrity.

ASEAN Member States welcome the efforts towards the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) which serves as a regional centre of excellence in addressing the humanitarian aspects of the explosive remnants of war (ERW) for interested ASEAN Member States.

**Other Issues**

Cognizant of the global challenges of information and communications technology (ICT) space, ASEAN recognizes that increased international efforts are required to improve the security of ICT space and to develop common understandings about the norms that apply to state behavior in ICT space.

We therefore highlight the need for the region to develop measures to address misperception and miscalculation, including a framework to manage and respond to ICT incidents or events of potential regional security significance.

Mr. Chairman,

It has often been said that disarmament efforts are already extremely difficult in normal times; but much more so in times of crises.

Let us not allow the multiple global crises we are facing shift our attention and focus away from the immediate task at hand which is the total and complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. Our job remains as relevant today as it is was more than four decades ago.

Thank you.