STATEMENT BY MR TAN WEIMING,
DELEGATE TO THE 69th SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS,
FIRST COMMITTEE,
20 OCTOBER 2014

Mr Chairman,

1 As this is the first time Singapore is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you and the members of your bureau on your appointments. My delegation looks forward to working constructively with you to ensure a productive session.

2 We are about six months away from the 2015 Review Conference (2015 RevCon) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The importance of the 2015 RevCon cannot be understated. The NPT is a cornerstone of the international security architecture. However, with its credibility and relevance under severe stress, it is facing an existential challenge. Against the backdrop of growing global instability, we cannot afford for the NPT to unravel.

3 As we saw at the Third Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2015 NPT RevCon earlier this year, significant gaps remain on key issues. As a result, the PrepComm failed to achieve a consensus document. Looking ahead to the 2015 NPT RevCon, we must consider seriously how we can make further progress on all three pillars of the NPT, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in a balanced manner that maintains the core bargain of the Treaty.
First Pillar: Nuclear Disarmament

4 We acknowledge that nuclear disarmament is a long-term aspiration. Yet, there is a palpable sense of frustration amongst the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) on the lack of concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. If we are serious about achieving a world without nuclear weapons, the NWS have to muster the political will to take action. Every step counts. First, NWS must do more to reassure NNWS that they remain committed to fulfilling their obligations under Article VI of the NPT. Until they do so, countries of proliferation concern can continue to use national security to justify their need for nuclear deterrence. While the P5 consultation on disarmament-related issues is a positive step forward, more concrete steps need to be taken. We strongly encourage the US and Russia to commence discussions on further reducing American and Russian nuclear arsenals by a third from the level agreed in the New START. Notwithstanding their smaller nuclear arsenals, other NWS should similarly further reduce them. We also call on NWS to actively take steps to eliminate the risk of nuclear weapons being used.

5 Second, we must find a way to involve nuclear weapons possessing states that fall outside the ambit of the NPT in similar disarmament discussions. Both the NWS and NNWS must also commit not to take any actions, such as nuclear cooperation with nuclear weapons possessing states outside the framework of the NPT. This is to preserve the legitimacy and universalisation of the Treaty. Third, we must continue to recognise the importance of nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZs) as concrete building blocks towards a world without nuclear weapons. The viability of NWFZs depends on one important factor. NWS must fulfil their obligations to achieve the objectives of the NPT and the treaties to establish NWFZs and their protocols. To that end, the NWS should both sign and ratify the Protocols without reservations or unilateral interpretative
declarations; and to remove them where they exist. The effectiveness of NWFZs depends on the NWS fully accepting their obligations under the Protocols; reservations undermine the whole point of NWFZs. We also urge all relevant parties to work together to convene the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction before the 2015 RevCon.

6 Fourth, we strongly urge all countries, in particular Annex 2 countries which have yet to do so, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We also encourage the relevant parties to work on making progress at the Conference on Disarmament and on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). The ongoing discourse on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is also important. We urge the NWS to participate actively in this discussion, including attending the upcoming Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna in December 2014.

Mr Chairman,

Second Pillar: Nuclear Non-Proliferation

7 We also need to take steps to address the risk of proliferation of nuclear technology and material as well as dual-use items for military purposes. We can do so on several fronts. First, through enhancing nuclear security measures at the national, regional and international level for both civilian and non-civilian nuclear material and facilities. Second, by acceding to and fully implementing key international legal instruments such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its 2005 Amendment. Just last month, Singapore deposited the instrument of accession to the CPPNM and the instrument of acceptance of its 2005 Amendment with the IAEA. We also encourage NPT State Parties
that have not already done so to conclude IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols with the IAEA as soon as possible.

8 Third, we should work towards a more robust international export control regime to guard against illicit trafficking, while ensuring that legitimate trade is not hampered. As a major transshipment hub, Singapore has a robust export controls system and fully abides by all our international obligations. However, it is insufficient for only some jurisdictions or ports to tighten their export control regimes. The entire supply chain must be secure; otherwise proliferators will simply exploit the weakest link.

Third Pillar: PUNE

9 We should also reaffirm the right of sovereign states to peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology provided for under Article IV of the NPT. However, rights come with responsibilities. The peaceful application of nuclear science and technology must be carried out in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. The IAEA, in particular, should continue to assist countries in establishing the necessary regulatory and legal infrastructure through training and other capacity-building programmes. This will help promote the highest standards of nuclear safety and security and enhance their emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

Conclusion

10 The success or failure of the 2015 NPT RevCon and, consequently, the NPT depends on our ability to muster the necessary political will, put aside our differences and work together to forge a consensus on the concrete steps to be taken in order to move forward all three pillars of the NPT. Singapore remains firmly committed to the NPT,
and we will continue to support all efforts towards the advancement of global disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the rights of sovereign states to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, including energy, in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner.