STATEMENT BY MISS LYDIA LAU,
DELEGATE TO THE 69TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON OTHER DISARMAMENT MEASURES
AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY,
FIRST COMMITTEE, 28 OCTOBER 2014

Mr Chairman,

1. Like other delegates before me, allow me to congratulate you and your bureau on your appointments. My delegation has enjoyed working constructively with you thus far.

Mr Chairman,

2. We face slow progress in the disarmament agenda. The close link between disarmament and security means that First Committee discussions are often sensitive and contentious. Nuclear Weapon States and non-Nuclear Weapon States continue to disagree over the relative emphases on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is, however, encouraging to see the strong political commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) process, and in this regard the rapid pace at which it has progressed despite its text being adopted only recently in April 2013.
3. As many have highlighted, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an event significant to the disarmament agenda. Surprisingly, the fact that 2014 also marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War has featured a lot less prominently in our statements.

4. As Mark Twain once said, “History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme”. Earlier this year, the internationally respected historian Professor Margaret MacMillan pointed out the unsettling similarities between the worlds in 1914 and 2014. What stood out was the toxic nationalism that drew and continues to draw in external powers to protect both their interests and, to a lesser extent, their clients. The interconnectedness of the world in 1914 did not stop the outbreak of the First World War. It is this same interconnectedness today that heightens the gravity of the situation. Global security will inevitably have an impact on the international economy. Effective and expeditious multilateral action must be taken to stop the stagnation of the disarmament conversation. States should use this interconnectedness to facilitate communication and promote understanding. This will in turn contribute to the building of strategic trust, and make it easier to achieve a compromise on many multilateral issues in the disarmament agenda.

Mr Chairman,

5. Singapore is firmly committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) process, and will continue to support all efforts towards nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We also urge the remaining countries in Annex 2 to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
6. Singapore supports the international initiatives that address the humanitarian concerns associated with the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, and the conventional weapons governed under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). We remain fully committed to working with the UN and members of the international community to ensure that these weapons are not misused.

7. Outside the UN, Singapore is also an active participant in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Singapore has previously hosted two PSI maritime interdiction exercises, Exercise Deep Sabre I and II, in 2005 and 2009 respectively. We are also part of the six-country Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) initiative. Singapore is pleased to announce that we will host our third maritime interdiction exercise in 2016 under this APER initiative – Exercise Deep Sabre III. We are also a member of the PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG), and we actively participate in the annual PSI OEG meetings.

Mr Chairman,

8. Despite our existing contributions, the international community needs to continually question ourselves – what is the next step, and how do we get there? We need to make a conscientious effort to keep the disarmament conversation going. Existing multilateral regimes must actually being implemented. With the progressively transnational nature of threats to security, it is even more imperative today to look beyond national boundaries and towards common interests.
Mr Chairman,

9. These are ideas that I urge states to seriously consider over the course of the next year, before we meet again at the 70th UN General Assembly First Committee debates. With combined effort, we should and can achieve progress in the disarmament agenda.

10. Thank you.