Statement
by
Her Excellency Ms. Chulamanee Chartsuwan
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations
before the General Debate of the First Committee,
the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 4 October 2016
Mr. Chair,

1. The Thai delegation joins other previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the Committee, and assures you of our support throughout this session

2. Thailand aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Mr. Chair,

3. Since 1946, we have come to the First Committee of the General Assembly every year to share our views on disarmament, united with a common aspiration for a peaceful and safer world. 70 years later, while some progress has been made, we are still indeed confronted with the existence of even more powerful and indiscriminate weapons of different types and in increasing number, posing grave threats to humankind, despite the first UNGA resolution establishing a commission to “make specific proposals for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction”.

4. Our collective security is constantly challenged by emerging threats from proliferation of illicit weapons, as well as advancements in weapons and their delivery systems. Illicit flows of weapons can further fuel conflicts and exacerbate the delicate international security situation. Armaments and solutions to address these challenges have, for a very long time, diverted much needed financial and human resources from other people-centred priorities such as social and economic development.

5. Thailand firmly believes that in order to sustain peace and security, States must step-up our collective efforts and explore new ways to sustain our joint endeavours on disarmament and non-proliferation of all types of weapons.

6. Thailand is deeply committed to non-proliferation, preventing weapons from falling into the wrong hands. We implement international measures and obligations with rigour and make every effort to ensure that practical implementations continue to address emerging threats.
7. The recent passage of the *Nuclear Energy for Peace Act 2016* is a reflection of our efforts. The Act would enable Thailand to ratify or become Party to legal instruments related to nuclear issues, including the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, the Convention of the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and its Amendment, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

8. International cooperation also has a prominent role in developing and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. This is why Thailand has been actively participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the Nuclear Security Summits. As such, it is clear to Thailand that increased coordination amongst various non-proliferation initiatives, including international assistance and the engagement of the civil society, industries and academics, will benefit and optimise our efforts. Thailand looks forward to such reflections in this year’s comprehensive review of Resolution 1540.

9. Other international legal instruments such as the Biological and the Chemical Weapons Conventions, as well as the IAEA Safeguards are essential in balancing, on the one hand, securing the world from the spread of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons and on the other, ensuring that related materials and technologies benefit society through their peaceful uses. In this context, Thailand has taken legislative steps towards a comprehensive national control mechanism for dual-use items.

10. On conventional arms, we have serious concerns that most civilian casualties during conflicts are caused by small arms. Their illicit trade and the use by unauthorised end-users can pose similar threats and impacts as weapons of mass destructions. We therefore welcome the international community’s efforts to enhance transparency in arms transfer as reflected in the outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on illicit small arms and light weapons, and the role that the Arms Trade Treaty, as the international legal framework, can contribute to preventing illicit weapons from falling into the hands of unauthorised end-users. While Thailand is working on the Treaty’s ratification, our implementing agencies attach importance to sharing the experiences at the regional level. This is why Thailand hosted the Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on the Treaty’s implementation with the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in April of this year to highlight this important issue.

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Mr. Chair,

11. A peaceful and secured world cannot be achieved through non-proliferation measures alone. States need to make further progress with the ultimate goal of total and complete disarmament, taking into account human and collective security of all.

12. This year, despite nuclear weapons remaining the only weapon of mass destruction not prohibited, Thailand is hopeful that the First Committee will act upon the recommendations of the 2016 Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations to support a United Nations conference to be convened in 2017 to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, opened to all Member States with the contributions of the international organisations and civil society.

13. The substantive discussion on the humanitarian consequences, environmental impact and other associated risks of nuclear weapons, with contributions from the civil society, has reshaped the international and public attitudes regarding policies and practices that are premised on the acceptance of nuclear weapons. Such effort continues to provide new perspectives on how we should take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations and identify possible approaches to fill the disarmament gap.

14. As a depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Thailand joins in commemorating the 50-year anniversary of the establishment of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In this context, we encourage the signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone by nuclear weapon States as well as the establishment and maintenance of such zones in other regions around the world, especially the Middle East.

15. In the same humanitarian spirit, Thailand is progressing towards becoming a mine-free country under the provisions of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Our national implementation focuses on assistance to victims of unexploded remnants of war with the goal of quick rehabilitation and reintegration into society. We also look forward to participating in the
MSP15 that will be hosted by Chile in November this year and encourage all States Parties to make their contributions to the Conference so that the process of the Convention could continue without disruption. We also remain engaged in other disarmament frameworks, including international instruments on other indiscriminate conventional weapons.

Mr. Chair,

16. Taking note of incremental progress from within the disarmament machinery, it is clear that States must strive for consensus from the inclusive participation of all States. We should also stand united in addressing emerging threats from new weapons and their systems, as well as ensuring the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. At this juncture, Thailand urges for a review of the current disarmament machinery and supports the work of the Open-ended Working Group on convening the 4th Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament in this regard.

17. Thailand stands ready and committed to cooperating with all members in contributing to peace and security for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.