Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Nontawat Chandrtri
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative

at the General Debate of the First Committee
Seventy-Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 4 October 2017
Mr. Chair,

1. The Thai delegation congratulates you on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee and expresses its appreciation and support to you and the members of the Bureau of the First Committee. My delegation also recognizes the Under Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her team for their tireless contribution to our work.

2. Thailand also aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chair,

3. People must lie at the center of our work. This is the understanding that must guide our efforts to achieve meaningful progress in disarmament. The stockpiles and usage of various types of deadly weapons available to States and non-State actors are grave threats to peoples’ security, development and the promotion and protection of human rights. In our common quest to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, disarmament and arms control is now, more than ever, critical in fostering socio-economic progress as well as a just and peaceful society for the well-being of all people.

Mr. Chair,

4. The proliferation and illicit transfer of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, pose a serious threat to our collective security. 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) is a fundamental multilateral framework to address this multi-dimensional problem. Thailand looks forward to a constructive outcome of the Third Review Conference on the UNPoA in 2018. Thailand also recognizes the vital role of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in providing the international community with a robust legal framework to regulate arms trade.

5. Like many of our neighbors, the Kingdom is still confronted with challenges from remaining explosive remnants of war. Guided by our strong humanitarian tradition, Thailand was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Mine Ban Convention. We have since destroyed all landmines from our stockpiles and have focused rigorously on the rehabilitation and reintegration of mine victims.
6. Thailand remains unwavering in our commitment to return to the Thai people a land free of mines. Over the past decades, more than 84 percent of the contaminated areas have been declared safe and returned to the community. However, unforeseen circumstances have impeded our efforts to completely demine. The Kingdom has submitted a request this year to extend the deadline for mine clearance and we will spare no effort to realize this important objective.

Mr. Chair,

7. Global peace and security can be achieved through the total elimination of WMDs. The historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and its opening for signature are significant steps towards the end we have longed for. This year is the first, ever, that the new norms are set and that we can call all three WMDs illegal. However, our collective efforts should not stop here.

8. Nuclear weapons may guarantee security for some but at the expense of others. Yet, the risks from accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonation make collective security an unachievable goal.

9. Therefore, Thailand is honored to be among the three States to sign and ratify the TPNW on the first day of its opening for signature. As the Depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) or the Bangkok Treaty, the TPNW holds special significance for us and we will continue to urge nuclear weapon States to take advantage of its inclusive nature.

10. We will also continue to support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology and urge the IAEA to continue to provide technical cooperation to requesting States. Thailand is now finalizing the internal procedures in order to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and we call on the international community, particularly the remaining Annex II States that have yet to sign and/or ratify, to do so at the earliest opportunity.

11. The recent heightened tension in the Korean Peninsula is a matter of grave concern for us and our region. It underscores the critical importance of promoting a global norm against nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons testing. We reiterate our calls on the DPRK to comply with the relevant UNSC resolutions as well as to cease all nuclear and ballistic missile tests. We also wish to urge all parties concern to exercise restraint and work together towards the resumption of the Six-Party Talks and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
Mr. Chair,

12. For the past decades, we have strived to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). However, threats persist and we cannot afford to be complacent. Much work remains to be done.

13. This year, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC with 95 percent of the world’s stockpiles destroyed. The recent completion of chemical stockpiles destruction of Russia is another testament of States Parties’ commitment to the realization of the Convention. On the other hand, the BWC, which concluded its Eighth Review Conference last December, still requires the legally-binding verification protocol to become a complete and comprehensive Convention.

14. Thailand therefore renews the call for universal adherence to the CWC and BWC as well as all other WMDs mechanisms. We also wish to stress the important role of UNSC Resolution 1540, which connects the dots between relevant WMDs, disarmament, and non-proliferation frameworks, ensuring that WMDs do not fall into the wrong hands.

15. Thailand wishes to commend the active role and dedication of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on the disarmament agenda. Our note of appreciation also goes to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) in their efforts to promote multilateral disarmament issues within the region, bridging needs and fostering cooperation among States and stakeholders. Thailand also values our partnership with the UNRCPD and will continue to work closely to address challenges and broaden our collaborative efforts on the agenda.

Mr. Chair,

16. Outer space is the common heritage of humankind and must be limited to peaceful use. Capacity building and technology sharing are the only ways to reap the benefits of outer space for the common benefit of humankind. It is in this context that we look forward to timely discussion on this issue at the joint session with the Fourth Committee next week.

Mr. Chair,

17. Allow me to close with the following reminders. The value we attach to disarmament efforts must derive from the benefits and protection we gain for our people. There is an indispensable relationship between disarmament and development. There is a need to promote collective security, and therefore inclusivity in the multilateral arena. The gender dimension of our work is
important. The invaluable role and partnership with the private sector and civil society is imperative. Progress is only possible with the broadest possible support for the common good.

18. I thank you Mr. Chair.

**************************