Statement by
H.E. Mr. Vitavas Srivihok
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations

at the General Debate of the First Committee,
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Mr. Chair,

1. The delegation of Thailand congratulates you and members of the Bureau on your election to the Bureau of the First Committee. We have full confidence in your leadership and the Bureau and pledge our steadfast support for a successful 73rd session. Our appreciation goes to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her team for their hard work and support to the Member States throughout this past year.

2. Thailand would also like to align itself with the ASEAN and NAM statements delivered earlier this morning.

Mr. Chair,

3. A recurring theme that we hear at the United Nations is that multilateralism must place people at the centre of its efforts. The three guideposts for this important organization – peace and security, development, and human rights – which are mutually reinforcing, were also conceived with the benefit of humankind in mind. Disarmament has always had as its core objective, the aim “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”.

4. There is no doubt in our minds that for disarmament to be truly effective, it must be accomplished by the people and for the people.

Mr. Chair,

5. This is the underlying principle guiding Thailand’s disarmament efforts. We have and will continue to inform, educate and forge common ground with various sectors of Thai society of the necessity of pushing ahead with disarmament for the benefit of humanity and, in particular, our current and future generations.

6. Our efforts on conventional weapons demonstrates this well. For Thailand, landmines pose great danger to soldiers and civilians alike and continue to hinder social and economic development. Since becoming a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty in 1998, Thailand has worked diligently to return safe land to our people through collaboration between government, local communities and civil society.

7. Thailand is fully committed in working towards ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. And while pursuing that goal, Thailand is taking all necessary measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
In this same spirit, we support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and therefore participated actively in the discussions at the Third Review Conference.

Mr. Chair,

8. On chemical weapons, Thailand reaffirms our unequivocal commitment to upholding the norms against them. We strongly support the central role of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We also encourage constructive dialogues among state parties under the Chemical Weapons Convention and look forward to the constructive and meaningful outcome of the upcoming Conference of States Parties and Review Conference later this year.

9. Thailand is also committed to upholding the norms against the use of biological weapons. The international community can benefit from strengthening such norms with an effective and a legally binding verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. We need to also build up our capacity to respond to all threats related to weapons of mass destruction. In recent years, Thailand has been attentive and engaged with efforts to update Thailand’s legislation on the control of dual-use items and transfers of technology, which have included engaging industries across the country.

Mr. Chair,

10. On nuclear weapons, I am delighted to share with the meeting that less than two weeks ago, Thailand deposited our instrument of ratification to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) with the Secretary-General, cementing our longstanding commitment to ending nuclear test explosions.

11. In addition to our commitment against nuclear test explosions, we are firmly convinced that there is no place for nuclear weapons. For Thailand, establishing the norms to stigmatize the existence of nuclear weapons is a first critical step towards their total elimination. This is why last year on 20 September, Thailand became one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. But there is much more work to do.

12. In addition to making the humanitarian case for eliminating nuclear weapons, the economic case for ridding ourselves of these weapons must also be made. Freeing up national budgets used to maintain the operational status of nuclear weapons is
smart, valuable and beneficial. These funds could be diverted to poverty reduction, universal health care and other important goals. Thailand also continues to encourage engagement and dialogue among all parties concerned leading to the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

13. In this regard, Thailand welcomes the positive developments in the Korean Peninsula, in particular the commitments of concerned parties to “an era of no war.” We look forward to seeing the promise of dismantling nuclear weapons test sites and denuclearization fulfilled. In a similar vein, we maintain our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and call on all parties to continue to fulfill their obligations.

Mr. Chair,

14. As we look to the future, our disarmament efforts must encompass a keen and common understanding of emerging technologies to ensure that any such advances are used for peaceful purposes only. This includes the use of outer space, which we believe, is the common heritage of humankind. We must also engage the next generation, as well as women and girls, to ensure inclusive perspectives on disarmament and non-proliferation.

15. In this connection, Thailand welcomes the Secretary-General’s Agenda on Disarmament. “Securing our Common Future” reaffirms the will and the way forward needed to achieve effective disarmament and non-proliferation. We also welcome the recently released Implementation Plan for the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda.

Mr. Chair,

16. Allow me to conclude by returning to the principle underpinning Thailand’s disarmament efforts. As I said at the beginning of my statement, the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation can only be reached when the people are part of the process. Thailand will continue to work toward disarmament that is by the people, and for the people.

17. I thank you.