STATEMENT BY MISS SAMANTHA GOH,
DELEGATE TO THE 74TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
AT THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON CLUSTER ONE:
NUCLEAR WEAPONS, FIRST COMMITTEE,
21 OCTOBER 2019

Thank you Mr Chairman,

1  Please allow me to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your appointments. Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by Viet Nam on behalf of ASEAN, and by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

2  2020 will mark three-quarters of a century since the United Nations (UN) was established to maintain international peace and security. The General Assembly (GA)’s first resolution established, by consensus, a Commission for the elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction from national armaments. 74 years later, these efforts are in a state of severe crisis against a backdrop of deepening mistrust and a strained multilateral system.

Mr Chairman,

3  The historic gains we have made in global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are at risk of unravelling. The future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is precarious, following the US’ withdrawal, and Iran’s decision to cease implementing and further scale back its commitments. We call on Iran to continue fulfilling its obligations under the JCPOA and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocol, and to fully cooperate with international partners. The termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and the uncertainty about the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) are worrying. Singapore urges all parties to renew their political will to pursue meaningful dialogue, converge on practical solutions, and fulfil their international obligations.

4  On the Korean Peninsula, Singapore welcomes the recent diplomatic endeavours, including Leaders’ level meetings between the United States and the DPRK, and the Inter-Korean Summits. However, the DPRK’s nuclear and ballistic missile programme is of concern. We urge the DPRK to avoid actions that may escalate tensions, and to abide by its UN Security Council (SC) obligations.
Mr Chairman,

5 The only way to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons is to eliminate nuclear weapons themselves. I will make four brief points. First, Singapore reiterates our commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Nuclear Weapon States must do more to fulfil their commitments under Article VI and the 2010 Action Plan. Transparent and genuine dialogue is essential to build trust. We regret that the 3rd NPT Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) was unable to adopt a set of recommendations for the 2020 NPT Review Conference (RevCon). Singapore hopes that all States Parties will engage in constructive dialogue towards concrete, time-bound and verifiable action to ensure that the NPT remains relevant, as we approach 50 years of its entry into force. We are committed to a successful 2020 NPT RevCon, as well as the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the GA Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV).

6 Second, Nuclear Weapon States' continued qualitative improvements and testing of nuclear weapons are of concern. Singapore reiterates its strong support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We urge all countries, particularly the remaining Annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify the Treaty, and to avoid contravening its object and purpose. We strongly support the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), under the Conference on Disarmament, which is long overdue.

7 Third, Singapore believes that regional approaches are a practical step to achieve a nuclear-weapons-free world. This includes the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free-zones under Article VII of the NPT. Singapore is fully committed to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty. ASEAN has made steady progress on its implementation under the 2018 to 2022 Plan of Action. We look forward to the Nuclear Weapon States’ signing and ratification of the Protocol, without reservations.

8 Fourth, the proliferation of WMD materials, technology and dual-use items for illicit purposes continues to be a serious threat. Every country should exercise vigilance and implement effective export controls to maintain the global supply chain’s integrity. As a major transhipment hub, Singapore regularly updates our regime to ensure it is aligned with the four main multilateral export control regimes. We are also active in other multilateral initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meetings on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. This year, we participated in the PSI Exercise Eastern Endeavour and Operational Experts’ Group meeting. Singapore will host Exercise Deep Sabre IV in 2021, and looks forward to member states’ participation.

Mr Chairman,

9 In today’s geopolitical climate, achieving the global elimination of nuclear weapons will only be possible if states prioritise the rebuilding of mutual trust and demonstrate collective political will. Let us all renew our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons.

10 Thank you, Mr Chairman.