Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Virachai Plasai,

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations

at the High-level Segment of the

United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination

New York, 27 March 2017
Madame President,

Since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, please allow me to congratulate you and assure you of my delegation’s full support.

Thailand aligns itself with the ASEAN statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Philippines.

We have come a long way since the first UNGA resolution was adopted in 1946 which called for, among other things, a Commission to be established “to make specific proposals [...] for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction”.

Today, with the exception of nuclear weapons, all the major weapons adaptable to mass destruction have been prohibited. Their stockpiles have been or are being eliminated under international legal instruments. Only nuclear weapons remain, and we are here today to deal with them in an adequate manner with high hopes at this historical conference.

Madame President,

Our efforts thus far have been in line with and complementary to the NPT, which is and still remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Regional nuclear-weapon-free zones are provided for in Article 7 of the NPT and currently span the southern hemisphere. They are the result of the genuine aspirations and collective efforts to secure countries in these zones from the potential and existential threat of nuclear weapons. They provide inspiration and a solid foundation for us to build on.

The UN conference we are participating in today is another collective effort in the same direction. It is one to ensure the collective security for all, in line with Article 6 of the NPT, which calls for “each of the Parties to the Treaty to undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control”. “Negotiations in good faith”, indeed, involve genuine intention to negotiate in a meaningful manner in order to reach an agreement for the common good.
Madame President,

This legally binding instrument will finally set an international norm for nuclear weapons in the same way as the existing conventions on other weapons with indiscriminate impacts, such as biological and chemical weapons, landmines, and cluster munitions. It will be a concrete and historical step of mankind.

The object and purpose of this instrument should be to prohibit all acts relating to nuclear weapons -- their use, development, possession, acquisition, stockpiling, and transfer. It should be simple, practical and enforceable. It should lay the legal groundwork for the next steps towards the destruction and total elimination of nuclear weapons. Only in this way can we finally realize our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons, the goal that we have repeatedly called for over the past decades.

Madame President,

The path toward a nuclear-weapon-free world has not been without challenges. Still, with our unwavering efforts, we have made it here today. In no small part, civil society has helped to mobilize the critical support needed to influence policy makers, particularly parliamentarians and academia. We should also remember to encourage the younger generation to become more engaged in pursuing a safe and secure world without nuclear weapons. We must continue this momentum, especially between now, the first NPT PrepCom, and the next session of this UN conference. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should be pursued together, not one at the expense of the other, in order to ensure collective security for all. Finally, it is clear to us and supported by the UN Charter that nuclear disarmament is both the responsibility of nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States.

Madame President,

From our point of view, it has taken an incredible effort, and the unwavering patience, perseverance and utmost flexibility of all parties involved in the processes to lead to where we are today. It is our hope that we will continue on this path, as we will need this constructive spirit to carry us through these historic negotiations. Let us work together to set the norm to prohibit and to delegitimize such destructive weapons.

I thank you Madame President.