STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF

THE 59TH SESSION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to express my sincere congratulations to you and the other members of the bureau on your elections. I firmly believe that under your guidance and able leadership, the First Committee will head towards a more positive direction.

As an ASEAN member country, Thailand wishes to associate itself with the statement to be delivered by the distinguished representative of Myanmar on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are meeting here today one year prior to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, it is unfortunate that, despite the continuing efforts we have exerted in the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation, the world today is not any safer from the scourge of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons than it was over than half a century ago when the United Nations was founded. The Secretary-General’s most recent report on the work of the organization recalls that ‘the clandestine network and violations of non-proliferation commitments along with the slow pace of disarmament and threat of terrorism which jeopardize international peace and security may increase the risk of new instances of unilateral or pre-emptive use of force’. To prevent these negative developments from further weakening confidence in multilateralism, it is widely felt that a strong regime of compliance is vital key to the effective functioning of a multilateral system in this regard. As a developing country, Thailand fully recognizes the difficulties that other developing countries face in fulfilling their obligations. On our part, we stand ready, within our capacity, to work with the other developing countries in achieving our common endeavor.

**Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Mr. Chairman,

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) have become the major threat to peace and security. Thailand firmly believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the collective non-proliferation effort and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In this regard, Thailand urges all nuclear weapon States to become party to the NPT and encourages all NPT parties to implement the Final Document adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. It is also our hope that the discussion that will take place during the upcoming Review Conference of the NPT in 2005 will bring about concrete outcomes which will eventually lead to a nuclear-weapon-free world.
Mr. Chairman,

Thailand firmly supports the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 which we perceive as a suitable response to the serious threat of WMD proliferation. My delegation is delighted to inform you that Thailand is in the process of implementing the provisions of the resolution, and will be able to submit its first report on this matter within the timeframe set by the resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand wishes to call upon all states that have not signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to do so without delay in order to bring the Treaty into force. As for Thailand, we are now accelerating our internal process to ratify the Treaty, which we will hopefully have done by 2005. In the meantime, we have been working closely with CTBTO Preparatory Committee in establishing two monitoring stations in the country. After ratifying the CTBT, Thailand is determined to work even closer with the concerned parties to develop the CTBT verification regime.

With regards to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), after assuming its full partisanship of the Convention at the beginning of last year, Thailand has played an active role in promoting the universality of the Convention. Working hand in hand with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemicals Weapons (OPCW), we co-hosted the “Regional Workshop on the Universality of the CWC” in March of last year and the “Regional Workshop on Assistance and Protection” in Bangkok in March of this year.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons**

Mr. Chairman,

While the world is faced with threats of WMD, chemical and biological weapons, the problem of conventional weapons has never faded away. Despite our continued efforts in addressing the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons (SALW), hundreds of thousands of innocent lives are taken away by the scourge of SALW each year. My delegation, therefore, supports the establishment and the work of the Open-Ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument on marking and tracing of the illicit trade of such weapons, and looks forward to constructive deliberations at the Second Biennial Meeting of the United Nations Programme of Action in small arms and light weapons to be held next year.

Thailand sees the merits and admires the work of civil society, including NGOs, which have contributed greatly in the effort to solve the SALW problem. These non-profit organizations must be given more opportunities to closely coordinate with government agencies and international organizations in raising public awareness and continuously campaigning in this arena.
As part of the capacity-building exercise in accordance with the Plan of Action, my delegation is pleased to inform you that Thailand, in collaboration with the United Kingdom, will hold a regional workshop on small arms and light weapons transfer in January of next year in Bangkok.

Anti-Personnel Mines

Mr. Chairman,

Long before its assumption of Presidency of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties (5MSP) to Mine Ban convention in September of last year, Thailand has put the issue of landmines high on its agenda. As the President of the 5MSP, it is incumbent upon Thailand to fully commit to ensuring the advancement of the aims and objectives of the Convention, namely mine clearance, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and universal acceptance of the Convention. The universalization of the Convention is important to putting an end to the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines that kill or maim innocent and defenseless civilians.

Thailand has been working with like-minded countries and actors to highlight the fact that the issue of anti-personnel landmines is indeed not merely a humanitarian issue, but very much a development issue with tremendous socio-economic implications and negative consequences for affected countries and regions.

As mine clearance is an extremely tedious undertaking and involves a great deal of manpower as well as financial resources, concrete efforts and wider participation of the relevant actors are therefore needed. With this in mind, Thailand has been working closely with the Resource Mobilization Task Force of the Convention to identify new and potential sources of funding, particularly from international financial institutions. As part of this effort, H.E. Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, the Thai Foreign Minister in his capacity as the President of the 5MSP met with Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank in Washington D.C. last month, to discuss possible cooperation between the World Bank and the mine action community. The two sides agreed to and underlined the fact that the issue of anti-personnel mines is not simply a humanitarian issue, but also a development issue. Mr. Wolfensohn also reaffirmed the World Bank’s full support to mine action.

Mr. Chairman,

The First Review Conference on the Mine Ban Convention in Nairobi next month will be another milestone for those who share the vision of a mine-free world. The meeting will review the progress that has been made since the inception of the Convention and more importantly chart its future direction. Thailand hopes that the Nairobi Summit will produce a concrete outcome and action plan that will bring about the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines.
Last year, Mr. Chairman, Thailand took the role of coordinator of a draft resolution entitled the “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction.” The resolution was widely embraced by Member States, with 153 votes in favour and had as many as 145 co-sponsors. We were grateful for all Members States that co-sponsored and supported the resolution.

This year Thailand once again is pleased to assume the same role. We sincerely hope that the draft resolution will receive even a higher level of co-sponsorship and support from the Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

My final comment is on the issue of improving the working methods of the First Committee. In this regard, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the Non Aligned Movement’s views on resolution 58/41 on improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee, adopted by consensus last year. Thailand supported and co-sponsored the resolution because we believe it will contribute to the broader effort to revitalize the General Assembly. We are fully convinced that it is very timely to discuss this issue that stands in accordance with the General Assembly’s resolutions 58/126 and 58/316 on revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. My delegation looks forward to fruitful discussion on this issue during this session.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate our full support for and active participation in the work of the First Committee.

Thank you.