Statement by
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at the First Committee
of the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Thematic Discussions: Nuclear Weapons

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Please check against delivery
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1. Thailand associates itself with the statement made earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman

2. The international community has long been dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The issue has become more complex yet even more relevant in today’s world, given the growing interest in nuclear energy. Effective multilateral infrastructure is required to ensure that such a trend will not become a loophole in nuclear non-proliferation and hinder our ongoing efforts in achieving a nuclear weapon free world. This is why it has become more crucial that we comply with our commitment on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be treated as substantively interrelated and mutually reinforcing. These two intertwined challenges require strong political will and practical undertakings from both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Although we have not yet reached the goal we aim for, efforts are underway and states have recently shown stronger determination towards that end.

4. Thailand welcomes the ongoing negotiations between Russia and the United States to conclude a new treaty as a follow up to their Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which will expire in December this year. Aimed at reducing deployed nuclear warheads to 1,500-1,600 each within 7 years with effective verification measures in place, this new treaty, when concluded and implemented, will demonstrate a real and strong commitment of the two countries possessing most of the world’s nuclear arsenals to their nuclear disarmament obligations. It is our hope that the other nuclear weapon states, as well as countries with nuclear weapons capability, would follow suit.

5. This strong political will was shared by other Member States as reflected in the historic Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament and the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1887 last month. The recent positive developments marked a new era of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Thailand therefore calls upon all
parties concerned to build upon this momentum to ensure that our ongoing efforts will eventually bear fruit.

6. With the next NPT Review Conference due in May 2010, we are at a critical juncture to jointly decide whether to move on towards fulfilling our pledge or to stay just where we are. The Review Conference is indeed an opportunity to further consolidate our efforts. We hope to see constructive consultations that demonstrate commitments by both the nuclear-weapon and non nuclear-weapon states alike. Both have an equally important role to play. In our views, the Review Conference should also include, on its agenda, substantive discussion on confidence building measures, transparency, negative security assurances, effective safeguards against proliferation, and the follow-up to the implementation of the 13 Practical Steps agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

7. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another key instrument for the international community to reach the goal of a nuclear weapon free world. As a Signatory State to the CTBT, Thailand fully supports the universality of the Treaty and calls for the remaining 9 Annex II states to become party to the Treaty so as to put a definitive end to nuclear weapon testing. On our part, we are taking necessary steps towards our ratification of the Treaty.

8. From Thailand’s perspective, the next milestone in non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would be a fissile material cut-off treaty which helps reinforce efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Thailand therefore hopes that the Conference on Disarmament would be able to commence negotiations on such a treaty as soon as possible during its 2010 work.

9. As an ASEAN member, Thailand attaches great importance to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) as a key instrument for nuclear non-proliferation in Southeast Asia that complements the NPT at the regional level. The principles of SEANWFZ will be further upheld with the support of the nuclear-weapon states. Direct consultations with them will be resumed to encourage their early accession to the Protocol to the Treaty. To highlight the contribution of SEANWFZ to regional and international security, Thailand, as ASEAN Chair and Chairman of the SEANWFZ Commission, and on behalf of ASEAN Member States, has tabled the traditional resolution on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone at this Session of the General Assembly. We look forward to the valuable support of all UN Member States.

10. As an active proponent of the SEANWFZ, Thailand supports the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones in different regions. These zones not only serve as a means of complete disarmament and non-proliferation of
nuclear weapons at the regional level, but also play a pivotal role in the area of confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy. We greatly welcome the recent entry into force of the Semipalatinsk and Pelindaba Treaties which respectively establish Central Asia and Africa as nuclear-weapon-free zones. Cooperation among the Zones should be encouraged. Thailand therefore reiterates its support for the 2nd conference of nuclear weapon free zones to be convened next year preceding the NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Equally important is the issue of the development of nuclear energy. Thailand recognizes and respects the inalienable right of every state to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as stipulated in Article IV of the NPT. In the meantime, it is in our common interest that nuclear technologies and materials do not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is therefore important to ensure that peaceful nuclear activities are conducted under a strengthened and effective safeguards system. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as the sole international verification authority, has a vital role to play in this regard and should be equipped with all necessary tools to undertake this important work.

12. As nuclear terrorism is one of the most immediate and extreme threats to global security, Thailand welcomes the United States’ initiative in hosting the Nuclear Security Summit in April next year. We hope the Summit will lead to concrete outcomes on measures to secure vulnerable stockpiles of nuclear materials from theft and boost global cooperation to combat the trafficking of atomic materials and technologies. We believe that the highest level of nuclear security is key to the development and expansion of peaceful nuclear energy worldwide.

12. In closing, Mr. Chairman, Thailand is convinced that the existing multilateral instruments remain relevant in today’s international security circumstances and must be further strengthened. We remain hopeful that we will be able to see substantive progress from the upcoming forums on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the year to come.

Thank you.