Statement

by

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before the First Committee

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General Debate

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Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important position. I am confident that under your able leadership, the First Committee this year will produce a successful outcome. My congratulations also go to all members of the Bureau.

2. Thailand would like to associate itself with the Statements made earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

3. Disarmament and arms control are indispensable in the maintenance of international peace and security. However, real and perceived security concerns and power imbalances continue to persist, between nations as well as within them. As a result, the continued possession, acquisition and further development of deadly weapons – including WMDs and SALW – by both States and Non-State actors remain serious causes for concern.

4. Thailand is fully committed to supporting the process of disarmament and non-proliferation of all types of WMD. We urge all States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to resolutely fulfill their respective obligations under the Treaty in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. Universality and strengthening of the Treaty must be promoted. The work of the three pillars of the Treaty – nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – must be balanced and pursued concurrently. Additionally, the recommendations of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the Five-Point Nuclear Disarmament Plan proposed by UN Secretary General in 2008 must also be seriously pursued and implemented.

5. Thailand welcomes the entry into force in February 2011 of New START Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States, which aims at deep and verifiable cuts of their nuclear arsenals. Their leadership is crucial for the achievement of global nuclear disarmament. Negative Security Assurances are also another important issue, where serious discussions and constructive actions are required. Thailand believes that Negative Security Assurances constitute a significant confidence-building measure between Nuclear-Weapon States and Non-Nuclear-Weapon States and will help strengthen global non-proliferation efforts.
6. Thailand supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones globally. We believe such zones can lead to the penultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Together with our ASEAN friends, Thailand has played an active role in forging the Treaty on South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) or the Bangkok Treaty. Given the close and ongoing consultations between ASEAN and Nuclear-Weapon States, we hope that Nuclear-Weapon States will be able to sign on to the SEANWFZ Treaty soon. It is also our hope that the resolution on SEANWFZ to be tabled by ASEAN again this year will receive even broader support from the international community than it did in UNGA 64.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Since the Cold War ended, the specter of nuclear terrorism has grown ever more threatening. The increasing possibility of non-state actors acquiring nuclear materials and technology is a compelling reason for all Member States to cooperate and coordinate their efforts to prevent such a cataclysm. Thailand is committed to implementing UNSC resolution 1540, with a view to addressing the threat posed by WMD acquisition by non-state actors. We have also joined international efforts to address this issue through the frameworks of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit.

8. Important as nuclear security is, nuclear safety is no less deserving of our attention. The Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant incident in March this year was a wake-up call that nuclear safety cannot be taken for granted, no matter how elaborate the fail-safe mechanisms in place. The international community needs to urgently and effectively address this issue in order to restore public confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Thailand thus welcomes the UN Secretary General’s convening of the High Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security on 22 September 2011.

9. Given the demands to verify nuclear activities and ensure nuclear safety, it is incumbent upon all of us to increase our support for and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. As the sole international verification body, the Agency’s technical expertise is indispensable in strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Thailand calls on all Member States to fully cooperate with the Agency and ensure that it continues to work in an effective, transparent and independent manner.
Mr. Chairman,

10. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention are also key international instruments to combat proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Thailand supports universal adherence to and strict implementation of these Conventions, particularly the complete destruction of chemical weapons within the agreed timeframe and the strengthening of confidence building measures within the BWC.

11. As our contribution towards promoting effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Thailand will co-organise the 6th Challenge Inspection Field Exercise from 31 October to 4 November 2011 with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Our aim is to ensure that the Organisation is well prepared to respond to any request for a challenge inspection under Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are pleased to host this Exercise, the first such exercise to be held in Asia. Additionally, since the 7th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention is approaching, Thailand also looks forward to working closely with other BWC States Parties to further strengthen the BWC and promote its full and effective implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

12. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) remains a serious threat to peace, security, stability and development in various parts of the world. They are much more common and widespread than WMD, and linked more closely with armed violence, transnational crimes and terrorism. Thailand supports the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key multilateral framework to curb the proliferation of SALW.

13. Thailand also reaffirms its support for the preparatory work leading up to the negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We believe that the ATT will help assure responsible transfer of conventional weapons and minimize the social and humanitarian impacts from the illegal flow of such weapons. Thailand welcomes the progress achieved at the three ATT preparatory meetings in 2010 – 2011, and looks forward to participating in the UN Conference in 2012.
Mr. Chairman,

14. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has long played an important role in advancing global disarmament and promoting international peace and security. For more than a decade, however, the CD has struggled to make progress in its substantive work. The High Level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament last year gave much-needed political impetus to the substantive work of the CD. The strong political will shown at the High-Level Meeting now needs to be translated into concrete results. In addition, as disarmament involves the security of all countries, all States should have the right to participate in the discussion and negotiating process on an equal basis. As the first coordinator and an active member of the Informal Group of the Observer States to the CD, Thailand firmly believes that the CD must engage all stakeholders, and reaffirms our call for expansion of membership of the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

15. Peace and security are goals that are universally shared but not always easily achieved. Strengthened security for one nation should not come at the expense of others. All members of the international community must do their utmost in fulfilling their political, legal and moral obligations in making the world safer. My delegation will continue to work with all Member States so that together we may build a world of lasting peace and security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.