Statement by

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before the First Committee
of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
General Debate

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Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me first to express my sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee of the 67th United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that under your able leadership and guidance, 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 by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Thailand would also like to share its views on the issue of disarmament and international security.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The core principle and purpose behind the establishment of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. Time and again, history has taught us that lasting peace can never be achieved by waging war. International security is best guaranteed by strengthening global cooperation, not by stockpiling and usage of weapons.

4. Thailand thus sees disarmament as a fundamental answer for effective reduction in threats to peace and risks posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms. We also feel that disarmament and non-proliferation are supportive of the theme of this year’s UN General Assembly, “adjustment of settlement of international dispute or situations by peaceful means”. By seeking the dismantling of weapons capable of vast destruction and often used by human rights abusers, the work of this Committee is vital in promoting dispute settlement by peaceful means.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Thailand is fully committed to supporting the process of disarmament and non-proliferation of all types of WMD. We have joined all key international treaties and conventions and have complied with all obligations and commitments under these instruments as well as relevant UNSC resolutions. In March this year, at the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, the Thai Prime Minister made a commitment towards global nuclear security and announced Thailand’s contribution to such efforts by offering a venue to host one of the Sherpa meetings, which is now scheduled in January 2014, in preparation for the next Nuclear Security Summit in the Hague.

6. Thailand commends the UNSG’s initiative to convene the High-level Meeting on Countering Nuclear Terrorism held on 28 September 2012 in New York. The meeting was timely and relevant to the precarious times we live in. We welcome the outcome of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held in April-May 2012. We look forward to the
commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials, as well as a Nuclear Weapon Convention, to be held in an inclusive manner. We support unequivocal and legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, which would help strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We also urge all States Parties to the NPT to resolutely fulfill their respective obligations under the Treaty in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Mr. Chairman,

7. As an active proponent of the Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ), Thailand supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones globally. We welcome the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be held in Helsinki in December this year. We also welcome the P5 co-sponsorship of the resolution on SEANWFZ last year and hope to build on that momentum and urge Nuclear-Weapon States to sign the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty as early as possible.

8. Important as nuclear security is, nuclear safety is no less deserving of our attention. Thailand commends the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency as the sole international verification body and calls upon all Member States to fully cooperate with the Agency. As a member of the Board of Governors, Thailand looks forward to working closely with the international community in enhancing global nuclear safety, security and safeguards. We also wish to inform the Committee that the Thai delegation, led by the Minister of Science and Technology, will participate in the upcoming Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in December this year.

9. At the regional level, Thailand has initiated the establishment of the ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies or Relevant Authorities (ASEANTOM) with the objective to enhance regulatory activities and further strengthen nuclear safety, security and safeguards in ASEAN. This Network has been welcomed by ASEAN Leaders at the 20th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in April this year and it is expected that the Network would be established by the end of this year. This network will also support and contribute to the purpose of the ASEAN in preserving Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

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 and the strengthening of confidence building measures within the BWC.
11. As this year marks the 15th Anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC, Thailand welcomes the recent High-level Meeting of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and urges states that are not yet party to the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible. We look forward to fully and positively participating at the upcoming Third Special Session of the Conference to State Parties to the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention to be convened in April 2013. Additionally, we support the outcome of the 7th Review Conference of the BWC. 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, as they are much more common and widespread than WMD. When linked with transnational crimes and terrorism, they continue to inflict severe loss of life and limb on countless innocent victims across the world.

13. Thailand supports 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. We commend the hard work and successful conclusion of the 2nd Review Conference of the UN PoA held in New York from 27 August–7 September 2012 which provides vital momentum to arms control activities. We note that adequate resources and assistance are essential to the implementation of the PoA and pledge our full support in implementing the UN PoA since the illicit SALW have disproportionately affected innocent civilians, particularly vulnerable groups.

14. On this note, we wish to commend the work of United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) for providing substantive support for initiatives and activities for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific region. In particular, we would like to express our appreciation to the Center in supporting our initiative to organize the upcoming workshop entitled “Building Capacity and Overcoming Language Barriers in SALW Control” scheduled to be held during 11–13 December 2012 in Bangkok. In this regard, we urge the Center to maintain its active role and, at the same time, encourage all states in the region to further enhance their close cooperation with the Center in order to further promote regional peace and disarmament effort.
Mr. Chairman,

15. It is regrettable that the UN Conference on Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) held in July in New York this year did not reach a successful conclusion. However, the Thai delegation is not disheartened. We remain committed and supportive of the ATT process, an important treaty which we believe will help control the illicit transfer of conventional weapons and minimize the social and humanitarian impacts of such transfers. Thus, Thailand hopes to see a way forward on this matter and that the ATT could be successfully concluded in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

16. 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 in 2010 gave much-needed political impetus to the substantive work of the CD. Yet, it required the strong political will of the Member States to carry out much needed 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 its call for expansion of membership of the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

17. On a final note, Thailand firmly believes that peace and security are goals that every nation strives for. Even though the road may be arduous, the end result is worth the struggle. Progress in multilateral negotiations may be slow and not easily achieved. But the alternative is too bleak to contemplate. For the sake of present and future generations, 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.