STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE A LEGALLY-BINDING

INSTRUMENT TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

LEADING TOWARDS THEIR TOTAL ELIMINATION

New York, 27th – 31st March 2017

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)
I thank you Madam President for giving us the floor,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to preside over this conference and all members of the bureau. Timor-Leste is confident that under your capable leadership, this session will deliver the best possible outcome. In this regard, rest assure of the full cooperation of Timor-Leste delegation in the deliberations of the Conference.

Timor-Leste shares the views of ASEAN Member Countries as presented in the statement by the distinguished Representative of the Philippines.

Madam President,

We are all looking to a world that is safer, secure and free of all kind of weapons of mass destruction, in order, to preserve the existence of humanity and the generations to come.

The world that we know today is faced with numerous challenges. War, terrorism, race towards weapons of mass destruction, inequality, exploitation, injustice, just to mention a few, are still part of our daily reality.

The efforts undertaken to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament have taken decades and are still yet to be realized completely. The world has witnessed the catastrophic result caused by the use of nuclear weapons to humanity and its civilization. The race towards developing and owning nuclear weapons has also contributed to the rise of tensions both at the regional and global level. This threatens the existence of peace and stability and in the absence of peace and stability; there isn’t a place for development.

Considering the long path it has taken for the fulfillment of NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) objectives, Timor-Leste believes that serious action to eliminate nuclear weapons should lead to a world that is free from nuclear arms.

A collective effort which involves State Members and other stakeholders, serious commitment as well as the pursuit of good faith negotiations, are indeed required to realize a world that is safer, secure and serves as a safe haven for all. In this regard, Timor-Leste welcomes the initiative of world leaders who urged states to find common solutions to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, prevent their use and moreover, to bring to a conclusion the existence of nuclear arms.
Madam President,

On January 13th 2007, Timor-Leste signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia. The purpose of the treaty is to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and co-operation among the people of South East Asia. By doing so, we expect high solidarity and collaboration among nations of the region based on the fundamentals of respect, non-interference, settlements of differences by peaceful means, renunciation of threat or use of force and effective co-operation among nations.

Timor-Leste ratified the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction and on the Prohibition of Bacteriological (biological) Weapons or Toxics. Timor-Leste is also signature to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). These, Madam President, are clear manifestations of our commitments to promoting a peaceful and just world.

Timor-Leste views that a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons negotiated in this Conference shall reflect the following points:

1. Humanitarian consequences
   Nuclear weapon explosions and testing have caused unacceptable harm to generations of people. It demonstrated devastating immediate, mid-term and long-term effects. Moreover, the impact of nuclear weapon detonation cannot be contained by national borders and therefore could have regional and even global consequences, destruction, death, displacement as well as a long-term damage to the environment.

2. Risk
   The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a high risk for the existence of humanity. The risk of unauthorized or intentional use of nuclear weapons due to the vulnerability of nuclear command and control may contribute to instability at the regional and at the global level.

3. International law
   It is imperative to put into consideration all rules of international humanitarian law, such as the rule prohibiting attacks directed at civilians or civilian objects, the rule of prohibiting indiscriminate attacks and the rule on the protection of the natural environment.

Timor-Leste also views that it’s also imperative that the treaty should prohibits its parties, their nationals, and any other individuals subject to its jurisdiction from engaging in activities such as development, production, testing,
acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment, and use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.
The treaty should also prohibit its parties, their nationals, and any other individuals subject to its jurisdiction from assisting, financing, encouraging and inducing acts under prohibition.

Finally, the treaty should also include positive obligations for states parties, such as ensuring the rights of victims and survivors of nuclear weapons activities; requiring actions to address damage to affected environments; and providing for international cooperation and assistance to meet the obligations of the instrument.

Madam President,

In conclusion, Timor-Leste recognizes the efforts made by the United Nations in securing regional and global stability. However, the realization of a world that is free from nuclear weapons, requires political will, collective efforts of all as well as putting the values of humanity on top of other concerns. In these collective efforts, Timor-Leste continues to count on efforts made by civil societies, academia and international community.

Thank you, Madam President