



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY LOKE SEOW LAY  
DELEGATE TO THE 61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE  
FIRST COMMITTEE  
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Madam Chair,

1 Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as the Chairperson of the First Committee. My delegation looks forward to working with you. We are confident in your leadership and would like to assure you of our cooperation.

2 There often is a sense of deep resignation within the First Committee. This is a result of how little we seem to achieve from year to year. Several speakers have already referred to examples like the inability to mention disarmament and non-proliferation in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and the failure of the 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. More recently, there was the failure of the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in 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 to agree on a Final Document.

3 These speakers are right to point out that progress has been slow. Yet, I do not wish to succumb to pessimism. Undersecretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Mr Nobuaki Tanaka has already admonished us against taking that approach. He has said that we are not "powerless" in the face of these issues. I agree.

4 The reality is that disarmament and non-proliferation are serious issues with myriad implications - national and global. This is why discussions are often sensitive and contentious. Admittedly, this often results in slow progress. But on the flip side, this also means that there is broad and serious engagement. There is recognition that

these issues matter. There is understanding that these issues extend past national borders.

5 In this context, I hope that we can find pragmatic ways to move forward together. There are common areas of interest. For example, we all find ourselves in a different security environment from before. In the past, we have tended to focus almost exclusively on states. This was natural, since states were the main actors. But today, security issues tend to extend further afield. Clearly, states are no longer the only actors. Non-state actors are a concern to us all.

6 What would happen if a non-state actor acquires a weapon of mass destruction? This is a chilling thought. Many countries here have already been subjected to terrorist attacks. These attacks have not been geographically limited. Many of us, from Asia, to Africa, to Latin America, to Europe and North America, have suffered from attacks or been targeted at one point or another. Thankfully, if I can even use this term, these have been conventional attacks. Imagine the greater devastation if they were not. Let me repeat that we all have a stake in preventing this.

7 In this environment, global efforts are crucial. We need to recognize that disarmament and non-proliferation go together. It will be difficult to have progress on one without the other. States with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) should recognize that the existence of vast quantity of these weapons is a source of deep disquiet. States without WMD should realize that having them often adds nothing to their security. Both sides need to be pragmatic and try to build confidence. There are already multilateral initiatives that we can build on. For example, there are the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The world also awaits the coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), ten years after its adoption by the General Assembly. We can also seize the opportunity of the BWC review conference to be held later this year to minimise the dangers of the misuse of biotechnology.

8 As Undersecretary-General Tanaka has said, we are not powerless. We have, as a community, already made progress in addressing threats of WMD proliferation to non-state actors. Singapore welcomes the extension of the mandate of the UNSC 1540 Committee via Resolution 1673 of this year. We are also heartened

by the General Assembly's adoption of the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in April last year. We urge member states to take steps to ensure follow through of these instruments.

Madam Chair,

9 As a small country with an open and trade dependent economy, Singapore is acutely aware of the dangers posed by WMD. We have tried to take measures to mitigate these dangers. We have banned the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons. We have also tightened our export control system. Our Strategic Goods (Control) Act covers the export, re-export, transshipment, transit, brokering, and intangible technology transfers involving strategic goods and items suspected of WMD end-use. We participate in the Container Security Initiative and the Megaports Initiative. We participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). In line with Article XI of the CWC, we have been holding the Singapore International Symposium for Protection Against Toxic Substances (or SISPAT) since 1998.

10 The UN has a vital role in global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The UN is an organization with a global mandate and international legitimacy. The fact that we are all here today discussing these issues is proof positive. I hope that we can work together in building effective and cooperative disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. It is in our common interest to do this. Thank you.

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