



Association of Southeast Asian Nations

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Statement by

**His Excellency Mr. Kyaw Tin, Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations in New York
on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
at the General Debate of the First Committee
of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 8 October 2015

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar.
2. ASEAN congratulates you on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly. We assure you of our full support and cooperation.
3. ASEAN also congratulates Mr. Kim Won-soo on his assumption to office as the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in June 2015. We look forward to working closely with him in the months ahead. ASEAN would like to pay tribute to Ms. Angela Kane for her life-long contribution to the UN and her dedication to disarmament affairs during her tenure as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.
4. ASEAN associates with the statement delivered by the Vice Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mr. Chairman,

5. We are gathered here at a time when the UN celebrates its 70th Anniversary, affording us the opportunity to renew our commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Our meeting follows the adoption of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2015 also marks an important milestone for Southeast Asia's integration process. The 10 ASEAN Member States will establish the ASEAN Community by the end of 2015, which will contribute positively to the maintenance of regional peace and security.
6. Peace and security are essential requisites for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Strengthening our collective efforts to shape a secure future has become even more important. Although the UN has considerably contributed in maintaining world's peace and security, the number of regional conflicts as well as heinous acts of violence perpetuated by terrorists and extremist groups is on the rise. Their inhumane actions represent a threat to international peace and security. It is more crucial than ever to ensure that extremist groups and terrorists do not gain access to nuclear weapons, their means of delivery, and materials and technologies related to their manufacture.

Nuclear Disarmament

7. ASEAN reiterates that nuclear disarmament has always been, and remains, our utmost priority. Forty-five years into our collective efforts towards realizing this goal, the global stockpile of nuclear weapons remains alarmingly high. We therefore welcome recent efforts by UN Member States to focus the spotlight once again on nuclear disarmament.

8. ASEAN shares the aspiration of a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, ASEAN welcomes the General Assembly meeting held on 30 September 2015 to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The meeting raised awareness on why it is crucial and urgent to start eliminating nuclear weapons.

9. We deeply regret that prospects for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons continue to be bleak with almost two decades of stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We call upon the CD to establish, as soon as possible and as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

10. ASEAN reaffirms our commitments to the principles and objectives of the NPT, which continues to remain relevant, despite the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to adopt an outcome document. Although no agreement was possible this year and the preliminary discussion on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons fell short of our collective ambitions on the issue, there still remain valid conclusions and recommendations for other follow-on actions from the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. These include the 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament which remains outstanding and which still requires full and effective implementation.

Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons

11. ASEAN supports substantive discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, which are intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons both on human beings and the environment.

12. We agree with the United Nations Secretary-General that there is growing interest in understanding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the successful convening of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Oslo, Norway, Nayarit, Mexico and Vienna, Austria and welcome the endorsement of 119 states to the Humanitarian Pledge. We also welcome the 9th Regional Roundtable on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and the Prospects for a Ban Treaty in

Bangkok which was held in March 2015. It is high time to initiate a serious discussion to address the gaps that exist in the legal regime governing nuclear weapons. While we collectively deliberate the next steps forward on this issue in a transparent and inclusive manner, we urge all States Parties to uphold the NPT.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

13. ASEAN continues to believe that the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, contribute significantly to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

14. We welcome the convening of the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia in New York on 24 April 2015, chaired by Indonesia. While nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, they should not be a substitute for the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

15. ASEAN underscores the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, especially in the Middle East region, and expresses our continued support for the convening of the Conference, at the earliest date, on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. We also stress that it is necessary for the Nuclear Weapon States to provide unconditional assurances against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons to all states in the zones.

SEANWFZ

16. ASEAN plays a pivotal role in maintaining and promoting peace and stability in the region, thereby contributing to international peace and security.

17. We stress the importance of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime to maintain peace, security and prosperity in the region. We reaffirm our commitment to preserve Southeast Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. We further reaffirm our commitment to uphold the SEANWFZ Treaty. We underline the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including through the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of SEANWFZ Treaty (2013-2017), which was adopted by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 30 June 2013.

18. In this regard, ASEAN hopes to intensify the ongoing efforts of the State Parties to the SEANWFZ Treaty and the Nuclear Weapon States to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty pertaining to the signing and ratifying of the Protocol to that Treaty.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

19. ASEAN believes that the peaceful uses of nuclear technology provide enormous benefits for socio-economic development and will significantly contribute to the attainment of the 2030 Development Goals. ASEAN reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, in particular for its economic and social development. On our part, ASEAN has enhanced our cooperation to ensure that high standards of safeguards and safety measures are adhered to in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this connection, the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) was established in 2013. Since then, ASEANTOM has been a platform for sharing best practices and exchange of views on safety, security, and safeguards in the use of nuclear energy among the nuclear regulatory bodies or relevant authorities in the region.

20. ASEAN also recognizes the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, nuclear safety and safeguards. We continue to explore ways to formalize relations between ASEAN and the IAEA.

Iran Nuclear Deal

21. ASEAN welcomes the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the Islamic Republic of Iran and E3/EU+3 in Vienna on 14 July 2015, as well as the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on 20 July 2015. ASEAN believes that the Agreement would contribute to a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear issue, and in turn, to peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. In this regard, we call on all parties to fulfil their obligations towards the full implementation of the agreement and encourage all member States to contribute positively towards this objective.

Korean Peninsula

22. ASEAN Member States reiterate the importance of maintaining peace, stability and security in the Korean Peninsula. We reaffirm our support for all efforts to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner,

including creating conducive environment for the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks, and to continue the inter-Korean dialogue which would pave the way for the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, as well as for Korean reunification.

CTBT

23. ASEAN calls for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and attaches great importance to the universalization of the Treaty. The entry into force of the CTBT is essential to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is our shared obligation as members of the international community to reach this objective.

Outer Space

24. ASEAN shares the desire of the international community to strengthen the safety, security and long-term sustainability of outer space activities, as well as to ensure that outer space is used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all States, irrespective of the degree of their social, economic or scientific development. The convening of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Space Security Workshops in 2012 and 2014 has contributed to the promotion of dialogue and understanding on outer space issues.

Conventional Weapons

25. ASEAN supports the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to curb the proliferation of these deadly weapons that continue to claim many lives. However, we reiterate the importance of the right and authority of every sovereign nation to the use of conventional weapons, proportionately, to protect its internal security and territorial integrity.

26. ASEAN takes note of the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as well as the conclusion of the First ATT Conference of States Parties in Cancun, Mexico, in August 2015. ASEAN notes the establishment of the Secretariat of the ATT in Geneva and looks forward to positive developments that further the goals and objectives of the Treaty.

27. ASEAN also takes note with satisfaction the positive progress towards the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) which serves as a regional centre of excellence in addressing the humanitarian aspect of the explosive remnants of war (ERW), and welcomes the successful convening of

the Second Regional Seminar on the Establishment of an ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) which was held in Siem Reap on 14-15 August 2015.

28. ASEAN takes note of the First Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions held on 7 September 2015 in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Conclusion

29. ASEAN Member States calls on Member States to continue lending support to two annual resolutions entitled, "*Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons*" by Malaysia and "*Nuclear Disarmament*" by Myanmar. Both draft resolutions underscore the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by ASEAN Member States.

30. In conclusion, ASEAN emphasizes the need for redoubling our efforts to reach the goal of general and complete disarmament, with particular and urgent attention given to the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free-world.

31. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
