



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

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**STATEMENT BY MR JOHN KHOO
FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
14 OCTOBER 2015**

Mr Chairman,

1 As this is the first time Singapore is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you and the members of your bureau on your appointments. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership, we will work productively and constructively towards a successful outcome.

Mr Chairman,

2 My delegation recalls that following the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), there was cautious optimism that disarmament efforts were finally gaining momentum. A substantive Final Document, which reflected the commitment by States Parties to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, had just been adopted. The US and Russia had just signed the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), committing to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads deployed. Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) were working constructively with ASEAN Member States towards their accession to the Protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty. Unfortunately, five years on, this positive momentum seems to have abated.

Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

3 Singapore regrets that States Parties to the NPT failed to adopt a consensus Final Outcome Document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference

(RevCon) in May 2015 despite all the efforts that have been invested in the process. It is also worrying that there has been little discernible progress on the implementation of the 22 actions related to Nuclear Disarmament in the 2010 RevCon Final Document. The NWS have yet to make concrete progress on nuclear disarmament and the issue of convening the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction remains in limbo. All these have contributed to serious doubts about the continued efficacy and credibility of the NPT.

4 Notwithstanding its imperfections, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. Singapore remains firmly committed to the NPT process and the objectives of the NPT. We support the advancement of global nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the right of sovereign states to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. The three pillars of the NPT are mutually reinforcing and equally important. The continued relevance of the NPT will depend on the delivery of its objectives on all three fronts. Rather than attribute blame for the disappointing outcome of the 2015 RevCon, NPT States Parties should reaffirm their commitment to uphold the NPT and intensify our search for common ground. Only in the spirit of compromise will we be able to drive the process forward towards our shared objectives. We must also work towards the universalisation of the NPT, and find a way to involve nuclear weapons possessing states that fall outside the ambit of the NPT in disarmament discussions. Their exclusion undermines our collective efforts towards complete nuclear disarmament.

Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

5 The Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons initiative gained prominence and political support this year. Today, 119 nations, including Singapore, have formally endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge. Two NWS attended the Third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna last December for the first time. This issue was also an important element in the discussions at the 2015 RevCon. In the meantime however, states also need to make a greater commitment to uphold

the NPT, in particular Article VI, to eliminate the risk posed by nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones

Mr Chairman,

6 Singapore supports the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones as concrete, pragmatic steps under Article VII of the NPT, and as building blocks towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We have consistently supported efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear weapons-free Middle East through open, genuine and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties. In this context, we are disappointed that references to convening a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction could not be agreed on at the 2015 RevCon, which ultimately contributed to the failure to secure consensus. We reiterate our calls for all relevant parties to continue their engagement in a constructive manner and strive to convene the Conference as soon as possible.

Mr Chairman,

7 Twenty years ago, ASEAN Leaders signed the SEANWFZ Treaty in Bangkok, unified in their resolve to preserve Southeast Asia as a nuclear weapon-free zone. After a series of lengthy negotiations, NWS were scheduled to sign the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty in July 2012. Unfortunately, the signing was scuppered as a result of the last-minute submission of reservations which were not only broad and with substantive implications, but also incompatible with the object and purpose of the SEANWFZ Treaty. Nevertheless, we reaffirm our commitment to working closely with the NWS to resolve outstanding issues, and to work towards the collective signing and ratification of the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty by the NWS without reservations.

Mr Chairman,

Iran

8 Singapore welcomes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed between the P5+1 and Iran. We commend the hard work and efforts of all the parties involved. The agreement is a positive step in the right direction, but the implementation of the agreement will be crucial. We urge all parties to fulfil their respective obligations expeditiously and in good faith, for the sake of their own interests and those of the international community. We further urge Iran to extend its full cooperation to the IAEA in the implementation of the “Road-map for the Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran’s Nuclear Program” signed with the IAEA on 14 July 2015.

Arms Trade Treaty

9 We were pleased to welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014, which Singapore signed. Singapore has consistently supported global efforts to establish common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. Singapore is actively working to review and assess existing frameworks and legislations to ratify the ATT. With the ATT in force, the export of conventional weapons will be more closely regulated. This is a significant step towards greater accountability in the global arms trade.

Space

Mr Chairman,

10 Outer space, one of the few realms mankind has yet to fully conquer, holds untold opportunities. The number of worldwide orbital launches in 2014 was at its highest for twenty years, with 2015 set to be just as busy. The number of space-faring nations has rapidly expanded, accompanied by the development of their capabilities. Miniaturisation has enabled the construction

of smaller, cheaper satellites. Over the last few years, Singapore-built microsatellites, nanosatellites and picosatellites have been launched into space to serve purposes such as imaging and the tracking of environmental changes.

11 Satellites today play an indispensable role in our daily lives. We rely on them to make a phone call, navigate using Google Maps and forecast the weather. Their growing importance as well as the increasing number of stakeholders in outer space reinforces the need to strengthen the safety, security and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space. In particular, space debris poses a key challenge with more than 20,000 pieces of debris larger than 10cm orbiting Earth at over 27,000 kilometres per hour. With the number of satellites climbing steadily, the risk of collision has also increased. This issue should be tackled expeditiously. A possible avenue would be through a multilateral framework on rules of behaviour in outer space. Countries should build consensus on norms that encourage the peaceful use of space as a global commons for the benefit of all States.

Mr Chairman,

12 In conclusion, there is urgent work to be done to strengthen the international security regime. Nearly 70 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted its first resolution establishing a Commission whose mandate included the elimination of all atomic weapons and other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. Every UN Secretary-General since the founding of the United Nations has supported the goal of nuclear disarmament. The importance of disarmament is not lost upon us. Our common goal must remain general and complete disarmament. While we acknowledge that this is a long-term aspiration, we must redouble our efforts to ensure concrete progress expeditiously, and to ensure that disarmament does not remain a quixotic quest.

13 Thank you, Mr Chairman.