MYANMAR

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United Nations General Assembly
74th Session

Statement delivered by

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On behalf of the
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia,
Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam
at the General Debate of the First Committee

10 October 2019
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Mr. Chairperson,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar. ASEAN aligns itself with the NAM statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia.

2. ASEAN congratulates you and members of the Bureau, on your election as Chair and Bureau of the First Committee of this 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident in your able leadership to bring the best possible outcome and assure you of our support in advancing the important work of this committee. We also express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their leadership in advancing the UN disarmament agenda.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Chairperson,

3. We are gathered here once again to renew and reaffirm our commitments to uphold the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. ASEAN is supportive of collective measures to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN's mutual cooperation and engagement with each other on disarmament and non-proliferation contributes towards achieving the goal of sustaining and maintaining a peaceful and prosperous world.

4. ASEAN remains supportive of Comprehensive Agenda for Disarmament of Secretary-General António Guterres, launched in May 2018.

5. ASEAN remains concerned with the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. Therefore, ASEAN strongly supports initiatives and discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons since they provide a comprehensive understanding of the catastrophic impacts of nuclear weapons, both on humanity and the environment.

NPT

6. ASEAN continues to recognize the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. ASEAN calls on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations, particularly those under Article VI.

7. ASEAN commends Malaysia, one of its Member States, for its tireless and consistent efforts under trying circumstances in chairing the Third NPT Preparatory Committee in New York this year. The PrepCom Chair submitted recommendations, which gave a positive message despite a lack of consensus that we are broadly committed to implement our obligations across the three pillars of the NPT. ASEAN calls upon all parties, including the NWS, to demonstrate good faith and political will, promote mutual understanding, and enhance trustworthy cooperation to enable the 2020 Review Conference to produce tangible results towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

SEANWFZ

Mr. Chairperson,

8. ASEAN reiterates our commitment to preserve our region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty).

9. ASEAN also affirms the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones to the existing global non-proliferation regime. ASEAN continues to support the ongoing efforts toward the establishment of such zones, especially in the Middle East.

TPNW

Mr. Chairperson,

10. ASEAN recognizes that the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on July 7, 2017, along with the Bangkok Treaty and other nuclear weapon free zone treaties, constitutes a vital step towards global nuclear disarmament and complements the existing non-proliferation and global nuclear weapon related instruments. ASEAN believes that it would also make significant contributions towards the shared goal of making our region and the world free of nuclear weapons.

11. In this regard, the signatures of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand as well as the ratification of the Treaty by Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam are significant steps towards an early entry-into-force of this historic legal instrument.

CTBT

12. ASEAN also highlights the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Thailand's ratification of the CTBT on 25th September 2018 made all ASEAN members ratifying parties to the CTBT. ASEAN joins others in urging the Annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible to realize its entry into force, as most recently reiterated in the Final Declaration of the Article XIV Conference on 25 September.

Korean Peninsula

Mr. Chairperson,

13. ASEAN urges all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realization of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the US and DPRK leaders. ASEAN reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and notes international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Peaceful use of nuclear energy

Mr. Chairperson,

14. ASEAN reiterates that every State has the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, in particular for its economic and social development. In this regard, ASEAN will strengthen its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on issues related to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, including capacity building.

15. ASEAN signed the Practical Arrangements with IAEA in September 2019 to promote cooperation in nuclear science and technology, applications, nuclear safety, security and safeguards. ASEAN has also successfully convened the 6th ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) Annual Meeting in Krabi, Thailand in July 2019, and adopted the Five-Year ASEANTOM Work Plan (2019-2023).

UNSCR 1540

Mr. Chairperson,

16. ASEAN also underlines the importance of full and effective implementation of the non-proliferation regimes, including Security Council Resolution 1540. It is important that Member States cooperate closely especially on intelligence sharing, capacity-building, and assistance. Furthermore, industry, academia, and civil society have an important contribution to make to realizing an effective non-proliferation regime.

On other weapons of mass destructions,
CWC and BWC

17. ASEAN recognizes the threat and danger of the existence and use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons and call for universal adherence to applicable international legal instruments prohibiting these. ASEAN welcomes, in particular, the progress made in eliminating chemical weapons stockpiles since the entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention 20 years ago in 1997.

18. ASEAN also takes note of the discussions at the 17th Meeting of the State Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and looks forward the Fourth Review Conference which will be held at the end of next month in Norway. ASEAN is contributing through the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre headquartered in Phnom Penh in addressing the humanitarian aspect of unexploded ordinance and explosive remnants of war.

On information and communications technology,

Mr. Chairperson,

19. ASEAN recognizes the growing sophistication and transboundary nature of cyber threats and underline the need to address cybersecurity challenges in a holistic manner to ensure an open, secure, stable, accessible and resilient cyberspace to support the digital economy.

20. ASEAN stresses the need to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various fora under the United Nations disarmament machinery. ASEAN realizes the important role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and reiterates its call on the CD to agree, by consensus, on a balanced and comprehensive program of work without any further delay. ASEAN commends the Presidents of the CD in 2019, including Viet Nam for their sincere efforts to bring the CD forward.

21. The road we take towards disarmament that leads to a secure and peaceful world is a long and arduous one. ASEAN maintains the view that we must abide by our commitments and redouble our efforts in making tangible progress in disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. ASEAN firmly believes that only through constructive political dialogue, negotiations and engagement can heightened tensions and disagreements be addressed, and it expresses its readiness to closely interact with delegations and colleagues in the course of the deliberations.

22. I thank you Mr. Chairperson.

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