



MYANMAR

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Statement by

His Excellency U Maung Wai,

Ambassador/Permanent Representative

of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

on behalf of the ASEAN Member States

at the General Debate of the First Committee of

the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

9 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations - ASEAN namely; Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and my own country, Myanmar.

Mr. Chairman,

2. First of all, I congratulate you on your assumption as the Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that under your able leadership and vast experience, this Committee will produce very fruitful outcomes. Our tribute also goes to the other members of the Bureau for their election. ASEAN will extend its full support and cooperation as you discharge your important responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman,

3. ASEAN, with its sustained development, strategic geographical location and peace-oriented values in the region, plays a pivotal role in maintaining and promoting of peace and stability in the region, aiming toward prevalence of international peace and security.

4. Materializing their vision of a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies, the ASEAN Leaders adopted the ASEAN Charter. In line with the Charter and guided by the principles and purposes contained therein, the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint was adopted in March 2009. Under the APSC, one of the priority areas is the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) launched at the 21st ASEAN Summit in November 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, aimed at promoting research activities on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution in the region.

5. We put our utmost efforts in establishing the ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM). The first formal meeting of the network was held in September 2013 in Phuket, Thailand, and subsequently, its Terms of Reference was formally endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting in the same month. We strongly believe that the ASEANTOM will support and contribute to the purpose of ASEAN in preserving Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

6. We reaffirm the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct governing inter-state relations in the region and a foundation for the maintenance of regional peace and stability. In this regard, ASEAN welcomes the entry into force of the Third Protocol Amending the TAC and the accession by the UK, the EU, and Brazil in Phnom Penh in 2012 and Norway in Bandar Seri Begawan in July 2013 to the Treaty as a positive signal of their commitment to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN and contribute to peace and security in the region. Therefore, we are encouraged by the continued interests of other non-ASEAN member states to accede to the Treaty and we encourage the others to do so.

Nuclear disarmament and Nuclear Non-proliferation

Mr. Chairman,

7. Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on the disarmament agenda of ASEAN. We underscore that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the UN Charter, provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues.

8. ASEAN attaches great importance to the outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and reiterates its call for the full and effective implementation of the action plan as set out in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the Final Document of 2010 Review Conference, particularly the 22-point action plan on

nuclear disarmament. While welcoming the success of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, the ASEAN States Parties to the Treaty call for the full implementation of the action plans adopted in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle-East.

9. Though there have been some positive signals and development, the world is still confronted by unresolved challenges. Therefore, ASEAN calls for renewed efforts to resolve the current impasse in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. In this regard, we welcome the successful convening of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. We hope that building on the outcomes of this meeting, we can move forward to achieve the common goal of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, we also welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) to develop proposals to move multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations forward for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. In order to have concrete and deliverable outcomes, we strongly believe that all stakeholders should be involved in the process of the OEWG.

10. ASEAN Member States stress the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We reaffirm the Treaty as a core instrument that prohibits all nuclear testing on earth contributing to stop the modernization of existing nuclear weapons, and preventing the development of new nuclear warheads and their means of delivery systems, leading to nuclear disarmament. While welcoming the recent ratification of CTBT by Brunei Darussalam, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq, we reiterate our call on all States, in particular those whose ratification is needed for the Treaty's entry into force, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

Resolutions on Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

11. ASEAN Member States are committed in continuing to contribute the work of the First Committee. In this light, two draft resolutions will be submitted by ASEAN Member States again this year. One of the draft resolutions that will be tabled by Malaysia again this year is "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons". The draft resolution essentially underscores the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice on 8 July 1996 that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control.

12. In line with the highest priority we attach to in our disarmament agenda, Myanmar will again table a draft resolution on Nuclear Disarmament to this session. We are convinced that the mere existence of nuclear weapons combined with the lack of international legally binding instruments on the complete prohibition of such weapons poses the greatest threat to the survival of mankind. The resolution has been introduced for a number of years, and it is cosponsored by the ASEAN Member States and like-minded countries. This resolution reflects, inter alia, interim measures and steps to be taken by nuclear-weapons States as well as various multilateral approaches leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

13. These resolutions underscore the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by ASEAN Member States. We hope that we will enjoy the support of UN member states in taking action on the draft resolutions at this esteemed Committee.

Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone

Mr. Chairman,

14. ASEAN continues to believe that the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the treaties of Tlateloco, 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. 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 to the convening of the Conference, at the earliest, on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. We would like to stress also that it is necessary to provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all states in the zones by the Nuclear Weapon States.

15. One of the purposes, enshrined in the ASEAN Charter as well as one of the key elements in the APSC Blueprint is to preserve the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction. ASEAN will continue to engage the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty, outstanding issues with regards to the signing of the Protocol of the SEANWFZ Treaty without reservations as early as possible. ASEAN underscores the importance of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime to maintain peace, security and prosperity in the region. We welcome the adoption of the revised Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the SEANWFZ (2013-2017) with a renewed commitment and a stronger emphasis on concrete actions.

16. At this 68th session of UNGA, Brunei Darussalam, as ASEAN Chair and Chairman of SEANWFZ Commission, and on behalf of ASEAN Member States, will submit once again the biennial traditional draft resolution entitled "Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone". Building on the results in 2011, ASEAN is hopeful to seek the co-sponsorship of the resolution on SEANWFZ from the Nuclear-Weapons States this year. We look forward to the support of all UN Member States to this resolution which encourages nuclear-weapons States and States parties to the Bangkok Treaty to continue to work constructively with a view to ensuring the early accession of the nuclear-weapons States to the Protocol of the Treaty without reservations.

Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Chairman,

17. ASEAN reaffirms that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC) also play a major role in combating weapons of mass destruction as they pose a serious threat to humankind. While expressing our concerns on the use of chemical weapons used in Syria, we again urge states that have not yet done so to join these Conventions at the earliest opportunity with a view to their universality.

Conventional Weapons

Mr. Chairman

18. ASEAN Member States share the concerns on the negative impact of illicit small arms and light weapons on security, human rights and social and economic development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels. As such, we are seriously concerned of the illicit manufacture, transfer and trade of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. Therefore, it is essential to promote full and effective implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the

Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this regard, we reiterate our call on all states and organizations to fully support this Programme of Action.

19. While welcoming the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013, ASEAN wishes to express that the Treaty could be more balanced and inclusive. ASEAN upholds the UN Charter and international law, and reaffirms that every nation has the rights to self-defense and protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity and they have the primary responsibility to prevent illicit arms trade and transfer in their own territories.

20. ASEAN recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact caused by the use of landmines and cluster munitions. Underscoring the importance of an ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), we have concluded its TOR. We welcome the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (13MSP) to be held from 2 to 5 December 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. We also recognize the important work done during the discussions at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions held in Lusaka, Zambia from 9 to 13 September 2013.

Conference on Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

21. ASEAN Member States reaffirm the importance and validity of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament forum on disarmament. We are disappointed by the continued stalemate at the Conference during its session in 2013. However, we welcome the establishment of an Informal Working Group to produce a draft Programme of Work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. Although there are some arguments for and against the efficacy of the informal working group, we believe that it is a step in the right direction and constitutes a new opportunity for us to move the work of the conference forward. We also call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, as soon as possible and as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

22. ASEAN supports the appointment of a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

23. We are further intensifying our efforts to ensure a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible ASEAN Community in 2015 by implementing the ASEAN Charter and the Road Map for an ASEAN Community. In doing so, we are committed to striving for international peace and security and strengthening efforts to reach the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world as a matter of utmost priority.

24. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.