



**Statement delivered by**

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On behalf of the  
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

at the thematic discussion on Nuclear weapons of the First Committee of  
the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
(New York, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022)

*Mr. Chair,*

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN aligns itself with the statement by the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) delivered by the distinguished representative of Indonesia.

*Mr. Chair,*

2. We are discussing the issue of nuclear weapons this year in the face of a challenging environment. The heightened tensions between major powers, and the modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals spark new concerns of an arms race. The Secretary-General has warned of “nuclear danger not seen since the height of the Cold War”. Against such an unsettling backdrop, solidarity in our efforts to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons must remain a paramount priority. ASEAN is convinced that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are best addressed through multilateralism, with all countries fulfilling their obligations and commitments responsibly.

3. On our part, ASEAN supports the common efforts of the international community towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN remains concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and the risks posed by their continued existence. ASEAN continues to reiterate that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee against their use and threat of use.

4. ASEAN reaffirms its recognition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global regime of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. ASEAN therefore welcomes the convening of the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last August after it was postponed four times. However, we regret the consecutive failure of the Ninth and Tenth Review Conferences to adopt a consensus outcome document that could have provided much-needed additional momentum towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The hard work must continue, and ASEAN recognises the important role of the NPT for peace, security and sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, ASEAN reiterates its call on all States Parties to the NPT to renew their commitments to the full and effective implementation of NPT obligations and commitments, particularly those concerning the realization of Article VI of the NPT.

ASEAN also calls on all Nuclear Weapon States-Parties to the NPT to fulfill all of their nuclear disarmament obligations and emphasizes the need for them to adhere to accountability through benchmarks, concrete, measurable, timebound actions on nuclear disarmament with established deadlines, and to report their implementation of their obligations until the goal of total elimination is achieved, in a structured manner that allows Non-Nuclear Weapon States to engage constructively on their reports.

5. ASEAN reaffirms its collective position against nuclear tests, and continues to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay. All ASEAN Member States have ratified the CTBT, reflecting our strong commitment to the international norm against nuclear testing. ASEAN welcomes that the CTBT now has 186 signatories and 176 ratifications, but continues to call upon the remaining States listed in the Annex 2 of the CTBT, to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible for its early entry into force.

ASEAN also recognizes that the dangers of nuclear testing continue to be of utmost concern. Therefore, the situation in all regions that underwent nuclear test explosions shall not be forgotten. We encourage the international community to assist these regions.

6. ASEAN maintains that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a historic agreement which contributes towards global nuclear disarmament and complements other existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, including the NPT, the CTBT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Having entered into force on 22 January 2021, the TPNW provides that each State Party undertakes never under any circumstance to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We note the adoption of the Declaration and an action plan of the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, held in Vienna in June 2022.

In line with the foregoing, ASEAN supports the United Nations Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament as a comprehensive step to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a concrete, holistic, and integrated manner.

*Mr. Chair,*

7. Such a comprehensive approach must also emphasise the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zone. ASEAN supports every effort to create and enhance the role and contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including in the Middle East.

ASEAN continues to uphold its commitment to preserve the Southeast Asia region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) or Bangkok Treaty. To this end, we agreed to extend the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ for another five-year period (2023-2027) and reaffirm our commitment to continuously engage the Nuclear Weapon States and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

8. We would like to stress that it is necessary for the Nuclear Weapon States to provide unconditional legally binding negative security assurances against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons to all states in the zones, as well as to reduce and eliminate the risk of unintentional and accidental use of such weapons, pending the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

*Mr. Chair,*

9. ASEAN reiterates that every State has the right to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology, in particular for its economic and social development. Commending the efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in their technical cooperation programmes with states toward these ends, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our cooperation with the IAEA. In this regard, we would like to highlight the annual meetings of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) with the assistance of the IAEA, including

the most recent meeting held in August 2022. ASEAN is pleased with the progress in the implementation of the 2019 Practical Arrangements (PA) on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards between ASEAN and the IAEA.

10. Mr. Chair, let me conclude by reiterating ASEAN's commitment to the important work of the Committee in realizing the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I thank you, Mr. Chair./.