



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ANOUPARB
VONGNORKEO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)
AT THE 2024 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION**

NEW YORK, 1 APRIL 2024

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
2. We extend our congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the 2024 Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Rest assured of ASEAN's full support and constructive participation.
3. ASEAN recognises the importance of preserving and strengthening the nature, role and purpose of the various fora under the UN disarmament machinery, given the persistent challenges to international peace and security. We believe that the UNDC, with its universal membership, retains a unique role in building trust and confidence among Member States on various issues in the disarmament sphere.
4. In today's world, characterised by heightened tensions and the expansion and modernisation of nuclear arsenals, the imperative for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remains as urgent as ever. ASEAN reiterates its concern over the declining commitment and cooperation in global disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control mechanisms. We remain convinced that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are best addressed through multilateralism with all countries, especially Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) fulfilling their obligations and commitments responsibly.
5. ASEAN supports the common efforts of the international community towards realising a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN remains concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and the unacceptable risks posed by their continued existence. ASEAN reiterates that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee against their use and threat of use.
6. To this end, we reaffirm our collective position against nuclear tests and continue 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 continues to call upon the remaining States listed in Annex 2 of the CTBT, to sign and ratify the CTBT

as soon as possible for its entry into force.

7. ASEAN reaffirms its recognition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. We acknowledge the convening of the First Session of the Preparatory Committee of the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in Vienna last year and look forward to the Second Session this year in Geneva. We hope this review cycle can yield substantive outcomes and provide crucial momentum towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.
8. ASEAN continues to call on all States Parties to the NPT to renew their commitments to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, particularly Article VI, and to pursue best efforts to uphold the credibility and integrity of the NPT and to rally towards a meaningful consensual outcome document at the 11th Review Conference in 2026.
9. ASEAN also calls on all Nuclear Weapon States 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 the implementation of their obligations until the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons is achieved, in a structured manner that allows Non-Nuclear Weapon States to engage constructively on their reports.
10. We reiterate our commitment to preserving the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) 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 (SEANWFZ) or the Bangkok Treaty, and stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Treaty. We reaffirm that the establishment and preservation of SEANWFZ enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and furthers the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Furthermore, we recognize that the SEANWFZ Treaty contributes to the objectives of the NPT.
11. ASEAN welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the biennial resolution on the Bangkok Treaty on 4 December 2023 by consensus. We thank Member States for supporting this important resolution which underscores the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by the region.
12. In addition to the NPT, the CTBT and nuclear-weapon-free-zones including SEANWFZ, 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. We acknowledge the convening of the 2nd Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW held at the end of 2023.
13. On our part, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and its 27 members have continued to engage in dialogue and exchange of views on non-proliferation and disarmament issues through the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD). The 14th ARF ISM on NPD was successfully held in Sri Lanka in May 2023 and we

look forward to the 15th ARF ISM on NPD which is scheduled later this month in the United States.

14. ASEAN reaffirms the inalienable right of States to peaceful use of nuclear energy, in particular for their economic and social development. In this regard, the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), which convened its 10th Annual Meeting in August 2023, continues its efforts to enhance cooperation among the nuclear regulatory bodies and further strengthen nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in the region. ASEAN is pleased with the progress of the implementation of the 2019 Practical Arrangements (PA) between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards, and is committed to strengthening its cooperation with the IAEA, including through renewal of the PA.
15. ASEAN reiterates its support for the full and effective implementation of other relevant efforts, including UNSC Resolution 1540 and the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a concrete, holistic, and integrated manner. Additionally, ASEAN takes note of the Secretary General's New Agenda for Peace which outlines his vision for multilateral efforts for peace and security, based on international law, for a world in transition. ASEAN will remain engaged and active in the discussion in this regard.
16. ASEAN recognises that global challenges are becoming more frequent, interconnected and multidimensional. Notably, the rapid advancement of emerging technologies presents both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges, particularly within the context of international security.
17. We acknowledge the necessity to establish policies and guidance to spur the development of emerging technologies in a responsible and secure manner. To that end, the ASEAN Digital Ministers have endorsed the ASEAN Guide on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance and Ethics, which sets out ASEAN's approach towards governing and leveraging the power of AI. The Guide, which includes use cases for trustworthy AI, will serve as a practical and implementable tool to support the trusted deployment of AI solutions in the region.
18. ASEAN looks forward to deeper discussions on emerging technologies in the context of international security under Working Group II in this new UNDC cycle. These discussions could help foster collective understandings and exchange of views on robust approaches to address emerging challenges, towards ensuring the responsible and beneficial integration of emerging technologies within the broader context of international security.

Mr. Chair,

19. In closing, ASEAN remains ready to engage in and contribute to the discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as emerging technologies, towards our common goals in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

