Assalamualaikum and a very good afternoon,
I am delivering these remarks on behalf of The Honourable Dato’ Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia,

Yang Teramat Mulia Dato’ Seri DiRaja Tan Sri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz Binti Almarhum Sultan Abdul Halim Mu‘adzam Shah, Tunku Temenggong Kedah, National Chairperson, Malaysian Red Crescent Society,

Yang Berbahagia. Dato’ Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia,

Heads of Department,

Distinguished guests,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to express my warm appreciation to you, in giving your time to be here, as we celebrate this important occasion. As you have just witnessed, I had signed the Instrument of Ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), on behalf of the Government of Malaysia. Our officials will ensure that this instrument is transmitted immediately to our mission in New York, so that it can be registered and deposited with the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG).

2. With Malaysia’s ratification, to date, 46 countries have ratified the Treaty. This brings the international community closer to the number of 50 ratifications that is needed to bring this Treaty into force. We are proud to have contributed to this important Treaty, and we encourage other States to expedite their ratifications.

3. Malaysia has always held a principled position that the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons should be at the top of the international agenda.
4. Despite some progress over the decades just preceding and after the end of the Cold War, recent developments regarding nuclear weapons are going in the wrong direction. Instead of fulfilling their legal obligation under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to engage in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, global tensions and increased great power rivalry have led nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed States to continue to modernise their nuclear weapons arsenals. At the same time, the global disarmament and arms control architecture is being eroded, and some States are developing doctrines for use of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons that increase the risk of use, whether intended, unintended, or accidental.

5. For Malaysia, and many non-nuclear weapons States, these developments are unacceptable. They affect our security and the security of all States. It is these developments that spurred the process for this Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

6. Malaysia signed the TPNW on 20 September 2017. Though it has taken a little time to ensure that the necessary processes were completed, I am honoured that Malaysia has placed a tangible effort to the global movement towards nuclear disarmament.

7. This year of 2020, which marks the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly, the 75th Anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the 50th Year of the Entry into Force of the NPT and the 25th Year of its indefinite extension, has been a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is and remains the focus at the moment, but States cannot forget the other challenges to humanity such as the continued existence of nuclear weapons. The coming entry into force of the TPNW complements international law, and reinforces that nuclear weapons are unacceptable, should not be used, should not be threatened to be used, and need to be discarded and destroyed as soon as possible. The TPNW further changes the nuclear disarmament discourse - from that dominated by the nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed States, to that which is more democratic, equitable, and where all countries have a voice.

8. For Malaysia, our journey to get here has been the result of many people, both in Government and outside, as well as with external partners, working together, and with passion and vigour towards this goal. Malaysia had supported the resolutions in the General Assembly leading to this Treaty. We were active at the 2016 Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) in Geneva, supporting the Chair of Thailand; and together with Brazil, Costa Rica, and 7 other States, submitted Working Paper 34 to the OEWG which for the first time listed the prohibitions needed for nuclear weapons. This led to the OEWG recommending to the General Assembly to commence negotiations in 2017. At the TPNW negotiations itself in 2017, Malaysia supported the President of the Conference from Costa Rica, and worked together closely with Austria, Brazil, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Thailand and South Africa, amongst others, to ensure that the draft treaty being negotiated was legally sound, politically strong, and also practicable and implementable.

9. In these processes, we also worked together with partners from the international community, such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Soka Gakkai
International, Article 36, and the International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI), amongst others.

10. Domestically, so many have been invaluable partners, including, Soka Gakkai Malaysia, the Malaysian Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organisation (MAPIM), University of Malaya (UM), the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and the International Islamic University of Malaysia (UIAM).

11. And finally, the other ministries and agencies in Government have been crucial in the process, such as the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), the Attorney-General’s Chambers (AGC), the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), the Malaysian Nuclear Agency (MNA), the National Security Council (MKN), and ISIS-Malaysia, and security agencies such as the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM), the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM), Royal Malaysian Customs (JKDM), and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (APMM).

12. I wish to thank all of them in supporting the Foreign Ministry, and the Government of Malaysia in reaching this point.

13. I also wish to thank the leadership and officers in Wisma Putra, those in service as well as those who have retired, for consistently pursuing the disarmament agenda, for continuously highlighting the importance of these issues, and for working tirelessly in the negotiations, consultations and coordination needed to get us here.

Distinguished guests,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

14. We are taking another step towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons. There is still much more to be done. But with the signing of the Instrument of Ratification of the TPNW by Malaysia today, we are one step closer.

I thank you.

Distinguished guests,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thus conclude the statement by The Honourable Dato’ Seri Hishammuddin.