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STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY U MYA THAN

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA

ON BEHALF OF

THE ASEAN MEMBER STATES

IN THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
57TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 9 OCTOBER 2002
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the Association of the South East Asian Nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and my own delegation, Myanmar.

At the outset, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your unanimous election as the Chairman of the First Committee. Our tribute also goes to the other members of the Bureau. We, the ASEAN delegates, are fully confident that, under your able leadership, our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. We pledge you the fullest cooperation and support of the ASEAN countries.

We welcome in our midst the representatives of Switzerland and Timor-Leste who have just joined us as the 190th and 191st Member States, respectively, of the United Nations.

Millennium Declaration

Mr. Chairman,

The Millennium Declaration adopted by the Millennium Summit is of utmost importance, reflecting the commitments by our Heads of State and Government. In the Millennium Declaration, our Heads of State and Government reaffirm their resolve to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. During this session we should continue to focus our efforts to translate these commitments into reality.

Resolution on ICJ's advisory opinion

Mr. Chairman,

The ASEAN countries would like to reiterate that we view the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* as a very important contribution to the international community’s efforts for peace and security.

The ASEAN countries recognize that, in view of recent political developments, there now exist conditions for the establishment of a world free of
nuclear weapons. The ASEAN countries also reaffirm the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996 that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regards, we, the ASEAN countries, intend to continue co-sponsoring the resolution, tabled every year by Malaysia, supporting this important ruling, and we will continue to do so.

Resolution on nuclear disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

For a number of years, the ASEAN countries have co-sponsored the yearly resolutions, initiated by Myanmar, urging the nuclear weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. The resolution urges the nuclear weapon States, as an interim measure; to de-alert and de-activate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to further reduce the operational status of their nuclear weapon systems. It also calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

These two resolutions are part of the ASEAN members' contributions to the cause of disarmament. This year, Malaysia and Myanmar, with the support of ASEAN and other co-sponsors, will re-table these resolutions. It is our hope that these resolutions will enjoy broader support and increased co-sponsorship.

At the same time, I should like to inform the delegations that the ASEAN countries has also successfully introduced a working paper on Nuclear Disarmament at the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission and our proposals, underscoring the elements of the above-mentioned resolutions were included in the Chairman's paper on the Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament. Through such efforts, the ASEAN countries will continue to strive to accelerate the momentum of the process of nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation

Mr. Chairman,

The ASEAN countries have consistently stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
(CTBT) and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). We reiterate our call on the nuclear weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

In this context, we welcome the convening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in New York in 2001. We are encouraged that three nuclear weapon States have ratified this important Treaty to date. We also urge all States, particularly the remaining nuclear weapon States, to ratify the CTBT treaty, as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and note with satisfaction that the preparations are underway for the 2005 Review Conference. The ASEAN countries particularly welcome the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all states parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. We reiterate our view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call again for the full and effective implementation of the steps set out in the Final Document. In this connection, we reaffirm our conviction that there exists an urgent need for the nuclear weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfill their obligations under the NPT, in particular Article VI on nuclear disarmament and Article IV to provide technical assistance in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to non-nuclear weapon states.

We welcome Cuba's recent decision to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to ratify the Tlatelolco Treaty. This will bring us one step closer to achieving the universality of the membership of the NPT.

**Missiles and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty**

Mr. Chairman,

The ASEAN countries note the recent dialogues among the major powers and the concerned States on the National Missile Defence (NMD) and expressed our hope that such dialogues would narrow down the differences and bring new constructive approaches to address the issues related to the NMD in the interest of maintaining world security and stability.
We share the view that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, as a contribution to international peace and security. We note that a Panel of Governmental Experts was established pursuant of General Assembly Resolution 55/33 A to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. We continue to believe that the concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

We note with concern the recent development pertaining to the START process and the ABM Treaty. We also note the signing of the US-Russia Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (The Moscow Treaty) as a step towards reducing their deployed strategic nuclear weapons.

**Weapons of mass destruction**

Mr. Chairman,

We recall that the 34th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the progress that has been made in the negotiation of a Protocol on the verification of the Biological Weapon Convention (BWC). However, we note with regret that the 5th Review Conference of the State Parties to BWC was adjourned without any substantive results and with a lack of consensus at the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group on the draft composite text of BWC Protocol. The ASEAN countries regret that the Group could not adopt a final report of its work. The ASEAN countries emphasizes the validity of the mandate that was given to the AD Hoc Group and underlines that the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory legally-binding agreement.

We express our hope that the re-convened session of the BWC Review Conference to be held in November 2002 will make progress in efforts to strengthens the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), especially by agreeing to hold annual meeting of the State Parties.

We also urge all States, which have neither ratified nor acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to do so at an earliest possible date.
Small arms and light weapons

Mr. Chairman,

The ASEAN countries note the outcome of the UN Conference on Illicit Trade on Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects held in New York and expressed our hope that the Programme of Action adopted by this conference would be implemented effectively. At the same time, we regret that the Conference failed to achieve agreement on two core issues relating to the problem of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, i.e., strict control over private ownership of small arms and prevention of supplies of small arms and prevention of supplies of small arms to non-state groups. However, we should like to underline the right of self defence of States to the legitimate use of small arms to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. In this connection, we join the call made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Member States to redouble their efforts to work on a ban on supplying small arms to non-state actors. The Programme of Action coming out of the Conference is a first step in the right direction.

We look forward to the Biennial Meeting, to be held in 2003, and to the Review Conference to take stock of progress made and to consider further and more effective measures to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We express our preference for convening the Biennial Meeting in New York in July 2003.

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

Mr. Chairman,

We strongly believe that the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) constituted by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba as positive steps towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned.

The ASEAN countries, through sustained efforts have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South East Asia. The South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) had entered into force on 27 March 1997. A protocol is annexed to the treaty for accession by nuclear weapon-States (NWS). In welcoming the announcement by China at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in July 1999, of its readiness to accede to the
Protocol, we wish to reiterate our call to NWS to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

We welcome the progress in the implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty and stress the importance of direct consultations between ASEAN and the five nuclear weapon States. We consider this a significant progress towards encouraging the accession of the nuclear weapon States to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty. In this connection, we welcome the first direct consultation between ASEAN and NWS in Hanoi on 19 May 2001 and reaffirm our support for this process and call for continued consultations with NWS. We also welcome the SEANWFZ and IAEA Regional Workshop on Strategic Plan for Radiation Safety held in Bangkok on 11 August 2001.

We also welcome the recent agreement at the expert level among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the text of the treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The emergence of the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone will further broaden the nuclear-weapon-free regions of the world, and will contribute to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We also reiterate our support for the consolidation of the nuclear-free status of Mongolia and for P5’s Joint Statement providing security assurances to it.

SSOD IV

Mr. Chairman,

We reiterate once again our support for the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament. We reiterate our deep concern over the lack of consensus on the deliberations held by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999 on the agenda and objectives. We continue our call for further steps leading to the convening of the Fourth Special Session with the participation of all Member States of the United Nations as well as the need for SSOD IV to review and assess the implementation of SSOD I, while reaffirming its principles and priorities.
ARF process and confidence building measures

Mr. Chairman,

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence building efforts among the countries in the region. ASEAN has been steadfastly undertaking concrete measures to enhance regional security through various initiatives at the ASEAN Regional Forum.

We note the positive developments in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process through various activities. We take note with satisfaction of the fruitful discussions and exchange of views at the 9th ARF. We are encouraged that the 9th ARF has adopted the ARF Statement on Measures against Terrorist Financing and has welcomed the establishment of an Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC) as a specialized response to the challenge posed by the international terrorism. We are also encouraged that the ARF will continue to build on the concept papers on Preventive Diplomacy, the ARF Experts/Eminent Persons Register and the enhanced role of the ARF Chair as a means to further advance the ARF Process and that it has welcomed the Concept Paper, submitted by the United States of America and Malaysia as a good basis for the work of new ISM.

We also note with satisfaction the progress in the implementation of the overlapping measures between Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD). Over the past years numerous discussions and talks have been held to enhance mutual understanding among nations and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. We will continue our strong support for the activities of the ARF, Inter-sessional Support Group (ISG).

Conference on Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are greatly dismayed on the continued impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and regret that the Conference of Disarmament was still unable to reach an agreement on the programme of work at its 2002 session and start its substantive work. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome this deadlock and reach amicable solution in the near future. The ASEAN countries believe the
expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is necessary and we fully endorse the application of Thailand and the Philippines.

We believe that establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is an urgent priority. We therefore call for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein.

Regional Centre

Mr. Chairman,

Once again, we should like to express our appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean and Africa for their effective contributions towards international peace and security. Regional Seminars and Forums, which were organized by those Centres, effectively contribute to the progress of ongoing security and disarmament process in respective regions.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman,

We renew our commitment to multilateralism as an important means of pursuing and achieving our common objectives in the field of disarmament and our determination to further promote multilateralism in this respect.

It is now more urgent than ever for us, the international community, to strive for international peace and security and redouble our efforts and live up to our commitments to the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. We, the ASEAN countries, once again reaffirm our commitment to work cooperatively to achieve these goals as a matter of utmost priority.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.