Statement by His Excellency U Mya Than,
Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar
to the United Nations in Geneva

General Debate

The Second Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties
to the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Geneva, 29 April 2003
Mr. Chairman,

I am very much delighted to see you presiding over the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Allow me to extend to you the warmest congratulations of the Myanmar delegation on your well-deserved unanimous election as the Chairman of the Second PrepCom as well as our best wishes for success in your stewardship of this session. I pledge the fullest cooperation of my delegation.

I wish to associate my delegation with the statement by Ambassador Rastam Mohd Isa, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties to the NPT.

We are delighted to welcome to our midst the representative of Cuba which has acceded to the NPT on 4 November 2002.

We also commend the earnest efforts of the five Central Asia states to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

Mr. Chairman,

This is a time of daunting challenges and formidable difficulties for the NPT. The principle of the universality of the Treaty has been challenged. The nuclear non-proliferation regime has been put under a severe strain. The process of nuclear disarmament and the implementation of the 13 steps, set out in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, has been called into question.

**Strengthened Review Process**

Mr. Chairman,

One of the valuable and useful outcomes of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 NPT Review Conference is the strengthened review process. We have seen that the strengthened review process has worked fairly well so far. However, there is still much room for improvement. We should make the optimum use of the possibilities and potential offered by the strengthened review process in order to ensure fruitful deliberations and a successful outcome at the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

This Session --- the Second PrepCom --- constitutes the crucial stage in the preparatory work for the Conference. The Third PrepCom in 2004 will be engaged in substantive discussions and deliberations on important issues of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is, therefore, essential that the Second PrepCom should prepare the ground for the substantive work to be undertaken at the Third PrepCom, in addition to its normal preparatory work.
Universality

Mr. Chairman,

We attach great importance to the universality of the membership of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is incumbent upon all State Parties to continue their endeavours to achieve the universal membership of the Treaty.

The objective of universality of membership can be advanced not just be enlarging the membership but also by safeguarding against withdrawals from the Treaty. We should, therefore, like to emphasize the importance of sustainability and preservation of the membership, while striving to achieve its universality.

The one state party that has announced its withdrawal from the NPT should reconsider its decision, and should rejoin the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

The 13 practical steps, set out in paragraph 15 of the provisions on the Implementation of the Article VI and preambular paragraphs 8 and 12 of the Treaty in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, are the benchmarks with which we should assess how much progress has been made by the nuclear weapon states in the field of nuclear disarmament. Progress made in the implementation of the practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Treaty has fallen short of the expectations of the State Parties, and is, indeed, disappointing.

It is now 8 years after the indefinite extension of the Treaty and the adoption of the Decision on Principles and Objectives of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

It is almost 7 years after the pronouncement of the Advisory Opinion on 8 July 1996 by the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons. Yet, an objective assessment of the situation reveals that there has not been significant and satisfactory progress in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice is that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiation leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Today, after a lapse of almost a decade, we are no nearer to the achievement of this goal.
Mr. Chairman,

It is true that some progress has been made in unilateral reductions and bilateral reductions of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapon states. We welcome these steps.

However, it is essential that any reductions in the nuclear arsenals should be implemented in strict observance of the principle of irreversibility. This also applies to the Moscow Treaty.

We take note with appreciation the conclusion of the US-Russian Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (Moscow Treaty) as a positive step towards reducing their deployed strategic nuclear weapons, provided that these reductions be implemented in strict observance of the benchmarks of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency.

Mr. Chairman,

The track record shows that there is also lack of progress in other areas of the 13 practical steps set out in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference:

- The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet to enter into force.

- It is agreed that the next urgent step in nuclear disarmament process is the immediate commencement and the early conclusion of the negotiation of a FMC Treaty. But, owing to the inflexible positions of NWS, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is still unable to commence negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the report of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

- The CD ought to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament. But the CD is still in an impasse, and still unable to engage itself in any substantive work.

- Reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons is one of significant interim measures to reduce the nuclear danger. But, up till now, there have been no agreed measures by NWS to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons.