



MYANMAR

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STATEMENT

By

HIS EXCELLENCY U MYA THAN

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICES AND

OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, GENEVA,

ON BEHALF OF

THE ASEAN MEMBER STATES

IN THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

THE 58TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

NEW YORK, 14 OCTOBER 2003

I. Introduction

Mr. Chairman,

1. 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 People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and my own delegation, Myanmar.

2. At the very 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 are happy and proud to see Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, a distinguished diplomat from Thailand and an ASEAN colleague serving on the Bureau. We, the ASEAN delegates, are fully confident that, under your able leadership and skillful guidance, our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. I assure you of the fullest cooperation and support of the ASEAN delegations.

II. Millennium Declaration

Mr. Chairman,

3. The adoption of the Millennium Declaration by all member states of the United Nations General Assembly is of utmost importance, reflecting the commitments by our Heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit held in 2000.

4. We should, therefore, redouble our efforts to translate these commitments into reality, especially in the field of disarmament and international security. We, ASEAN countries, reaffirm our 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.

III. Resolution on ICJ's advisory opinion

Mr. Chairman,

5. The ASEAN countries share the view that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons is a very important contribution to the international community's efforts for peace and security. It is the conviction of the ASEAN countries that, in view of the recent political developments, there now exist conditions for the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons.

6. 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 regard, we, the ASEAN countries, continue to support and intend to co-sponsor the resolution, tabled every year by Malaysia, reaffirming this important ruling.

IV. Resolution on nuclear disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

7. For a number of years, the ASEAN countries have co-sponsored the yearly resolutions, initiated by Myanmar, calling upon 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 deactivate 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.

8. 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 ardent hope that these resolutions will enjoy broader support and increased co-sponsorship.

V. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation

Mr. Chairman,

9. 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.

10. In this context, we welcome the convening of the Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in Vienna in September 2003. We also welcome the adoption by the Conference of the twelve concrete measures, contained in the Final Declaration of the Conference, to promote an early entry into force of the CTBT. We are encouraged that three nuclear weapon

States have ratified this important Treaty to date. We welcome the ratification of the Treaty by Algeria — one of the countries listed in Annex II to the Treaty — and the ratifications by Afghanistan, Albania, Cote d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Kuwait, Mauritania and Oman in the past one year. We also urge all States, particularly the remaining nuclear weapon States, to ratify the CTBT treaty, as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

11. 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 once 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.

12. We note with appreciation the preparatory work by the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the NPT, held in New York in April 2002 and its Second Session held in Geneva in April-May 2003.

13. We believe that the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in New York in April-May 2004 will be of crucial importance, as it will deal with substantive issues. In this regard, we welcome and support the candidature of His Excellency Ambassador Sudjadnan Pamohadiningrat of Indonesia as Chairman-designate for the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee. We call upon the Third Session of Preparatory Committee to undertake substantive work to lay the groundwork for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

14. In this regard, we emphasize the need for Preparatory Committee meetings to continue to allocate specific times for deliberations on nuclear disarmament, implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and security assurances.

VI. Missiles and the Moscow Treaty

Mr. Chairman,

15. 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 the General Assembly Resolution 55/33 A to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. We also take note of the Secretary-General's report on the views of the Member States on the subject as requested in the General Assembly Resolution 57/71. We continue to believe that the concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

16. We also note the entry into force of the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions between the Russian Federation and the United States of America as a step towards reducing their deployed strategic nuclear weapons. This Treaty should be implemented in accordance with the principles of irreversibility and transparency.

VII. Weapons of mass destruction

Mr. Chairman,

17. 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). We note the adoption of the Final Report of the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) held in Geneva in November 2002. We also take note of the decision that the States Parties should meet annually in the lead-up to the Sixth Review Conference in 2006 and the Meeting of Experts should be held prior to each annual meeting. In this connection, we welcome the convening of the first Meeting of Experts from States Parties to the BWC in Geneva in August 2003 and express our hope that the First Annual Meeting of the States Parties, to be convened in Geneva in November 2003, will make progress in our efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

VIII. Small arms and light weapons

Mr. Chairman,

18. The ASEAN countries welcome the convening of the First Biennial Meeting on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects;

held in New York in July 2003. The Biennial Meeting undertook the evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. We take note of the comprehensive and intensive discussions by the Biennial Meeting on important issues such as weapons collection and destruction; marking and tracing; export and import control; capacity-building for implementation; research; institutional building; and human security. We take note with appreciation the work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on Identifying and Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

19. We call upon the Member States and the International community to take appropriate measures for the implementation of the Programme of Action. We also join the call made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Member States to redouble their efforts to work on a ban on supplying small arms to non-state actors.

20. We take note of the convening of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in Bangkok, Thailand, from 15 to 19 September 2003, which was the first time the meeting was held in Asia. We call upon the international community to provide the necessary assistance to mine affected countries to ensure their access to material equipment, technology and financial resources for mine clearance and increased humanitarian assistance for victims of landmines.

IX. Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

Mr. Chairman,

21. 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.

22. 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+China Summit in November 2002 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.

23. 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.

24. We also welcome the 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.

X. SSOD IV

Mr. Chairman,

25. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the convening of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD I). We reaffirm the continuing validity and relevance of the provisions of the Final Document of the SSOD I.

26. 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.

XI. Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II)

27. We note the historic Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, issued by the Heads of State or Government by the ASEAN countries at the ninth ASEAN Summit, held in Bali, Indonesia from 7 to 8 October 2003. The Heads of State or Government of the ASEAN countries agreed to establish an ASEAN Community that would be supported by the three pillars of "political and security cooperation", "economic cooperation", and "socio-cultural cooperation". These would be closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing in the effort to achieve peace, stability and prosperity. They agreed that through this effort they would reach a closer and mutually beneficial integration among the ASEAN member countries and their peoples. They also agreed to continue their efforts to promote regional peace

and stability, security, development and prosperity with a view to realizing a dynamic and resilient ASEAN Community. To this end, they adopted the framework to achieve this ASEAN Community through ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. They agreed to task the Ministers to implement the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II.

28. They also agreed that members of the ASEAN Security Community would rely exclusively on peaceful means in the settlement of intra-regional differences and regard their security as fundamentally linked to one another and bound by geographic location, common vision and objectives. The ASEAN Security Community, recognizing the sovereign rights of the member countries to pursue their individual foreign policies and defense arrangements and, taking into account the strong interconnections among political, economic and social realities, would subscribe to the principle of comprehensive security as having broad political, economic, social and cultural aspects in consonance with ASEAN Vision 2020 rather than to a defense pact, military alliance or a joint foreign policy.

29. The ASEAN Security Community is open and outward looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the region, and shall build on the ARF to facilitate consultation and cooperation between ASEAN and its friends and Partners on regional security matters.

XII. ARF process and confidence building measures

Mr. Chairman,

30. 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.

31. We note the positive developments in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process through inter-session activities and linkages between Track I and Track II. We take note with satisfaction of the fruitful discussions and exchange of views at the 10th ARF held in Phnom Penh in June 2003. We are particularly encouraged that the 10th ARF has placed importance, among other things, on strengthening the implementation of the nine recommendations endorsed by the 9th ARF; continuing work on Confidence Building Measures (CBM) as the foundation of the ARF process; implementing the concept and principles of Preventive Diplomacy (PD); marking the fight against international terrorism and transnational crime a priority of current ARF cooperation and enhancing the role

of the ARF Chair, including interaction with other regional and international organizations.

32. We also note with satisfaction the level of confidence and trust that had been developed under ARF auspices and with the activities in the overlapping areas between CBMs and PD that ARF had begun to undertake.

XIII. Conference on Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

33. We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are, however, disappointed and concerned by the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and note with regret that the Conference of Disarmament was still unable to reach an agreement on a programme of work at its 2003 session. 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.

34. We also note that during the 2003 annual session, successive Presidents of the Conference had conducted intensive consultations with a view to reaching consensus on the programme of work.

35. The ASEAN countries believe the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is necessary and we fully endorse the application of Thailand and the Philippines.

XIV. Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

36. We wish to take this opportunity to express, once again, 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 contribution 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.

37. In particular, we highly appreciate and fully support the dynamic activities and the substantial contributions to the security dialogue and raising the awareness of disarmament issues in the region by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

XV. Conclusion

Mr. Chairman,

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

39. 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 commitments to work cooperatively to achieve these goals as a matter of utmost priority.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.