



MYANMAR

Please check against delivery

**Statement
by
H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin
Ambassador, Representative of the Union of Myanmar**

**in the General Debate
of
the First Committee**

at the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

(New York, 8 October 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of Myanmar, and on my own account, I have great pleasure in extending our warmest congratulations to you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your wise and able guidance, we will achieve fruitful results in our work. I should also like to pay tribute, on behalf of my delegation, to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our full cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves fully with the statement made in the Committee by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction certainly constitute a grave threat facing humankind. Compounded by terrorism, that threat renders the world security environment highly vulnerable. With regard to weapons of mass destruction, we believe that nuclear disarmament should be accorded the highest priority on the international arms control and disarmament agenda.

We are deeply frustrated and disappointed at the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to achieve substantive results. Myanmar has consistently maintained that the two processes of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. However, much to our regret, the 2005 NPT Review Conference revealed that a wide and deep gap exists between nations that possess nuclear weapons and nations that have decided against the nuclear option. In our view, nuclear-weapon States should, and must, honour their unequivocal undertaking, declared at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The will to fulfil that unequivocal undertaking has yet to be demonstrated by fully implementing the 13 practical steps identified by the Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

For the past 10 years, Myanmar has introduced in this body comprehensive draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament reflecting the views of the majority of the countries of the NAM. This year will be no exception, and we shall again introduce at the First Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. We sincerely express the hope that it will be supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Myanmar has always stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the NPT. We welcome the Final Declaration of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in Vienna in September 2007, which called on those States that had not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. Although the CTBT's entry into force is still far from being a reality, we are pleased and encouraged to observe that the number of States to have ratified the Treaty has been growing. The treaty now enjoys nearly universal support, as it has been signed by 179 countries and more than 80% of these have ratified it.

Mr. Chairman,

I would now like to touch another issue that potentially has serious implications for the peace and security of the world at large. I am referring to the issue of prevention

of an arms race in outer space, which is one of the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. The Prevention of an arms race in outer space is another important concern. The common interests of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes should be recognized.

Myanmar has consistently supported the draft resolutions on that subject that have been introduced annually by Egypt and Sri Lanka in recent years. There is pressing need to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible a legally binding international instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space, as existing instruments are inadequate to comprehensively cover the issue. Myanmar supports such a move by the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome and support the recent initiatives of China and the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament towards the realization of such a treaty.

Transparency and confidence-building measures concerning outer space must be promoted in the interests of maintaining international peace and security. There is a pressing need to negotiate and conclude, as soon as possible, a legally binding instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space. In this regard, we consider that the Conference on Disarmament has a primary role to play.

Mr. Chairman,

While keeping our focus on the question of weapons of mass destruction, we cannot afford to ignore the challenge posed by small arms and light weapons. These weapons continue to kill and maim hundreds of thousands of people each year the world over. We attach great importance to the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The two core issues relating to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons -namely strict control over private ownership of small arms and the prevention of supplies of small arms to non-State groups - must be adequately addressed. Myanmar, together with other ASEAN members will work at both regional and international levels for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament is still unable to reach agreement on a programme of work and to begin its real substantive work. An agreement on the programme of work is our highest priority in the Conference on Disarmament. We sincerely express the hope that the parties concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome the impasse. However, we would like to express our appreciation to the successive Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2008, who conducted intensive consultations and attempted various initiatives with a view to reaching consensus on a programme of work, including by convening formal and informal plenary meetings and interactive sessions on agenda issues and other matters relevant to the international security climate.

In concluding, despite the impasse in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, we must not let our resolve be weakened by this negative trend. Instead, we must work constructively with renewed determination and the political will to address the legitimate security concerns of the international community.

I thank you , Mr. Chairman.