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Statement

by

H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin

Ambassador/Permanent Representative

of the Union of Myanmar

on behalf of the ASEAN Member States

at the General Debate of the First Committee of the

64th Session of the United Nations

(New York, 5 October 2009)

Statement by H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar on behalf of the ASEAN Member States at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 64th Session of the United Nations

Mr. Chairman,

1. It gives me pleasure and honour to take the floor on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-ASEAN namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and my own country, Myanmar.

Mr. Chairman,

2. First of all, I wish to extend our sincere congratulations to you on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. Our appreciations also go to the other members of the Bureau for their well-deserved posts. You can count on full cooperation and support of the ASEAN delegations in discharging your important duty.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member States envision ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies by the year 2015.

4. The ASEAN Charter in its Article 1 on Purposes clearly stipulates, among others, that Southeast Asia will be preserved as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction.

5. ASEAN Member States, guided by this vision and the Charter, collectively and individually, are contributing not only to peace and security of the region but also to that of the international community.

6. Nuclear Disarmament remains the highest priority on disarmament agenda of ASEAN. At the 42nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Phuket, Thailand in May this year, the Ministers recognized encouraging developments on nuclear disarmament in various fora and in particular welcomed the preliminary bilateral agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation to reduce their nuclear arsenals. They also recalled the commitment of the People's Republic of China to its position not to be the first to use nuclear weapon. At multilateral level, it was hoped that all participating countries in the Conference on Disarmament would resume negotiations on nuclear disarmament as called for in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Resolutions on nuclear disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

7. A draft resolution which essentially underscores the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control" will again be tabled by Malaysia this year. The resolution, among others, calls on all States to fulfill this obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapon convention. ✓

8. The resolution on Nuclear Disarmament has been tabled by Myanmar and adopted with wide support from members of the United Nations since 1995. All ASEAN Member States, together with others outside the region, co-sponsor the draft resolution every year. The draft resolution while recognizing current efforts by major nuclear weapon states focuses on total elimination of nuclear weapons, reflect interim measures and steps for nuclear-weapon States, and outline various multilateral approaches to nuclear disarmament leading to total elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time. ✓

9. These draft resolutions underscore the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by the ASEAN Member States.

Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Non-proliferation

Mr. Chairman,

10. ASEAN welcomes the decision of the Russian Federation and the United States of America to conduct negotiation to conclude a new comprehensive legally binding agreement to replace the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of its resolution 1887 (2009) on 24 September 2009.

11. ASEAN considers the balanced implementation of the three pillars of the NPT as a key to achieve the objectives of the treaty. The 2009 Prep Com held in May fail to agree on recommendations for 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, legitimate concerns and honest cautions of the parties to the NPT have been heard during the process. If the integrity of the NPT is to be preserved and its effectiveness enhanced further, practical measures addressing such concerns and cautions are needed to be developed. State Parties to the NPT have identified and agreed to one such measure at the 2000 Review Conference as 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. In this context, the ASEAN member States once again wishes to highlight the need for the full and effective implementation of these steps and urges all member states to take advantage of prevailing conducive atmosphere and to double efforts on initiatives in line with these steps.

12. In the same vein, we wish to urge all parties concerned to demonstrate utmost political will and exercise maximum flexibility prior to and during the 2010 NPT Review Conference in

order to produce concrete and practical steps to accelerate efforts on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and in this regard urges States Parties to the NPT to work closely with Amb. Libran N. Cabactulan of the Philippines, President-elect of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

13. We are encouraged by the increasing number of States adhering to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. To date 181 countries have signed the treaty and 150 of these have ratified it. The earliest entry into force of the CTBT is necessary if the treaty is to constitute an effective nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measure. In this connection, we reiterate our call to all States particularly those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force to sign and ratify it. We hold the firm view that the development of all nuclear weapons must stop, and therefore seek universal adherence to the CTBT, first and foremost, by all Nuclear Weapon States. That would make an excellent first step towards a world of zero nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Meeting of the SEANWFZ Commission in Phuket, Thailand in July 2009 also reaffirmed importance to the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone and its support by the Nuclear Weapons States and in supporting the global efforts in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

15. At this session of the UNGA, Thailand, as ASEAN Chair and Chairman of the SEANWFZ Commission, and on behalf of ASEAN Member States, will be tabling the traditional resolution on the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, and we look forward to the support of all UN Member States. The resolution encourages nuclear-weapon States and States parties to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) to continue to work constructively with a view to ensuring the early accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the Treaty.

16. ASEAN strongly believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, and Semipalatinsk as well as the Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status contribute significantly to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In this regard, ASEAN once again encourages the Nuclear-Weapon States to redouble their efforts for the early accession to the Protocol to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Bangkok Treaty).

Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

17. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC) are core instruments in combating weapons of mass destruction. ASEAN is encouraged to note that 188 states have joined the CWC making it almost

a universal treaty. To make our world a safer place, we would urge remaining states to join the treaties at an early date. We reaffirm the importance of meeting the 2012 final destruction deadline in the CWC.

Conventional Weapons

18. States recognized that the primary responsibility for solving the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects falls on all States by adopting the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. ASEAN considers that international cooperation and assistance plays a vital role in effective implementation of the Programme of Action. In this regard, we call on States and organizations in a position to do so to strengthen cooperation and support capacity building particularly of developing states affected by such problems.

19. We take note of the 2009 Cartagena Summit to reaffirm the commitment of State Parties to the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and achieving a world free of mines.

Conference on Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

20. ASEAN reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. We took note with satisfaction that after years of stagnation, the Conference on Disarmament was able to adopt its Programme of Work for 2009 on May 29 this year. However, it is regrettable that the Conference was not able to take a procedural step to commence its substantive work. We hope that the Conference will overcome it through the wisdom of its membership and promptly assume its substantive work at the beginning of its 2010 Session.

Mr. Chairman,

21. Following the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter in December 2008, the ASEAN Member States adopted the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) Blueprint this year, at the 14th ASEAN Summit in Thailand. The APSC promotes a Rules-based Community of shared values and norms; a Cohesive, Peaceful, Stable and Resilient Region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; a Dynamic and Outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. We will be guided by these goals in our relations with the international community.

Thank you.