

Myanmar

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Opening Statement

by

**His Excellency U Mya Than,
Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar
and President of the Conference on Disarmament**

at the 965th CD Plenary

Geneva, 19 August 2004

**Opening Statement by His Excellency U Mya Than,
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Myanmar and
President of the Conference on Disarmament
at the Plenary Meeting
19 August 2004**

Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me as well as for my country to preside over this august forum --- the Conference on Disarmament --- during the concluding part of its 2004 session.

The last presidency of the year is the most hectic one. It entails report writing, winding up the activities of the CD, laying down the groundwork for next year's session and endeavouring to make advances, to the extent possible, on substantive issues.

Myanmar was the founder member of the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee (ENDC) in 1962. Since then, Myanmar has participated in various disarmament fora, and has made its modest contributions in the field of arms control and disarmament. Myanmar has assumed presidency three times in the Conference on Disarmament. It is a great privilege for me to have this opportunity of serving as the third President of the CD from Myanmar in this august body.

The year 2004 is the year of the Group of 21. I should like to pay my tribute to my colleagues from G-21, Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya, Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico, Ambassador Khasbazaryn Bekhbat of Mongolia and Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco for their able leadership and diplomatic skills with which they have conducted the proceedings of the CD during their tenures. I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and other members of the Secretariat for their valuable support and cooperation.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

The CD is at a critical juncture. After eight years of inaction in this forum, the international community is looking to the CD to revitalize its work and to accomplish substantive progress. Establishment of Ad Hoc Committees or programme of work is still elusive.

Nevertheless, there have been useful and constructive activities and developments at the 2004 session of the CD. Under the presidency of Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya the CD took a decision on the enhancement of the engagement of the civil society in the work of the Conference, by which the NGOs will be allocated, after the adoption of a programme of work by the CD, one informal plenary meeting at its annual session to address the Conference.

Under the presidency of Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia, an open-ended informal consultation was held on work programme. Under the presidencies of Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico and Ambassador Khasbazaryn Bekhbat of Mongolia and Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, seven informal plenary meetings were held on the issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, under the presidency of Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, one informal plenary meeting was held on "new and additional issues related to the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament", and two informal plenary meetings were held on "Methodology of the work programme of the Conference on Disarmament". This has generated powerful momentum and interest in the CD.

We should take good advantage of such momentum and interest to move forward in the CD and to explore possibilities with a view to reaching consensus on establishment of Ad Hoc Committees or programme of work.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

In Myanmar, there is a saying that, in whatever you do, the most important and crucial factor is to have an appropriate outlook or consideration. *Yawnisaw Manasikara*.

It is the way one looks at things, and the way one projects one's vision as to what one can achieve. Depending on the way one looks at it, one may say that a glass is half full or half empty. Likewise, one may consider one's position fully justified, and may consider that the other parties ought to make accommodations to reach an agreement.

It is only when one can adopt an appropriate and right outlook and take a balanced view, taking into account the position of the other parties as well as one's own that one can create a 'win-win' situation and achieve a successful outcome. I hope that the Member States of the CD will be able to adopt such an appropriate and positive outlook, and show maximum flexibility. This will contribute to our search for a common ground and to finding a solution.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

May I take this opportunity to outline what I intend to do or the workplan for the remaining period of this year's session. It consists of: -

- ongoing process of consultations on establishment of Ad Hoc Committees or programme of work;**
- ongoing process of consultations on interim steps such as the appointment of a Special Coordinator or Special Coordinators to facilitate the process with a view to reaching agreement on programme of work;**

- the convening of informal plenary meetings;
and
- report writing.

It is late in the year. We have difficult and heavy responsibility of report writing ahead of us. Nevertheless, as the President of the Conference, I shall not give up efforts to make progress on substantive issues. Our priority is establishment of Ad Hoc Committees or programme of work. There have been many important proposals i.e. A5 proposal, my own proposal and many other initiatives. I will continue my efforts and consultations on the basis of these proposals and fresh inputs from the delegations.

Sometimes, it can be helpful to take interim steps to facilitate the process with a view to achieving our main objectives. In this context, I will continue my consultations on the appointment of a Special Coordinator or Special Coordinators if it could help us in our endeavours.

Most of the delegations to the CD have informed me that they favour the convening of a few more informal plenary meetings. Taking into account their desire and willingness to have a few more informal plenary meetings, I intend to convene: -

- an informal plenary meeting on “how to move forward on substantive issues / programme of work” on Tuesday, 24 August 2004.

In so doing, we will use the provision of the Decision on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference on Disarmament contained in document CD/1036 concerning, inter alia, holding of an additional meeting during the 22nd week of the CD’s session, which this year begins on Monday, 23 August.

Here I should like to stress that it is important to have structured and focussed discussions. Delegations are invited to contribute their views on specific aspects of A5 and other specific aspects on programme of work. It appears that

the majority of delegations can go along with A5 proposal. Those delegations who are not in a position to go along with A5 proposal should explain and make suggestions on ways and means to modify A5.

All delegations are also invited to express their views on specific substantive issues rather than making general comments.

Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Conference on Disarmament is a unique institution. It cannot be recreated under the prevailing political circumstances. Nor can it be replaced by another body as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of arms control and disarmament in the foreseeable future. The CD has the capacity to deliver concrete results when there exist political will and concerted efforts by the Member States to negotiate arms control and disarmament agreements. One shining example is the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Incidentally, there will very soon be the presentation of a book on CTBT in the CD this morning by Ambassador Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands who presided over the successful conclusion of negotiations of the draft Treaty as the chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are also among the important international treaties, delivered by the CD and its predecessor bodies. It is, therefore, incumbent on all of us to revitalize this most valuable multilateral institution.

One of the cardinal rules of the CD is the rule of consensus. The position of each and every Member State counts. The merits and demerits of this rule have been the focus of much heated debates. In my view, it is the strength of the CD. We should respect the rule of consensus. I will, therefore, respect the position of each and every delegation. I will take into account the position of each and every delegation in trying to find a common ground on substantive issues as

well as on procedural arrangements. Bearing this in mind, I have transmitted to all the Member States a letter and a questionnaire to facilitate the process of intensive consultations. I am consulting all the delegations in the CD.

With your support and cooperation, I will do my best to make such progress, as warranted by the collective will and consensus of the Member States of the CD.

I thank you.