

*Myanmar*

*Permanent Mission of the Union of Myanmar*

*47, Avenue Blaise, 1202, Geneva, 0022 905 98 50, 905 98 51*

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**Statement by**

**His Excellency U Mya Than,  
Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar**

**at the 947th Plenary  
of the Conference on Disarmament**

**Geneva, 19 February 2004**

**Madam President,**

I am delighted to see you, a close friend and a sister from a fellow ASEAN Member State and a friendly neighbouring country Malaysia, presiding over the Conference on Disarmament. You know that you can count on the full support and cooperation of the Myanmar delegation. We are confident that you can and will provide the effective leadership to the CD at this crucial juncture.

We commend your predecessor Ambassador Amina C. Mohamed of Kenya for her skillful guidance in the smooth adoption of the agenda and the decision for the participation of the civil society in the annual sessions of the CD.

**Madam President,**

I wish to bid farewell to the leaders of the delegations to the CD who have left Geneva on completion of their tours of duty: Ambassador Rakesh Sood of India; Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia; Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka; Ambassador Johan Molander of Sweden; Ambassador Mykhailo Skuratovskyi of Ukraine; and Ambassador Eui-Young Chung of the Republic of Korea.

I should also like to welcome in our midst the new arrivals: Ambassador Michel Adam of Belgium; Ambassador Mikhail Whebe of Syria; Ambassador Elizabet Borsiin Bonnier of Sweden; Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania; Ambassador Sarala Fernando of Sri Lanka; and Ambassador Jackie Wolcott Sanders of the United States of America.

**Madam President,**

The world is still in the teething pains of an emerging new world order. We do not know yet exactly what shape and character the new world order will assume and what will be its manifold ramifications and full implications. The international security environment is also changing, and we are facing additional security threats, while still grappling with the old security problems.

We should, therefore, engage ourselves collectively as well as individually in a thoroughgoing exercise of soul-searching and deep reflection on the present and the future of multilateral efforts for arms control and disarmament.

The demise of the Cold War in 1989 has put an end to the East-West confrontation and ideological conflict. However, the post-Cold War brings with it additional security threats. The post-Cold War situation has proved to be even more unpredictable and more complex.

Then, the world witnessed, in great shock, the tragic events of the terrorists' attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. This was another watershed in international relations. The post-11 September era presents us with additional security threats: the threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. These threats have been further magnified by the ongoing process of globalization.

How shall we cope with the additional security threats and challenges, posed by the new international security environment today? How shall we continue our efforts to resolve the long-standing old security issues and address additional ones? How shall we make the optimum use of the existing fora—including the CD, the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament—to negotiate necessary arms control and disarmament agreements, while exploring new possibilities wherever appropriate? All these important questions are tapping on our brains. We should try to find adequate answers to those questions.

Madam President,

Although we are still striving to attain a clearer vision, some stark realities and hard facts have already been dawning upon us. However powerful a country may be, it cannot go alone when it comes to dealing with global security problems. This has been demonstrated by international efforts in the war against terrorism. Although multilateralism is passing through a difficult time, it is certainly irreplaceable by unilateralism in dealing with global security problems. The twin problems of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament must be dealt with in a coordinated and correlated manner. One problem cannot be resolved in isolation from the other. The same applies to the problems of non-proliferation and disarmament of other weapons of mass destruction.

Madam President,

This year's session of the CD is taking place at a difficult and delicate time for multilateral arms control and disarmament.

We have been witnessing the weakening of international commitments. To our dismay, even the commitments enshrined in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, have been called into question.

The international community has witnessed the demise of the ABM Treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which constitutes one of the urgent steps to be taken for the implementation of the systematic, progressive and irreversible process of nuclear disarmament, is still struggling for its entry into force. This important negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament, has been mired in an impasse for the past seven

years, if we count out the year 1998 when the CD had a nominal programme of work but did not actually engage in any substantive work.

Madam President,

This is a defining moment for the Conference on Disarmament.

After seven years of impasse, the CD's credibility and relevance will be further questioned if the CD will once again have another lost year in 2004. I believe that it is a view shared by all the Member States of the CD that the CD must not have another blank year in 2004. To this end, let us go an extra mile and take the remaining gap in a stride to overcome the current impasse in the CD.

Madam President,

Although the CD has not been able, up till now, to take a decisive step to adopt a programme of work and start its full functions, the fact remains that there is no lack of efforts and initiatives on the part of the delegations to the CD in this respect. There have indeed been intensive efforts and consultations among the delegations of the CD with a view to reaching consensus on a programme of work.

Currently, the five Ambassadors' initiative—A5's proposal—is on the table. It has served as a useful basis for consultations. I commend the five Ambassadors for their valuable contribution.

As Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi, the previous President of the CD, said in her statement in the plenary on 20 January 2004, A5's proposal has yet to achieve consensus, although many delegations have indicated their support for the initiative. We should do our utmost to narrow down the remaining differences and to achieve consensus on a programme of work expeditiously.

We should build on A5's proposal, and should welcome any other innovative proposals and initiatives that may help to find a common ground.

Madam President,

Bearing this in mind, I should like to propose a few amendments to A5's proposal with a view to facilitating the ongoing intensive consultations in order to reach consensus on a programme of work as soon as possible. My humble intention in so doing is to complement A5's proposal. I keep an open mind. I am very flexible.

In fact, I have consulted closely with Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri of Algeria, the only remaining member of the group of original A5, as well as the Permanent Representatives of A4 to work out a revised version of A5's proposal, incorporating my proposed amendments.

This revised version may be termed as A6's proposal or A5+1's proposal. Or it may be given another name. It does not matter. What really matters is substance. The text of this revised version is circulated to all delegations to the CD as an informal paper for ready reference.

We do hope that this revised version will contribute towards narrowing down the remaining differences and to facilitate our efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work.

Madam President,

Myanmar's proposed amendments consist of two parts:-

Programme of Work

*Establishment of the Ad Hoc Committees*

- (i) establishment of four Ad Hoc Committees on the four main subjects; and

*Appointment of the Special Coordinators*

- (ii) appointment of the Special Coordinators.

Programme of Work

My humble intention is to build on A5's proposal. I have added only a few new ideas, nuances and language that, I believe, will improve the text and will facilitate our endeavours to bridge the remaining differences.

First, I should like to stress that draft I on the establishment of the four Ad Hoc Committees on nuclear disarmament, fission, prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and security assurances (SA), respectively, is our priority. We should focus on it. Draft II on the appointment of the Special Coordinators is of lesser importance, which we may pursue only if the Member States are still interested in the appointment of the Special Coordinators.

Second, my approach is, therefore, to de-link the question of the establishment of the four Ad Hoc Committees from that of the appointment of the Special Coordinators.

Third, I have attempted to make it a smaller package.

We often talk about the need to refrain from making linkages. One merit of this approach is that the question of the establishment of the four Ad Hoc Committees will be liberated from the rigid framework of a linkage with the question of the appointment of the Special Coordinators. This makes it shorter, simpler and easier to build consensus on.

Fourth, nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for Myanmar and most of the Member States of the CD. It is also the first item on the agenda of the CD. Hence, I follow the order on the time-honoured agenda of the CD.

Fifth, on the issue of nuclear disarmament, my slight amendment is to stick to the agreed language of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference in order to make it simpler.

Sixth, I also leave out the presidential statement to make it simpler and easier to reach an agreement on. Presidential statements are devices which we use as a fall-back, to supplement the programme of work only when it has become absolutely necessary. We may work on it only when there is a need for it to clinch an agreement on a programme of work.

I believe that these proposed amendments will serve as useful building blocks in the evolving process, aimed at achieving consensus on a programme of work. With an open mind and a flexible attitude, I would welcome any other constructive suggestion or amendment that will build on this revised text and will really advance our endeavours to clinch a deal on a programme of work.

But time will soon come to stick to one revised text and to concentrate on it so that we may seriously and earnestly get down to the business of negotiating the final consensus text of a programme of work, acceptable to all the Member States of the CD.

#### Additional Issues

Madam President,

May I now express some thoughts of the Myanmar delegation on additional issues or "out of the box issues".

The CD should be open to appropriate additional issues so that its work may remain to be relevant to the needs of our time.

In the view of the Myanmar delegation, the CD may address appropriate additional issues or "out of the box issues" that may include, among other things:-

- measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction;
- radiological weapons;

- some aspects of the prohibition on illicit trade in small arms;
- prohibition on exports and illicit transfers of anti-personnel mines;
- compliance issues;
- missiles; and
- any other additional issues to be agreed upon by the Member States of the CD.

This list is tentative, and is not an exhaustive one. The important thing is that the CD should address whatever additional issues the Member States can agree upon.

We should also keep the format and modalities of dealing with additional issues flexible. The CD may address additional issues at plenary meetings, either informal or formal. It may later establish an appropriate mechanism or mechanisms to deal with appropriate additional issues, as required.

As to the question of what kind of product or products we can expect from such an exercise, we can have useful products such as political declarations, declarations of principles or even agreements. It all depends on the collective will and judgement of the Member States of the CD.

Madam President,

We are ardent advocates of multilateralism. We must do our utmost to strengthen multilateralism, particularly in the field of arms control and disarmament. We are mindful of the fact that multilateralism is also a means, not an end in itself. Multilateral fora should be put to their optimum use to deliver concrete results. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) and its predecessor bodies have delivered many important multilateral treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention. We sincerely believe that the CD is capable of delivering new multilateral agreements, and of addressing additional security issues, relevant to the needs of our time, provided that there be political will on the part of the Member States.

Let us, therefore, revitalize the CD and let it perform its proper functions i.e. to negotiate multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements.

I thank you, Madam President.