STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY U MYA THAN

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND

OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

IN THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

AT THE FIFTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK
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Mr. Chairman.

I have the pleasure of extending the warmest congratulations of the Myanmar Delegation on your unanimous election as the Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your able leadership, we will have a fruitful session of the Committee.

Our tribute also goes to the other members of the Bureau. We also wish to express our deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Jarmo Sarova, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland for his tireless efforts for the advancement of the work of the First Committee at the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman.

The greatest security threat, facing mankind today, is the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), particularly nuclear weapons.

Another grave threat, staring us into our eyes today, is the threat of terrorism. The international community has been concerned about the possibility of a nightmarish scenario of WMD falling into the hands of terrorists. We should step up international efforts to deal with and overcome these horrendous threats.

Nuclear disarmament, therefore, is the highest priority on the international agenda for arms control and disarmament. As a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament, Myanmar has tabled a comprehensive draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, reflecting the views of the majority of NAM countries, to the First Committee every year since 1995. We shall table this traditional draft resolution on nuclear disarmament to the First
Committee this year, as well. We hope that our draft resolution would enjoy the overwhelming support of the Member States.

We appreciate the unilateral measures taken by some nuclear weapon states. Nevertheless, we are disheartened by the lack of progress in the process of nuclear disarmament, particularly in its multilateral aspect.

The benchmarks for the implementation of nuclear disarmament have been laid down by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We should, therefore, measure progress in systematic and progressive efforts for nuclear disarmament against those benchmarks.

Mr. Chairman,

The fulfilment of the first step in the thirteen steps i.e., the early entry into force of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) still remains elusive. We are, however, encouraged to note that the status of the ratification of the CTBT is rising at a steady pace. As of today, the Treaty has been signed by a total of 173 states and ratified by 119 states, including 33 of 44 states listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty. The latest ratification was that of the United Republic of Tanzania on 30 September 2004.

The early entry into force of the CTBT is an imperative for the effective implementation of nuclear disarmament. It is, therefore, essential that countries in the Annex 2 to the Treaty, ratify it as soon as possible.

Another step in a systematic and progressive process of nuclear disarmament is the negotiation of a draft treaty banning fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We very much regret that the Conference on Disarmament is still unable to commence negotiation on this issue.
Mr. Chairman,

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament, is still unable to reach an agreement on a programme of work and begin its real substantive work. An agreement on a programme of work is our highest priority in the CD. There were, however, some significant developments in the CD at its 2004 session. On 12 February 2004, CD took a decision on the enhancement of the participation of the civil society in the work of the CD. The CD, under the presidency of the successive Presidents, conducted 12 structured informal plenary meetings on the issues on its agenda, on new and additional issues related to its agenda, on methodology of the programme of work, on how to move forward on substantive issues/programme of work and on assessment and stock-taking of informal plenary meetings.

This has generated interest and momentum in the CD. We should take advantage of such interest and momentum and should intensify efforts to reach an agreement on a programme of work at the beginning of the 2005 session of the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

We should like to reiterate here the importance of the forthcoming 2005 NPT Review Conference and the need to have a positive outcome at the Conference. There are three main pillars of the NPT: nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It will not be correct or effective to address one issue in isolation from the other two. To deal with the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, while putting
the other two issues on the back burner will definitely not be the right way to achieve positive results at the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

We should, therefore, take a balanced approach, based on the three main pillars of the NPT. We should recognize, respect, maintain and strengthen the interrelationship and synergy among the three pillars of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

While attaching great importance to the question of WMD, we recognize the clear and present danger of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that are actually killing and maiming hundreds of thousands of people every year around the world. It is essential that we address in an effective manner the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We commend the establishment, and the work of Open-Ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument on marking and tracing of illicit transfer of SALW. We welcome the convening of the Second Biennial Meeting on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in SALW in All its Aspects in 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important measure to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons in its geographical aspect, and contributes to the cause of nuclear disarmament. The ASEAN countries have successfully established the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) in our region. The Treaty has come into force with
effect from 27 March 1997. However, the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty is yet to enter into force. For the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone to be fully operational and effective, it is imperative that the nuclear weapon states accede to the Protocol at the earliest possible date. We welcome the announcement by China of its readiness to accede to the Protocol. We urge the other nuclear weapon states to do likewise as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

We highly appreciate the excellent work carried out by the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific in promoting the regional dialogue on regional and international disarmament issues and in organizing many seminars, workshops and meetings in this respect. We should like to thank particularly His Excellency Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Shun'ichi Ishiguri, Director of the Regional Centre, the Department of Disarmament Affairs and the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for their important contributions. We endorse the view that the Centre should be provided with adequate financial resources to enable it to sustain and expand its activities for the benefit of the Member States in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, I wish to briefly touch upon the question of improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. My delegation fully endorses the statement, made by the representative of Indonesia on this subject on behalf of the Member States that are members of the Non-Aligned
Movement. Measures for the improvement of the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee should be undertaken as part of, and within the overall process of the revitalization of the United Nations General Assembly. Moreover, the existing methods of work of the First Committee that have proven to be effective should be maintained, further consolidated and strengthened.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.