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Statement by
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Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and Other
International Organizations in Geneva

General Debate of the First Committee of the
71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 10 October 2016
Mr. Chairman,

1. I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you and other members of the bureau for your well-deserved elections to the office. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

2. Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous and destructive on earth. As such, nuclear disarmament is prioritized by most of us.

3. Myanmar continues to believe that the only absolute guarantee from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is nothing but their total elimination. The continued existence, and possession by a few shall be a stimulus for the rest to go nuclear, a dangerous path for all. For a safer and secure world where international peace and security prevails and sustains, we must take the security of all into serious consideration. Not that of a few and their allies. Many in the room have expressed that nuclear weapons must be banned like other WMDs. They must be outlawed, in all aspects, as an interim measure leading to their total elimination.

4. In this regard, Myanmar welcomes the steps taken bilaterally in the context of the New START treaty. However, we want to see faster and bolder measures leading to total elimination of nuclear weapons in a predictable framework of time.

5. The NPT remains to be the corner stone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Obligation under the Article VI of the NPT must be fulfilled by all parties in good faith and with renewed political will, particularly by the NWSs. Indefinite extension of NPT in 1995 should not be taken for granted. All three pillars of the Treaty must be pursued in a balanced manner. At the
same time, the NPT Review Conferences must be brought back on track by raising the level of trust between NWSs and NNWSs. But the mutual trust can only be earned through concrete actions on the ground.

6. Continued reliance on nuclear deterrence derives from their very existence. And their existence inflicts insecurity on others. Then, reliance on one’s own arsenal for deterrence grows. This vicious cycle must be stopped.

7. Myanmar welcomes the Report and recommendations contained therein of the Open-ended Working Group established by General Assembly resolution 70/33 as an important contribution to the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

8. The UN Security Council Resolution 2310(2016) adopted on 23 September 2016 supports the broader objectives of the CTBT. Universalization and early entry into force are keys to an effective CTBT. We call upon all states that have either not signed or not ratified the Treaty, particularly the remaining eight Annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

9. Nuclear tests by anyone under any circumstances runs counter to our common goal of peace and security for all.

Mr. Chairman,

10. In our view, both chemical and biological weapons are uncivilized and inhumane. Any violation of near-universal treaty obligations poses direct challenge to the integrity of these legal instruments and our civilization. Any violation should never be condoned. On the bright side, we would like to commend the work of the OPCW resulted in getting rid of 93% of all declared chemical weapons to date.
11. Myanmar reaffirms her continue support for and confidence in the relevancy of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. Our Presidency last year observed that political will on the part of some CD member states is very much needed to overcome the deadlock. Persistent stagnation in the CD and the unproductiveness of United Nations Disarmament Commission-UNDC need to be urgently addressed by convening a Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament-SSOD-IV.

12. Negotiation of a treaty on future production and existing stockpiles of fissile materials in the Conference on Disarmament is long overdue. We must redouble our efforts and renew our political will for an early negotiation on this.

13. As a legitimate cause, we reiterate our call for the pursuant and conclusion of an international legal instrument on unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

14. Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone-SEANWFZ strengthens global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidates international efforts towards peace and security. We recommend intensified efforts to the Nuclear Weapon States to resolve all outstanding issues on signing and ratifying the SEANWFZ Treaty as we are fully committed to do so.

Mr. Chairman,

Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for their support to our national round-table on the implementation of Resolution 1540 held in Nay Pyi Taw early this year.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Despite our national priorities on democratization processes, we never lose sight of our disarmament agenda. In recent years, Myanmar was able to sign an Additional Protocol with IAEA in 2013, and ratified BWC and CWC in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Ratification of CTBT on 21 September 2016 is the latest installment to our disarmament goals.

17. Myanmar will be tabling an annual draft resolution that focuses on concrete and practical steps leading to total elimination of nuclear weapons. We shall reflect more on this in respective cluster discussions.

18. In closing, Mr. Chairman, I hope that together we will be able make a step into a safer world through our work in this Committee in coming weeks.

I thank you.

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