Statement by
H.E. Mr. Kyaw Moe Tun, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations Office in Geneva

On behalf of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

First Committee Thematic Discussion on "Disarmament Machinery"

73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 31 October 2018
Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement 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, Viet Nam, and my own country, Myanmar.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Disarmament and non-proliferation are substantively interrelated and mutually reinforcing. There is genuine need for a systematic and progressive effort to advance these two processes. Multilateralism is the core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope.

3. The existing multilateral disarmament institutions need to be reinvigorated and better utilized, by improving coordination and integration of expertise into their work.

4. Indeed, based on its existing rules of procedure and methods of work, the UN disarmament machinery has produced important treaties and guidelines, and has promoted confidence and mutual trust among states. However, it is a matter of deep concern that the global disarmament mechanism has been moving at a snail’s pace as a result of continuous erosion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament. In this regard, we believe that political will of the member states is important and should be increased substantively.

5. ASEAN stresses the need to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various fora under the United Nations disarmament machinery, namely the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR).

6. While realizing the important role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, we are concerned at the continued deadlock in the CD concerning agreement on a program of work.
Therefore, ASEAN reiterates its call on the CD to agree, by consensus, on a balanced and comprehensive program of work without any further delay.

7. While welcoming the establishment of five subsidiary bodies during the 2018 session of the Conference on Disarmament, ASEAN encourages all CD member states to demonstrate the necessary political will in order for the CD to fulfill its negotiating mandate.

8. ASEAN welcomes the successful conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (4th SSOD) and calls for all member states to continue consultations on the next steps for convening the 4th SSOD.

9. While recognizing the important and valuable role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on non-proliferation and disarmament, ASEAN stresses that it should be adequately strengthened and its research and information functions accordingly extended, as provided for by the final document of SSOD-I.

10. ASEAN welcomes the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda of “Securing our Common Future”. We look forward to the effective implementation of its 40 actions.

Mr. Chairman,

11. ASEAN believes that the current achievements of the UN disarmament machinery are certainly still far from our common expectations. It is time to identify concrete measures on how the machinery could be made more effective, delivering practical benefits that will contribute to international development, peace and security.

12. We have been warning of the dangers of the accumulation of “rust” in the multilateral disarmament machinery. We have been witnessing examples of deadlock in the absence of sufficient political will.
13. Therefore, it depends on our attitude whether we move the machinery forward collectively or we stay in the trap of deadlock. Our choice would determine our future disarmament architecture.

14. ASEAN urges all member states to intensify our efforts to strengthen the global disarmament machinery. We recall the timeless words of the late Kofi Annan, our esteemed former Secretary General, who said, “If ever there was a time to break the deadlock in multilateral negotiations and bring disarmament back into the limelight of the international agenda, I believe it is now.”

15. Thank you.

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