Statement

By

His Excellency Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin,
Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

at the 2013 Session of the Conference on Disarmament

(Geneva, 12 September 2013)
Statement by
His Excellency Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the 2013 Session of the Conference on Disarmament (Geneva, 12 September 2013)

Mr. President,
Secretary General of the Conference,
Excellencies,

It is an honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament on the final day of the 2013 Session. I would like to thank all of you for this opportunity. As I am no stranger to this forum, I am very pleased to come back here today to speak and to see new and old colleagues.

I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Gerard Corr of Ireland, on your assumption as President, Ireland’s second time since its membership of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), as well as your guidance leading to the successful adoption of the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly. My appreciation and admiration also goes to your predecessors of the CD this year for their active and constructive contribution to the work of CD.

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my country’s long-standing commitment and support to the CD. As one of the original members of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, Myanmar continues to attach great importance to the CD as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament created by the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD I).

The central role played by the conference in producing several important multilateral disarmament treaties in the past is remarkable. We share the disappointment of many in this chamber at the continued stagnation of CD for the past 17 years to respond to the calls of the international community to fulfill its mandate and resume substantive work. Despite this, we continue to believe that its existence and the unique composition of membership are still important asset in our quest for peace and security through disarmament.

Mr. President,

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on the disarmament agenda of Myanmar. The continued presence of nuclear weapons and their deployment stands as one of the most serious security challenges posing the greatest threat to the very existence of mankind. They can be triggered at any time, either by miscalculation or by mistake or by wrong hands. This serious threat infringes on the security of all nations all the time. As such, the only
absolute guarantee against a nuclear catastrophe is the complete and total elimination thereof.

Furthermore, Myanmar is also committed to other important issues on the disarmament agenda, such as a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that addresses past, present and future productions, the prevention of arms race in outer space (PAROS), and negative security assurances (NSAs) in a form of internationally legally binding instrument. We would welcome negotiations or pre-negotiations on these issues, within the framework of CD.

Mr. President,

With regard to the expansion of membership in the CD, Myanmar welcomes the call for the appointment of a special coordinator on this matter to examine modalities of review, without any prejudice to the outcome.

In keeping with the nature of the CD as a negotiating forum, we support the strengthening of the CD’s interaction with the civil society in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

We should not single out the CD for lacking progress. In fact, the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole has been stagnant. Myanmar believes that the Fourth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD IV) has the authority and legitimacy to comprehensively review the functioning of the entire United Nations Disarmament Machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament. To this end, Myanmar supports an early convening of SSOD IV.

Mr. President

I would like to touch briefly on my country’s commitment to disarmament. Myanmar has now ushered in a new era. Since the formation of the new government 30 months ago, we have successfully undertaken many key reforms within a short period of time. With the increasing support and cooperation from the international community, we are confident that we will achieve our goals of democratic transformation, job creation, income generation and poverty alleviation sooner.

While focusing her attention on achieving the aforementioned goals, Myanmar, at the same time, is reviewing its domestic laws that are not in line with international norms and practices. We are also taking progressive steps to further enhance our status in connection with a number of disarmament related conventions including CTBT, BWC, and CWC. In the meantime, we will continue to actively participate in and follow the developments in relation to the said conventions.
Mr. President,

Allow me to comment on the ongoing work of the CD. Myanmar welcomes the establishment of an Informal Working Group to produce a Programme of Work of robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. Although there are some arguments for and against the efficacy of the informal working group, we believe that it is a step in the right direction and constitutes a new opportunity for us to move the work of the conference forward. At the same time, the work of the Working Group has to be supported by political will and flexibility of all member states. I wish the Working Group and its officers every success.

Mr. President,

High-level meetings are important tools to garner political will for a desired goal. They have proved beneficial in the past. We look forward to seeing a fruitful outcome from the High-Level Meeting of the UNGA on Nuclear Disarmament to be held on 26 September 2013 in New York.

As we are preparing ourselves for the forthcoming UN General Assembly particularly for the First Committee, I would like to inform you that Myanmar will once again be tabling its traditional resolution on Nuclear Disarmament this year. I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all cosponsors and delegations for supporting our resolution. I would also like to request you all to support the resolution again this year.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I would like to inform this forum that Myanmar has been making serious efforts to conclude a protocol additional to the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency for the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT. To this end, a series of workshops have been conducted in Nay Pyi Taw in close cooperation with IAEA. We also had the opportunity of sending our policy and technical level officials to the IAEA headquarters in Vienna. We also worked with US Department of Energy-USDOE through another a series of workshops at the same time. I wish to express our appreciation to these agencies and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation-ANSTO for its cooperation with Myanmar.

Mr. President,

With all these efforts, I am happy to announce here that Myanmar will soon be concluding the Additional Protocol with IAEA.

I thank you, Mr. President.

* * * * *