



MYANMAR

Please check against delivery

**Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Kyaw Moe Tun, Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations**

at the General Debate of the
First Committee of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly
(New York, 7 October 2021)

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to you and the bureau on your election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation for the fruitful outcome of this committee.

Within the last two years, a number of common goals we all share, including those of the First Committee, have been subject to regression brought about by COVID-19. This trend is still continuing in many parts of the world. As the UN Charter rightly calls for, "*the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources*" is one of the remedial measures we urgently need not only to compensate for COVID-induced losses but also to make the world a better place. We need to redouble our efforts in driving disarmament and non-proliferation forward.

Mr. Chairperson,

We all must not overlook the existence of nuclear weapons and their deployments, as well as the threats thereof. Nuclear threats are the most serious security challenge, risking the existence of humankind. The dangers of nuclear weapons posed by their very continued existences and modernization of any sorts may not be easily visible to the general populace, but everything could go wrong if anything went wrong with nuclear weapons, and the history tells us that there have been numerous nuclear close calls.

Therefore, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threats of use.

Even though we are still yet nowhere near our ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament, we believe the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is the quintessential instrument in reinforcing norms against nuclear weapons. The entry into force of this treaty on 22 January of this year is a welcoming progress and a crucial achievement for nuclear disarmament agenda. We believe that it will contribute to making the world free of nuclear weapons. Myanmar signed the TPNW in September 2018 and had planned to ratify it this year. This ratification, sadly, is no longer possible with the naked power grab and illegal coup by the brutal military. But this should not generate any doubts over our commitments on promoting nuclear disarmament, and we sincerely wish to ratify it as soon as possible, with proper endorsements by the duly elected representatives of the people of Myanmar.

Mr. Chairperson,

The resolution titled “Nuclear Disarmament” is an annual resolution tabled by Myanmar together with like-minded countries since 1995 with overwhelming supports from many of the members. This resolution calls for practical and tangible measures to be taken by both nuclear haves and the have-nots in our path towards nuclear disarmament. Our strong dedication and commitment to this tall ambition, once again, we will table the draft resolution at this session. We would like to reiterate our sincere appreciations to member states for their co-sponsorships and supports of previous years, and request all of you to continue your supports for this year’s resolution.

Myanmar welcomes the extension of the New START Treaty in February this year. We believe this extension saves the world from unrestrained nuclear competition and hope further measures will be taken to deescalate the number of nuclear warheads.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is still the linchpin of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Balanced implementation of

all its three pillars is instrumental in maintaining the credibility and integrity of this Grand Bargain. We appeal to all member states to fully comply their obligations under the Treaty, especially those under Article VI of the NPT. We hope the upcoming review conference of the NPT early next year will be a welcoming opportunity for all of us to chart the way forward to strengthen the goals of the NPT.

Establishments of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones can consolidate our collective efforts towards disarming nuclear weapons. Myanmar reiterates its commitments to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

It is comforting that the numbers signatory states and ratifying states to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are increasing steadily year after year. We urge states outside this treaty, especially the Annex II states, to join this treaty at their earliest opportunities.

As a founding member of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Myanmar remains faithful to the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in advancing the disarmament agenda. This year, I regret that the Conference on Disarmament did not succeed in reaching consensus on its substantive discussions. We urge all members of the CD to demonstrate their highest flexibility so as to move the works of the CD forward, which have been in limbo for so many years.

Mr. Chairperson,

Norms against the use of chemical and biological weapons emerged and cascaded from witnessing their devastating consequences unleashed upon both civilians and combatants. These norms have now been internationalized, instilling in us a dedication not to tolerate any uses of such inhumane weapons by any actors. It is heartening that 98 % of declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been verifiably destroyed.

As a ratifying party to the Chemical Weapons Convention since July 2015, during previous years, the civilian government of Myanmar has been actively engaging to comply

with its obligations in pursuant to the convention, despite minimal cooperation and lack of transparency by the military. Not long ago, with credible evidences, it was brought to the attention of the civilian government that Myanmar is failing to declare a decommissioned chemical production facility, which is controlled by the military, that developed a schedule 1 chemical in the past. I regret to say that effort to address this shortcoming has now been upset due to the prevailing political crisis in Myanmar.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe in the inherent right of legitimate authorities and subjects under their command to employ conventional weapons to safeguard their territories and their people. Most of human sufferings associated with these weapons are rooted in irresponsible usages of them by people in power. The power of indiscriminate killings is also vested in the proliferation of conventional weapons to actors who do not hesitate to abuse them for their narrow interests.

This is exactly what the people of Myanmar are going through right now. The military brass has been known for a long time in committing atrocities upon the people they are meant to protect using semi-automatic assault rifles, artilleries, airstrikes and other assorted portable arms. I sincerely appeal those countries selling arms, ammunitions and associated technologies to the Myanmar military to revisit their decisions to do so, as doing so will save many innocent lives.

Mr. Chairperson,

Myanmar has lagged behind in terms of subjecting the management of its conventional weapon stockpiles to international rules and regulations. We believe, to some extent, this has contributed to the plight of the people of Myanmar. Lives of the ordinary people will still be cheap if we do not make the cost of toying with the guns expensive.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.
