

Please check against delivery

Statement by H.E. U Nyan Win Minister for Foreign
Affairs and Chairman of the Delegation of the Union of
Myanmar in the General Debate of the 62nd session of
the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 1 October 2007

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the high office of the President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I would also like to convey Myanmar's appreciation to your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa for her able stewardship of the previous session.

The annual report of the Secretary-General reflects the significant work done in the past year by the United Nations in meeting the challenges we face. We congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his successful first year in office and welcome his timely initiative with regard to such pressing global issues as climate change.

Mr. President,

The High-Level Event on Climate Change has re-ignited the international community's interest in climate change and rightly so. Climate change remains the most critical challenge that the international community faces today. The adverse effects of climate change, such as sea-level rise, hurricanes, floods, drought and desertification, particularly in recent years, are a stark reminder of the negative impacts that they have on long-term economic and social development of the global community, particularly, the developing countries. To address the adverse impact of climate change, we need concerted action at the national,

regional and international level. We need to be mindful that climate change is not merely an environmental issue but a sustainable development issue. Accordingly, an integrated and coordinated approach is required. On its part, Myanmar is pursuing a national environment policy, based on sustainable utilization of natural resources. In 1991 we adopted the Myanmar Agenda 21 which serves as an important guideline, both for the public and private sectors.

Myanmar also pursues a system of sustainable forest management. We have implemented a nation-wide programme of afforestation and reforestation. As a result, we have been able to retain 50 percent forest cover in the country. Myanmar was among the 12 nations that took part in the Asia Least-Cost Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy - ALGAS - in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The inventory of greenhouse gas emissions taken under ALGAS confirms that Myanmar has greater sink than sources of CO₂ emission. The base line projection of the National Greenhouse Inventory 2020 also shows that the forestry sector will continue to be a significant sink in Myanmar in the future.

Mr. President,

The economic activities undertaken by developed countries, historically and currently, are mainly responsible for the emission of greenhouse gases that affect the global climate system. The developing countries, which are least responsible for contribution to climate change, face the greatest risk from its adverse impacts.

Addressing the challenge of climate change requires an integrated approach to economic growth, social development and environment protection. Concerted actions would have to be taken within the internationally agreed United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It will require

developed countries to provide new and additional financial resources to developing countries and to fulfil the commitments made at various international conferences.

Mr. President ,

The impact of climate change is particularly felt in developing countries and has adversely affected national development prospects. In order to effectively meet the challenge of climate change, we would also have to address poverty alleviation. Then and only then, would the developing countries be able to achieve internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. It is, therefore, incumbent on the developed countries whose development process rely heavily on the natural resource acquired from the developing countries to provide the necessary financial resource.

Underdevelopment and mass deprivations lead to economic, political and social hardships in the developing countries. Development provides a conducive environment for democracy. I would like to call upon the entire international community to work together for poverty alleviation.

Mr. President,

The scourge of terrorism knows no boundaries. Combating terrorism is the common endeavour of the entire international community. I would like to stress here that terrorism in any form or manifestation must be rejected. It is the innocent people who bear the brunt of terrorism activities. To combat terrorism effectively, we also have to address its root causes. Poverty, grievances and underlying political, economic and social conditions provide fertile ground for the spread of terrorism. These root causes of terrorism need to be addressed.

Friendly relations among nations should be based on respect for principles of equal rights and self-determination. Countries should show goodwill, practice tolerance, and live together in peace and harmony. Nations have various historical background, differing culture, and different religions and customs. Nations are not identical. However, if we respect these basic principles and practice friendship and goodwill, it will effectively contribute to our common endeavour to combat terrorism.

Mr. President,

Today, the world is facing diverse problems and daunting challenges. The United Nations which represents the world community is called upon to resolve them. Our Organization is formed in order to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations and to promote cooperation in solving international problems of economic, social, cultural or humanitarian characters. In order to effectively address the full range of challenges, the reform of the United Nations as called by our leaders in the World Summit Outcome must be successfully implemented.

I am confident, Mr. President, that under your able leadership we will make significant progress in the UN reform process, taking into consideration the position of the vast majority of the membership.

Mr. President,

We are greatly disturbed to witness that neo-colonialism has reared its ugly head in recent years. The strategies they employ are obvious. At a first step, they conduct media campaigns against the targeted country and spread disinformation that the country concerned is committing gross human rights violations. They portray these campaigns as a fight for democracy. Secondly, they impose sanctions which hinder economic development and

cause poverty for the people. Here, I would like to stress that economic sanctions are counterproductive and can only delay the path to democracy. As a third step, they provide political, financial and other material support to create unrest in the country. Finally, under the pretext that a country is undemocratic, unstable, and that it poses a threat to international peace and security, they intervene directly and invade the country. The current events clearly show that, such course of action can only result in conflict and untold sufferings for the people of the country.

Mr. President,

My country is currently subjected to such courses of action. The international community should also be wary of these neo-colonialist attempts. Here, it must be stressed that the destiny of each and every country can only be determined by its government and people. It cannot be imposed from outside. On our part, we are determined to proceed resolutely towards democracy along our chosen path.

Mr. President,

In the life of every nation, there are times when it has to face challenging situations and overcome them. Myanmar has had to go through such a challenge recently. The situation would not have deteriorated had the initial protest of a small group of activists against the rise in fuel prices had not been exploited by political opportunists. They sought to turn the situation into a political showdown aided and abetted by some powerful countries. They also took advantage of protests staged initially by a small group of Buddhist clergy demanding apology for maltreatment of fellow monks by local authorities. The security personnel exercised utmost restraint and they did not intervene for nearly a month. However, when the mob became unruly and provocative, they were compelled to declare a curfew.

Subsequently, when protestors ignored their warnings, they had to take action to restore the situation. Normalcy has now returned in Myanmar.

The rule of law is a fundamental principle accepted by nations. Without it there can be neither the orderly conduct of the day to day affairs of state nor the enjoyment of human rights and democracy by the people.

Mr. President,

Myanmar is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. It is home to over 100 national races who have lived together in weal or woe over the centuries. National unity is of paramount importance to us. We have therefore been striving to strengthen the fabric of our nation. In keeping with the aspirations of the people for democratization, a seven-step road map was declared and a national convention was held to lay down the principles for a new constitution. The convention was attended by representatives from the national races, political parties and other stakeholders as well as representatives of the 17 armed groups who have returned to the legal fold. It concluded work on 3 September 2007 adopting by consensus the fundamental principles for the new constitution. Based on these principles, a draft constitution will be drawn up by legal experts. All the remaining steps will be implemented phase by phase. This process is applauded by the people. To date people in (11) townships have convened rallies in support of the successful conclusion of the National Convention. Townships all over the country are expected to hold similar rallies .

Recent events make clear that there are elements within and outside the country who wish to derail the on-going process so that they can take advantage of the chaos that would follow. They have become more and more

emboldened and have stepped up their campaign to confront the government.

The Myanmar Government is fully aware of its responsibility to lead the nation in the process of transformation to a disciplined democracy. We have laid down a road map and will work conscientiously to achieve our goals. Significant progress has already been made. The process can be successfully completed, sooner rather than later, if no obstacles are placed in our path. In this regard, the international community can best help Myanmar by showing greater understanding. They can begin by refraining from measures which would result in adding fuel to the fire.

Mr. President,

One area where the international community can demonstrate good faith and objectivity is to acknowledge the good work done in Myanmar in combating the scourge of narcotic drugs. As a result of our efforts to rid our country of those drugs by 2014, the production of opium has plummeted to unprecedented levels. In World Drug Report 2006, UNODC reported that in 2005 the total area under opium poppy cultivation showed a decrease of 26 percent against 2004. The World Drug Report 2007 confirms that in 2006, the total area under opium poppy cultivation was approximately 21,500 hectares, representing a decrease of 34 percent compared to 2005. Here, I would like to stress that in terms of opium production, the decline is 88 percent over a span of 8 years declining from 2,560 tons to an estimated 292 tons.

Myanmar regards the eradication of narcotic drugs a national priority. We have enhanced our enforcement capacity and have been providing alternative livelihood to farmers to encourage them to end their dependence on opium poppy cultivation. We are also taking effective

measures with regard to the emerging threat posed by methamphetamine-type stimulant drugs. Myanmar neither produces nor imports the precursor chemicals required for the production of those drugs.

Mr. President,

Cooperation with the United Nations is a cornerstone of Myanmar's foreign policy. It is in this spirit that we continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General with regard to his good offices role mandated by the General Assembly. We have agreed to the visit of his special adviser, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Ibrahim Gambari. He is presently in Myanmar. We will continue to work closely and cooperate actively with the United Nations.

I thank you.