



MYANMAR

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Statement

by

His Excellency U Nyan Win,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Union of Myanmar

at the 61st Session of
the United Nations General Assembly

New York
26 September 2006

Madame President,

First of all, I wish to congratulate Your Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashid Al Khalifa on your election as President of the Sixty-First Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are convinced that your vast experience in international relations and able leadership will lead this session to a successful conclusion. I would like to pay tribute to your predecessor Mr. Jan Eliason who led the last session of the General Assembly most ably and successfully.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan whose stewardship of this Organization over the last ten years has brought about many positive and remarkable changes to the world body. His tireless and dedicated service to the international community will be indelibly etched in our collective memory.

Madame President,

The reform of the United Nations to meet the new challenges of our times is an ongoing process that needs to be assessed constantly. While we have achieved tangible progress in some areas such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission, progress is yet to be made in other areas. The success of the reform of the United Nations must be judged in terms of its effective response to the contemporary needs of Member States, in particular, those of the developing countries, which form the majority of the UN membership. While many states, including the developing countries, struggle to protect and advance the principles and practices of multilateralism, the tendency towards unilateralism remains strong. This unhealthy tendency should in no way gain ascendancy if the United Nations is to remain viable.

Madame President,

Attempts by some strong and powerful states to impose their will on developing countries in pursuit of their political agenda, creates an environment of hostility in the international community.

To our dismay and frustration, there has been glaring abuse of the mandate entrusted to the Security Council by its Member States by unjustly placing the situation of Myanmar on the agenda of the Security Council by alleging that it poses a threat to regional peace and security. Nothing could be further from the truth. Myanmar has done nothing that can undermine the peace and security of any country, let alone regional or international peace and security. Myanmar has close and cordial relations with all her five neighbours and other countries in the region.

The founders of the UN did not intend the world body to become a forum where some members with political and economic clout could gang up against a member state, and label it for

what it is not. We, therefore, urge Member States to resist attempts by those powerful states to influence the Security Council to take action against a Member State which in no way poses any threat to international peace and security.

Madame President,

I wish to touch briefly on the Security Council reform issue. Myanmar is in favour of the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. The expanded Security Council must also reflect today's political and economic realities. However, the fact that we have not made substantial progress on the expansion of the Council demonstrates the sensitive and complex nature of the issue. It is extremely important that this issue does not become divisive among the United Nations membership. Dialogue and consultations must continue to arrive at a solution acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the membership.

Madame President,

It is encouraging that the first session of the Human Rights Council was successfully held in Geneva in June and is now working in full swing to quickly become an effectively functioning human rights body. The active participation at the high level in that session is a reflection of our commitment to further strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery. It is, however, important that the principle of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity are scrupulously observed in the work of the Council. Although we want the Council to become an effective tool in the strengthening of the United Nations human rights machinery, we are not giving the Council carte blanche. It is through the observation of the aforementioned principles, through dialogue and cooperation, and non-politicization of human rights issues that the Council is to function. It is incumbent not only on the members of the Council, but also on all of us to ensure that the Council does not deviate from the direction in which we expect it to head.

Madame President,

Terrorism continues to defy the attempts of the international community to eliminate it as it raised its ugly head again in Mumbai and elsewhere very recently. We are of the view that it is only through the involvement of every community of people that we can be forewarned in time of the impending onslaught of terrorist acts. Myanmar fully supports the international efforts to eliminate terrorism. In this regard we are fulfilling our obligations required under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We are also taking the necessary measures as required under Security Council resolution 1261 (1999).

Madame President,

A daunting challenge facing the international community is the horrendous crime of human trafficking which the Secretary-General of the United Nations aptly refers to as one of the most reprehensible violations of human rights. Despite the efforts of the international community to tackle this issue over the last decade, it continues to grow with serious national and international implications for the governments concerned. Human trafficking is a serious international issue and we believe that it requires a coordinated and cooperative response by the entire international community to address the issue.

Myanmar is a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Supplementary Protocols to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. I would like to stress that Myanmar regards combating trafficking in persons as a national task. We are making relentless efforts in that regard.

Madame President,

Myanmar has designated HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB as diseases of national concern. In 1989, we set up a high-level multi-sectoral national AIDS committee. We have been cooperating with the United Nations and in 2001, the National AIDS Programme and the Joint UN programme for HIV/AIDS have drawn up a joint Programme of Action, covering education, prevention, cure and rehabilitation to effectively address the challenge. As a result, we are not only able to level the HIV/AIDS infection rate but have been able to reduce it. We are also serving on the UNAIDS Programme Coordination Board, enabling us to address the issue both at the national and international levels.

Madame President,

Narcotic drugs continue to be one of the threats facing us today. As the government of Myanmar regards the eradication of narcotic drugs as a national responsibility, it has striven relentlessly to eradicate it by 2014. Our determined efforts on all fronts have resulted in a substantial decrease in opium production. Over a span of eight years from 1996 to 2004, opium production has declined from 2,560 tons to 292 tons, constituting an 88 per cent decrease.

I would like to reiterate here that Myanmar will step up its efforts in close cooperation with friendly countries and international organizations until we achieve our goal.

Madame President,

Cooperation with the United Nations is a cornerstone of Myanmar's Foreign Policy. Track records have proven that Myanmar has invariably extended its cooperation to the United Nations.

Myanmar has been implementing the National Development Plan with the aim to accelerate growth, achieve equitable and balanced development and to reduce socio-economic development gap between rural and urban areas of the country. The National Development Plan addresses the major aspects of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We have made significant progress to achieve the MDGs by 2015 particularly in such areas as health, education, sustainable access to safe drinking water and access to improved sanitation. In implementing the goals of MDGs, we are primarily relying on our national resources. In this regard, we are also receiving valuable assistance and cooperation from UN agencies concerned.

Madame President.

Finally, I wish to apprise the Assembly of the political developments in my country. We have been steadfastly implementing the Seven-Step Road Map for transition to democracy, announced in August 2003.

The National Convention, which was adjourned on 31 January 2006 will resume its session on 10th October, and will continue to discuss the basic principles for the drafting of an enduring constitution.

Madame President,

It is indeed a challenging task for the National Convention to reconcile the different points of views raised by various groups, while at the same time trying to strike a balance between the interest of the national races on the one hand and that of the nation on the other. However, we are trying to expedite the National Convention process. I wish to stress that the process of transforming the country into a democratic state will move ahead systematically in accordance with the Road Map.

Madame President,

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to working together in upholding the principles enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations and in strengthening the role of the United Nations to respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you.