



MYANMAR

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Statement by

H.E. General Thein Sein,

Prime Minister

of

the Union of Myanmar

64th session of

the United Nations General Assembly

New York
28 September 2009

Mr. President,

1. I would like to extend our warm congratulations to you on your well-deserved election as the President of the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

2. I would also like to pay a special tribute to His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his able leadership of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President,

3. The global financial and economic crisis which began last year is showing tentative signs of recovery. However, many countries, large and small, still face daunting challenges. The crisis originated in the developed countries, but the developing countries have been the hardest hit. The nascent economic recovery has yet to effectively lift the low-income countries from the trough.

4. It is commendable that the developed countries have been playing a leading role in addressing the crisis. The views of the developing countries should also be taken into consideration together with those of the G-8 and G-20 countries. Measures that could have adverse effects on economic growth of the developing countries must be avoided. The developing countries have for many years worked hard to combat poverty and achieve favourable conditions for economic growth. Low-income countries require developmental assistance beyond existing ODAs in order for them to meet the challenges posed by the global economic downturn. The developed countries should increase their ODAs to the developing countries. We welcome the reaffirmation by President Hu Jintao of the People's Republic of China in his statement to this Assembly that his country will increase support for other developing countries hit hard by the economic and financial crisis.

Mr. President,

5. Climate change is the most pressing major threat facing our planet. It is a global challenge that requires a global response. No country can be insulated from the consequences of climate change. The rapid pace and scale of climate change requires the global community to respond urgently and effectively. The UN Summit on Climate Change convened by the Secretary-General last week underlined the magnitude of the problem and the need to redouble our efforts on climate change.

6. We look forward to the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change in December. We hope that the negotiations will be fruitful and arrive at a new agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions that would go into effect in 2012 when the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period expires. Any deal to be effective must be comprehensive and consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

7. The global financial and economic crisis and the climate change crisis have compounded the problems we face in the last few years. These include the rising prices of food, high energy prices and the spread of pandemic diseases. No single country can effectively overcome these problems acting alone. The global community must work together to meet the common challenges we face. In these trying times for our planet, multilateralism is more important than ever. Dialogue among nations of different religious and cultural backgrounds can contribute to international peace, security and development.

Mr. President,

8. The United Nations is the single world organization with near universal participation dedicated to peace and development. In recent years, steps have been initiated to reform the Organization to make it more democratic, effective and accountable to enable it to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Regrettably, progress has been painfully slow.

9. For the United Nations to take decisions in a more democratic manner, it is essential that the role of the General Assembly where all Member States are represented be enhanced. The Security Council reform is also important. For many years, the United Nations General Assembly has debated the matter but has made little headway. In addition to the focus on the vexed issue of enlargement of the Council, we would like to see constructive changes in procedures and working methods of the Council, particularly those that would make it more transparent and accountable.

Mr. President,

10. The continued existence of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to mankind. Myanmar believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the single absolute guarantee against the threat or use of those weapons. Accordingly, we have been calling upon nuclear weapon States to undertake the step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat with a view to achieving the total elimination of those weapons.

11. We consider that pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons we should pursue efforts towards the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. We support the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Nuclear weapons free zones enhance global and regional security and contribute toward reaching the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

12. It is our hope that all nations of the world will continue to work together to eliminate nuclear weapons so that the power of the atom can be harnessed exclusively as a tool for the benefit of mankind and not as an instrument of self-destruction. At the same time, every nation must have the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Nuclear techniques have widespread application in such areas as food and agriculture, health, industry and science. We welcome the reaffirmation of the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament held last week that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime should be maintained and strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of the NPT.

Mr. President,

13. Some powerful nations have been resorting to economic sanctions to pressure developing countries. Their aim is to influence the political and economic systems of those countries without taking into account their historical and cultural backgrounds. Sanctions have no moral basis as they not only hinder the economic and social development of the people but also interfere in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the country. As sanctions are indiscriminate and of themselves a form of violence, they cannot legitimately be regarded as a tool to promote human rights and democracy. Sanctions are being employed as a political tool against Myanmar and we consider them unjust. I would like to state that such acts must be stopped.

14. Myanmar is a country that practices a market economy based on agriculture. We are self sufficient in food and are able to contribute to food security of the region. We have made considerable progress in improving the socio-economic conditions thanks to the combined efforts of the Government and the people. Without the economic sanctions imposed on us, progress would be even greater.

Mr. President,

15. Following Cyclone Nargis which hit Myanmar in May 2008, the Myanmar Government, the United Nations and the ASEAN established the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) to undertake relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction works in the affected areas. The success of the TCG has been given due recognition by the international community. It has been acknowledged as an exemplary mechanism for future disaster relief and rehabilitation undertakings. The Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) has been laid down for the period 2009 to 2011. Further plans have also been adopted to effectively respond to similar natural disasters in the future. We will implement the projects diligently.

16. PONREPP will require US\$ 691 million over a period of three years. To date, only half of that amount has been committed by the international community. We have been carrying out many of the rehabilitation activities relying on our own funds and resources. If more funds are forthcoming and donors fulfill their pledges, the rehabilitation process would be speedier and more effective. I would like to say that the Myanmar Government and the people of the affected areas will always remain grateful to the individuals, organizations, and the international community at large for the generous help and assistance extended to them during their hour of need.

Mr. President,

17. Peace and stability in the country and the successful holding of the democratic elections are essentials for the democratization process of Myanmar. A new State Constitution was approved by 92.48% of the eligible voters in a nation-wide referendum held in May 2008. The multiparty general elections will be held in the coming year. Subsequently, the parliament will be convened and a government will be formed in accordance with the new Constitution.

18. The country would have a bicameral legislature. The Constitution provides for a presidential system of governance. It is envisaged that the President would be elected by a presidential electoral college. The State will be composed of seven states, seven regions, five self-administered zones and one self-administered division. The Capital, Nay Pyi Taw, would be designated a Union territory. In keeping with the state structure, the Constitution also establishes 14 state and regional legislative bodies.

19. The transition to democracy is proceeding. Our focus is not on the narrow interest of individuals, organizations or parties but on the larger interest of the entire people of the nation. We have urged all citizens, whether they agree with us or not, to actively participate in the process without losing sight of the democratic goal. In this way, the aspirations of the people will be fulfilled.

20. The Government is taking systematic steps to hold free and fair elections. Electoral laws will be promulgated, and an election commission will be formed so that political parties can be formed and contest the elections. On 17 September 2009, 7,114 prisoners were released for their

good conduct. They too will be able to participate in the general elections next year in accordance with the law.

21. The multiparty general elections is a significant step in our transition to a peaceful, modern and developed democratic State. Democracy cannot be imposed from the outside and a system suitable for Myanmar can only be born out of Myanmar society. Citizens of Myanmar are the ones who can best determine their future. They can judge the merits of democracy and make adjustments in accordance with their genius.

22. The international community can best assist Myanmar's emergence as a new nation, based on the principles of justice, freedom and equality enshrined in the new State Constitution, by demonstrating understanding.

Mr. President,

23. Global issues that require the attention of all countries will increasingly come to the fore in the years to come. Strong political will and commitment of all countries would be needed to overcome the challenges. Speakers before me have emphasized the need for collective efforts in finding solutions to the problems and challenges. I fully share their views and affirm that Myanmar will do its part.

24. Thank you.