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Statement by H.E. Mr. Thant Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Head of the Delegation of Myanmar at General Debate in the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons
(Vienna, 9 December 2014)

Mr. Chairman,

It is a great honour for me to participate in this General Debate. First of all, my delegation would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of Austria for hosting this important Conference as well as for their warm welcome and hospitality extended to us since our arrival here in this beautiful city.

My delegation takes pride in the fact that Myanmar was able to participate in the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit, Mexico, respectively. We were also pleased to participate in the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, which was delivered by New Zealand at the First Committee of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly on behalf of 155 nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The continued existence 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 and the survival of the civilization. These weapons
can be triggered at any time, either by accident, miscalculation or by design.

The mankind first witnessed the massive destruction and widespread human suffering following the detonation of two atomic bombs in 1945. Hence, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons have all along been reflected in many UN resolutions. However, until recently, sufficient attention was not given to this issue in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation deliberations. But things are changing. The humanitarian focus is increasingly gaining widespread recognition and support. This situational change has been brought about, in large measure, by the conferences such as this one.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our firm belief that the only absolute guarantee against a nuclear catastrophe is the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this regard, I wish to recall the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, issued on 8 July 1996, and the unanimous reaffirmation by all judges of the Court that there exists an obligation for all states to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Therefore, my delegation would like to call upon all States to fulfill that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to the early conclusion of
a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination. Accordingly, we would like to call for the early convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects to identify and deal with concrete measures for nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

It is high time for the Conference on Disarmament, which is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to establish, as soon as possible and as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time.

At the same time, all nuclear weapon states should undertake concrete measures for disarmament. Concerted efforts by all states particularly nuclear weapon states are required to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

We welcome the participation of the United States in this Conference.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the UNDP for its kind assistance in enabling us to participate in this Conference.

We wish the Vienna Conference a very fruitful outcome.

I thank you.