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Statement by

**His Excellency U Mya Than,
Ambassador/ Permanent Representative
of the Union of Myanmar
and
Leader of the Myanmar Delegation**

at the

World Summit on the Information Society

Geneva, 11 December 2003

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Myanmar delegation as well as on my own, I should like to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your well-deserved election as the President of this august assembly of the First World Summit on the Information Society. I am fully confident that, under your able guidance, we will be able to achieve a fruitful outcome from this Summit.

I also wish to express our deep appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for kindly hosting this important first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the excellent arrangements it has made for this great event.

May I also thank His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his invaluable support, and His Excellency Mr. Adama Samassekou, President of the Preparatory Committee for the Summit, and all the members of the Bureau for their dedication and hard work which have made this first ever Summit on the Information Society possible.

I should also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Chairman of the High Level Summit Organizing Committee, Mr. Pierre Gagne, Executive Director of the Executive Secretariat of the Summit, and all their staff for the excellent performance of their respective duties.

Mr. President,

Man is the most wonderful creature on our planet, and so are his inventions. With a very few exceptions, all of his inventions have benefited mankind greatly. The inventions of the successive generations have made the lives of fellow human beings more and more comfortable and convenient, and have improved their living conditions far beyond their wildest dreams.

Modern information and communication technologies have brought about dramatic and profound transformations in all aspects of our daily life. The advancement of these technologies are very fast. We can only guess what more dramatic changes this future will bring us. One thing is certain. These technologies will play even an increasingly more important role in our daily life in future.

Mr. President,

This Summit is most timely. We hope that this Summit will be able to formulate principles and guidelines for the development, utilization and management of the information and communication technologies and to lay down a plan of action for the Information Society for the common good of the entire mankind.

We wish to see that the Information Society be based, now and forever, on respect for the time-tested principles of the United Nations Charter and international law relating to the peaceful and friendly relations among nations, and that everyone enjoys without let and hindrance the benefits of the information and communication technologies.

Mr. President,

One advantageous aspect of the information and communication technologies is the multi-purpose use capability of these technologies. One of the objectives of this Summit is, therefore, to identify ways and means to effectively use these technologies in order to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty alleviation, which has long been one of the greatest challenges facing us and has so far eluded our conquest is the highest priority of the MDGs. Poverty is the main obstacle to the economic development of the

developing countries, especially the least developed countries. If the existing digital divide between the least developed countries and the rest of the world cannot be narrowed significantly in a few years' time, these countries would be even more marginalized and left further behind. To be able to claim that this Summit is a success, it is essential to identify ways and means and the support measures to bridge the said digital divide. The plan of action should include, among other things, concrete practical measures in this regard relating to infrastructure building, capacity building, and technical and financial assistance for the developing countries, especially the LDCs.

Mr. President,

We endorse the shared vision of the Information Society, enshrined in the Tokyo Declaration adopted by the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held in Tokyo from 13 to 15 January 2003. The Information Society must provide equitable and appropriate access for all and must use ICTs as a driving force for the promotion of sustainable economic and technological development, and must fulfil other desirable objectives, reflected in the Tokyo Declaration.

Comprehensive ICT strategies that have been endorsed at the highest political levels and that include clear goals need to be formulated at community, national, regional and global levels in order to create the Information Society. These strategies will be encouraged to be designed and implemented through collaboration and participation of all stakeholders.

We also support the important role that ICTs can play in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which outline a fundamental set of principles and guidelines for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender inequality.

Myanmar signed the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement at the Fourth ASEAN Informal Summit in Singapore in November 2000, and it is committed to implement the necessary steps, specified in the Agreement.

Mr. President,

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can also be used for the promotion of understanding and tolerance between cultures and religions, which will contribute to world peace. Our information society must be able to constructively exploit the ICTs for this good cause and to effectively prevent these technologies from being used for the purposes contrary to this cause.

Terrorism in various forms has been threatening almost every country. The plan of action to be adopted by this Summit should also include the effective measures to prevent the ICTs from falling into the hands of terrorists.

There should also be effective measures to prevent the profit seekers from exploiting the ICTs and Internet for their personal interests.

I also welcome the proposal to establish a working group on Internet governance, for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and the civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005.

Mr. President,

Allow me to apprise this august assembly briefly of the Myanmar Government's endeavours to develop ICTs in the country. Realizing the potentials and the importance of the ICTs for the economic development of the country, the Government of the Union of Myanmar has established the ICT Development Council, chaired by the Prime Minister himself. The focal point of the Council is the e-National Task Force, chaired by the Minister for Telecommunications, Posts and Telegraphs. Six working committees on legal infrastructure, information infrastructure, ICT education, e-applications, ICT standardization, and services and investment, respectively, have also been constituted under the Task Force. The legal framework and related measures being put in place in Myanmar include, among other things, the Myanmar Computer Science Development Act of 30 September 1996, and other laws, rules and regulations. With regard to the ICT infrastructure, the measures to improve the domestic and international links, broadband access and Internet access are being taken. The measures taken with regard to ICT education include, among other things, the establishment of the computer universities and colleges and the e-learning centres and the implementation of various human resources development programmes.

Mr. President,

Myanmar's outstanding performance in the ICT development has been duly recognized and appreciated.

One concrete expression of such recognition and appreciation was the presentation of the Asian Oceanian Computing Industry Organization (ASOCIO) Personality Award 2003 to General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar;

Another concrete expression was the presentation of the ASOCIO Organization Award 2003 to the Myanmar Computer Federation at the 19th ASOCIO Summit and General Assembly held in Vietnam from 27 to 30 November 2003.

Mr. President,

The "information society" is both an ongoing process and an aspiration. How we shall put ICT potentials to good uses for the benefit of mankind; how we shall tackle and overcome the challenges and problems; and implement our future plan of action; and how we shall actually shape this information society depend on all of us. I hope that this Summit will be able to focus us on these paramount questions and bring us forward in our common quest for achieving these noble goals. I wish this Summit a great success.

I thank you, Mr. President.