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STATEMENT BY MALAYSIA
ON BEHALF OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT
AT THE CLOSING OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF
THE 59TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Friday, 5 November 2004

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the outset, NAM should like to extend its congratulations and appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for the highly admirable manner in which you have steered the work of the First Committee at this Session of the General Assembly. The smooth and efficient conduct of the work of the Committee is, indeed, a testimony to your leadership and skill as well as your ability to garner the full confidence and cooperation of all delegations, including the members of NAM. Of course, we never doubted your capacity or ability to do so most satisfactorily.

2. We also wish to commend you for building up on the measures introduced by your predecessor, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva of Finland, in improving the efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Committee. Undoubtedly, this is a continuous process and NAM has been and shall remain supportive of and constructive towards any effort aimed at achieving this common objective of ours. The innovative and creative measures that you have introduced and implemented during the course of our deliberations over the past five weeks, which are useful and constructive, have significantly contributed towards the positive outcome in our work at this session. In this connection, NAM hopes that these new measures would be retained and further refined in future Sessions in the interest of the Committee.

3. It has become obvious that the role and product of the First Committee have gained greater significance in recent years. This has become more apparent owing to the inability of other multilateral disarmament machinery to generate substantive results this year. While we do not wish to paint a bleak picture, the reality is that, Mr. Chairman, 2004 has been a disappointing year in the field of multilateral disarmament. Nevertheless, we share the positive outlook for the successful outcome of the Nairobi Summit on the Ottawa Convention at the end of this month and the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference next month. Similarly, we look ahead to the NPT Review Conference in May 2005 where we believe all the States Parties should work together to advance our common goals. It is our hope that these meetings would provide the much-needed impetus necessary to move the global disarmament agenda forward and towards fashioning a much more safer and peaceful world. Rest assured, Mr. Chairman, of the positive and constructive engagement by NAM in all of these meetings.

4. In that same spirit, NAM, as in previous years had approached this Session with a constructive frame of mind. We introduced seven draft resolutions for the consideration of the Committee. We have withdrawn L.13. We had engaged interested delegations in numerous informal consultations on the texts and, where possible, had taken into consideration the concerns raised. We continue to find these useful in enriching the discussion on and substance of the texts. As in previous Sessions, these draft resolutions have continued to receive overwhelming support by Member States in the Committee. NAM should like to take this opportunity to express appreciation and gratitude to all those delegations that have supported these resolutions. Although they are sponsored by NAM, these resolutions as well as those approved by the Committee, in the final analysis, fall under the ownership of the General Assembly, notwithstanding our national, regional and grouping interests. As such, we are glad to have had the opportunity to exchange views on the important question of implementation and follow-up to resolutions of the First Committee that you have constituted during our interactive discussion a couple of weeks ago. We have certainly benefited from it and look forward to further ideas and proposals that you and the Secretariat may produce in due course for our consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Recognizing the importance of constantly moving forward and evolving to meet current and future challenges, NAM together with the European Union, the United States and other interested delegations have been actively engaged in a series of open-ended informal consultations to collectively formulate measures to improve the work of the Committee. Thus, we believe that the approval by the Committee today of draft resolution L.60 signifies another important milestone in our efforts to improve the work of the Committee and the General Assembly as whole, as envisaged in Resolutions 58/126 and 58/316.

6. The Committee has now completed its consideration of all 16 items under the agenda of the 59th Session of the General Assembly that have been allocated to it. The Committee has also succeeded in approving three decisions and 52 resolutions, as compared to seven and 46, respectively, at the previous Session. We have achieved these through 23 meetings, including today's session, that we have convened despite the maximum allocation of 26 meetings over a period of five weeks. These are certainly signs of a good achievement. In that connection, congratulations are due to you, Mr. Chairman, to the Members of the Bureau of the Committee, to all delegations and groupings as well as to the Secretariat for all the hard work and spirit of cooperation that have prevailed throughout the past five weeks. We should also like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, who has exhausted all efforts to ensure the smooth deliberations in the Committee.

7. Finally, NAM reaffirms and reiterates its commitment in promoting international peace and security primarily through disarmament measures. NAM strongly reaffirms that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, remain the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.