

Speech by HMFA Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

- Thank you for joining us here today, some of you from as far away as Singapore, Bangkok, Delhi are included among you, so I would like to thank you for taking the trouble to take all the way to Nay Pyi Taw. It's a wonderful opportunity for all of you, some I already know, some familiar faces, some are new. It would be good for us to learn from one another and I'm sure you are interested in what we might have in mind, a new government might have in mind with regard to foreign policy. As you all know, our country stands at the meeting point of South Asia and South East Asia and with China in the north we can claim to touch the Far East as well.
- In such a unique position, obviously there are many challenges which we hope to turn into opportunities for fostering peace, prosperity and friendship, not just throughout our region but throughout the world. Since we became independent in 1948, we have adopted the policy of neutrality and universal friendship. We were one of the first signatories to the United Nations Charter and to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights, which means that we have always placed emphasis on the need to international cooperation and on the need to respect human beings everywhere, because, friendship and peace are dependent on the security and happiness of all peoples in the world. This has always been our aim that our country should be on the ground for fostering better relations, not just between our neighbours and us, but between us and the rest of the world and between all other countries as well.
- I suppose what might be known as some circle that I was a Foreign Service bred which is to say that, I spent some years with my mother when she was Ambassador to India. And in that way I learnt much about what life means in the diplomatic community and how important personal relations are. Personal relations can lead to better relations between nations. And I'm sure all of you here, as seasoned diplomats are not only aware of this, but practicing it very,

very enthusiastically in this country to create better relationship between us and your countries, between our people and your people and between each other.

- We are not a big or a very big country. But we hope that we will be able to lead the world when it comes to overcome all problems that beset our globe with sincerity, with goodwill towards all and with a genuine desire to work hard to achieve the kind of situation of which all human beings dream but which we very seldom manage to achieve. It is always good to have goals, even if these goals seem sometimes unattainable; I think it is a basic necessity that we should aim high. We have a saying in Burmese which means effectively that if you aim very, very high, you may get to somewhere in the middle. So you have to try very hard to get somewhere, anywhere. I don't think you achieve anything for nothing.
- By the way I think I had better clear this business of Burma and Myanmar right here. Because there are some members of diplomatic corps quite who don't know which term to use. So, it is up to you. Because there is nothing in the constitution of our country that says that they may use any term in particular. I use Burma very often because I'm used to using it. But it does not mean that I require other people to do as well. And I'll make an effort to use Myanmar from time to time so you all feel comfortable. This is what Diplomacy is all about. We have to learn to accommodate each other. We have to be aware of other people's problem and we have to think as much by resolving other's problem as resolving our own.
- A foreign policy that is based only on getting our own way is not much of the policy. We want to get only on getting our own way, of course. But we hope that we can get our friends to help us together to get our own way willingly, out of the friendship and out of the conviction that we are asking for is not unreasonable. We are trying to build up our country as a strong nation. Strong because of the strength of the people. We look upon our people as our gracious

strength. Economic development and social development can come only if the people are actively involved in building up a nation.

- We cannot do it on our own. When I say “We”, the government cannot do it on our own without the cooperation of the people. We put great emphasis on people to people engagements. The best relationship between countries can be fostered only by the people of the countries.
- But of course diplomats have much to do to make sure that our people get to know one another in the right way and learn to appreciate differences. This is what diplomacy is about. It is about making differences come together to become a harmonious home.
- I don't want to say creating unity out of diversity, but creating harmony and interest out of diversity. We are starting out now on I would like to say a new approach. Not entirely new because as I said we always have a foreign policy to which we have adhered faithfully since the time of our independence. But of course we have seen nuances in the past.
- We would like to present to a time when we can be more open in our relationship with our neighbours and friends from far corner of area and to use, I am not sure, use is the quite correct word but to make it possible for our relationship with other countries to be an ascent of our own country as well.
- We have much to learn, we are prepared to learn and I hope that you will also think that we have something to offer as well. As I have said, we are starting out a new journey, but those are starting out a new journey often noticed events and happening that may pass a notice to those who have come used to the old scenes.

- With our new approach and our new vision, I hope that we may be able to persuade you to join us in constructing the kind of diplomatic order where problems can be resolved through negotiation, mutual respect and understanding. That is what the UN is all about.
- When we joined UN in 1948, we believed problems of the world could be resolved through reason and through goodwill. We still believe that. I think we need to believe that. Problems in our world can be resolved through intelligence, goodwill, through eagerness to learn about others. We have to learn about others, if we are to get on with the rest of the world. So, that is our very very simple policy.
- We want to get on with the rest of the world. We want to build good relations with the rest of the world. We want to learn from you how we may build good relations. And, I would like you to help us to learn as well.
- Once we have reached the point where we can make our own contribution towards world peace and prosperity, I am sure we will look back to these days when all our friends stand ready around in our time of need.
- Personal relations are most important when it comes to diplomatic engagements. As I said when I was a Foreign Service bred, I discovered that in many instances good personal relations between diplomats much further than any professional personnel in solving problems between nations. This is the value of a good diplomat.
- It's good diplomats who are able to use diplomacy positively for everybody concerned, not just for the own country but also for the countries with which we are engaging. In this spirit that I ask all of you to join us in our new adventure.
- Our new adventure is a kind of adventure that any nation may need to lead at sometimes or the other. Even old, rich and well-established nations may

sometimes need help to meet new challenges when they need new ideas and cooperation of friends from all across the globe.

- I am wondering if it is sound like a lecture. But it is very difficult to talk to a lot of people in this way not become think somewhat academic term. But I understand that towards the end of the programme, we have an opportunity to engage more informally. I just want to say that the presence of so many of you here today to me seems that indication of your goodwill towards a country. And for that I thank you. And I don't want to walk on and on because I do want to leave enough time for His Excellency Robert Chua to talk on behalf of the diplomatic community and also for questions and answers session which I believe much more interesting than any single person is just going on and on.
- Thank you.