STATEMENT
BY
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OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE
AT THE 68TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 28
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

(NEW YORK, 16 October 2013)
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his insight and comprehensive reports on Advancement of Women. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN and the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

It has been almost two decades since the adoption of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The fundamentals of the Declaration remain valid and relevant.

Today, we are pleased to see that gender issue occupies a place of top priority at the United Nations system. Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women has been integrated into the Millennium Development Goals. We are intensifying our efforts to achieve those targets in the remaining short span of time. In this regard, the UN Women plays an important role in guiding the UN system to accelerate progress in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Despite progress in awareness in the gender issue, women and girls in many parts of the world are still facing with challenges such as poverty, violence, discrimination and trafficking. International community must step up its efforts to address these issues. In this regard, we share the view that supporting the advancement of women and gender equality is an important instrument to achieve both equality and sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

The successive governments in Myanmar took appropriate measures to promote and protect the rights of women and children. In order to align itself with the framework of the UN system in this area, Myanmar became a State party to the Convention on the Rights of Child in 1991. And in 1997, it acceded to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Government’s adherence and implementation of these international instruments has contributed significantly not only to the institutional development in this area but also to organizing national activities to promote and protect the welfare of women and children of the nation.
Mr. Chairman,

In my own country, female represents more than half of the total populations. Myanmar women traditionally enjoy equal rights with men. Their rights are being protected by both tradition and law. Myanmar is one of those rare countries where a woman keeps her own name even after marriage. In the past centuries, women's major role is traditionally regarded as for household keeping and men's role for bread earning. In this 21st century, those old thoughts and practice are now things of the past. In Myanmar, there is virtually no discrimination in terms of pay scales, retirement age, employment, voting rights or selection of positions. The Article 352 of the State Constitution prohibits discrimination against national races, native, religion or gender in selection and appointment of positions.

Since the country is advancing on the path of a peaceful democratic transition, the reform measures taken by Myanmar Government have created even more conductive environment for protection of vulnerable groups including women and girls. Voices of debate in the Parliament are becoming louder on this issue of gender equality and protection of women.

The present government has also stepped up its efforts for elimination of discrimination and violence against women by implementing the articles contained in the CEDAW. Complaints for violations against women or any other rights abuse could be filed with the National Human Rights Commission. As a State party, Myanmar has taken a series of national-level plans for the well-beings of women and girls. A draft law to protect women and girls from violation against them is in the drafting process to be in line with the provisions of CEDAW. At present, the government is in the preparation process to submit the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the States parties to CEDAW.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Myanmar is giving priority to enhance the role of women and fully support to the development and empowerment of Myanmar women through the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women.

The newly adopted National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022) is based on international conventions, laws, standards and strategies such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals. The Plan will be implemented by the Government in coordination and cooperation with national and international NGOs, UN agencies, civil society organizations and private agencies.
Mr. Chairman,

In Myanmar, women participation in the country’s political process as well as in the business world has started to grow. Although women participation is still low at the Cabinet level, women representation is even much higher than men’s at most of the Government Ministries, especially in Health, Education, Information, Industry and Labour. It is most visible in our own Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

With the emergence of a multi-party democratic system in Myanmar, the number of women parliamentarians in the legislative bodies and female politicians has increased to a certain level. At present, several women have been appointed as cabinet minister and deputy ministers in the Cultural, Planning, Social Welfare, Environment and Health ministries. This representation, though modest, is indeed a significant development in women’s participation in the political system in Myanmar.

Mr. Chairman,

Human trafficking is one of the menaces posing a serious threat to the security of women and girls. Myanmar is therefore, cooperating closely with its neighbours in the Mekong region to put an end to this hideous act. The government has instituted effective law enforcement measures such as enactment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law. We are now implementing the third 3-year plan (2011-2013) to combat human trafficking. We are glad that these efforts are appropriately recognized by the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

Myanmar has been taking necessary steps towards the advancement of women, since becoming a State Party to CEDAW in 1997. To show our support to the work of UN Women, Myanmar has made a token voluntary contribution to its activities for advancement of women. We believe that women and girls in rural areas can be empowered and advanced through providing better education, alleviation of poverty, creating job opportunities and providing micro-financing for their livelihoods. Myanmar stands ready to work together with the international community to help women and girls in addressing those challenges to promote the advancement of women and gender equality.

I thank you.