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Statement
by
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Representative of the Delegation
of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
on
Agenda Item 69 “Promotion and protection of human rights”:
(b) “Human rights questions, including alternative approaches
for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and
fundamental freedoms” (c) “Human rights situations and reports
of special rapporteurs and representatives Human Rights”
at the Third Committee of the 68th Session
of the
United Nations General Assembly

New York
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Mr. Chairman,

My delegate wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts for their comprehensive and informative reports presented to the Committee under this agenda item. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Malaysian delegation on behalf of ASEAN on the same item.

We recognize the importance of human rights as one of the three main pillars of the Unite Nations together with development and peace and security. Bearing in mind this core value of human rights, the Government has been undertaking unprecedented and wide-ranging political and socio-economic reforms to fulfil the two fundamental needs of its own people. These needs are no less than those of all other people around the world, i.e. to enjoy their rights to peace and tranquillity and socio-economic development of their lives.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to establish peace and tranquillity and the rule of law in the country, we are making intensive legislative reforms to review existing laws to be in line with the Constitution and applicable international instruments. The Hluttaw (Parliament) has already passed a total of 58 laws since its inception in 2011. A number of new legislations including the establishment of political parties, laws permitting freedom of association and peaceful assembly and the freedom of expression have already been enacted, contributing to the emergence of a favourable political climate. A series of amnesties granted by the President has also strengthened the government’s national reconciliation efforts. The special committee, which also includes some former prisoners of conscience, is functioning actively to scrutinize and identify prisoners eligible for future amnesties with a view to making all prisoners free from prisoners of conscience by the end of this year.

Another ongoing endeavour of the government is peace negotiations with various ethnic armed group to end the six-decade long conflicts hampering our efforts for economic development. We have achieved significant progress, as ceasefire agreements have been reached with virtually all ethnic armed groups, paving the way for signing of nationwide cease-fire agreement soon.

In order to uplift the socio-economic life of the people, the Government has been implementing bold economic reform measures. Priority is given to stabilization of macro-economy, poverty alleviation, increase of flow in local and foreign investment, and creation of job opportunities for the benefits of the ordinary peoples. In this endeavours, emphasis is
also given to take into account sustainable use of land, water, forest and natural resources, green economy and green growth. As the success of our reform depends on how much it can deliver benefits to the broader population, the government is paying special attention to achieving inclusive and equitable development.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held last year in Brazil serve as an inspiration us to advance the integration of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It also stresses the importance of poverty eradication, social inclusion and participation to the future of our world. Myanmar welcomes the important concept to incorporate the social dimension in the endeavors for sustainable development in the utmost interest of its people. No one should be left behind in the process of sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the incidents occurred recently, Myanmar is still a multi-ethnic country which has a long history of peaceful and harmonious existence among different faiths. Major religions coexist and flourish throughout this multi-religious country of Myanmar. Religious tolerance and the freedom of worship are guaranteed in the State Constitution. This constitutional right is clearly reflected in the fact that pagodas, churches, mosques and Hindu temples are standing side by side under the shade of each other in the country, testifying to the prevalence of religious harmony and tolerance.

The Government has been making serious efforts to resolve the problem of inter-communal violence through short-term and long-term plans to implement the recommendations of the Inquiry Commission, including taking measures to prevent recurrence of such violence and provisions of humanitarian assistance without discrimination. At the same time, with a view to promoting such traditional values of peaceful co-existence and harmony among the communities, interfaith dialogues are being conducted more frequently in Myanmar through the coordinated efforts made by the government, the civil society and the community-elders.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the promotion and protection of human rights must be based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue, aimed at strengthening the capacity of Member States to comply with their rights obligations. As such, Myanmar has been cooperating fully with the United Nations and its human rights mechanism.
In that spirit, we receive the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar twice a year. We have facilitated a total of eight missions for the current Special Rapporteur to enable to carry out his mandate. We firmly believe that the UPR mechanism is the sole and uncontroversial monitoring mechanism to fairly address human rights situations in all countries. Myanmar therefore constructively participated in the first cycle of UPR in 2011. We are now making preparations for the second cycle.

To serve as a mechanism to tackle complaints of human rights violations, the National Human Rights Commission has been put in place. The Commission will be further strengthened by the approval of the National Human Rights Commission Law by the Parliament. Once it is approved, the Commission will be able to expand its functions more effectively. At the regional level, the Commission is working closely with ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). Myanmar is also engaging through bilateral human rights dialogues with US, Japan and the EU.

In another development, Myanmar is continuing its negotiations with OHCHR to reach a mutually acceptable host country agreement for opening of OHCHR office in Myanmar with a view to receiving technical assistance for our efforts in protection and promotion of human rights.

The promotion and protection of the rights of children also occupies a place of priority for Myanmar. The Government’s efforts to address the issue of underage soldiers have made significant progress since the signing of the Joint Plan of Action with the United Nations on 27 June 2012. The Government has invited the delegation headed by the Chairperson of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to visit Myanmar at the end of next month. It demonstrates the goodwill and commitment of the Government to fully implement the Plan of Action to end this practice.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Special Rapporteur has admitted in his conclusion that the transition has already brought substantial human rights improvements for the people of Myanmar and hold the potential to bring much more. Despite remaining challenges, nobody could deny that dramatic changes occurred and the situation of human rights has improved significantly.

I would therefore like to conclude by saying that the outcomes of the democratic transformation process in Myanmar deserves a fair and just recognition from the international community, in the form of the termination of country-specific mandates inscribed by the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. We believe that without
these mandates, Myanmar will be able to work together more actively and extensively with the international community including the United Nations in our pursuit for promoting democracy and human rights.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.