MYANMAR

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Statement by Ambassador Hau Do Suan,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations
on the Report of the Secretary-General on Myanmar introduced
by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar
Agenda Item 70 (c): Promotion and protection of human rights: Human rights situation and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives at the Third Committee of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
(New York, 23 October 2019)

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the Special Envoy Ms. Christine Burgener for introducing the Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation of human rights in Myanmar. I am also pleased to convey my Government's appreciations to the Special Envoy for her impartiality and constructive engagement with Myanmar in discharging her mandate.

I am confident that the existing mutual trust and understanding, and the spirit of cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the Special Envoy will continue and contribute to bringing successful outcomes in our common efforts to resolve the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to make some comments on certain important issues contained in the report.

Repatriation

The most urgent priority of the Government of Myanmar concerning the situation in Rakhine State is to address the humanitarian issue and to implement the repatriation of displaced people as soon as possible.

In this regard, the Government is working closely with UNHCR, UNDP, and ASEAN to facilitate the implementation of the bilateral agreements between Myanmar and Bangladesh on the repatriation, resettlement, and development of returnees. Myanmar strongly holds the view that issues between neighbours can and must be resolved bilaterally in an amicable and friendly manner. The current issue of displaced persons in Cox' Bazaar can and must be resolved bilaterally.

We are grateful to our friends in the region who have been rendering political, financial, material and logistic supports to our efforts in creating conducive environment for the repatriation process in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner.

The preconditions set by some countries to put international pressure on Myanmar, such as attempts to bring the case of Myanmar to the international judicial bodies for accountability, to set up a "Safe Zone" inside Myanmar, and outright citizenship demands are unwarranted and not workable.

Despite obstacles that we are facing for repatriation process, including killings and threats by ARSA inside the camps, some displaced families have been returning under their own arrangement and of their own volition. Most recently on 21st of this month, 29 people returned safely to Rakhine by their own free will which make total number of returnees 341 up to now.

At the informal ministerial meeting among Myanmar, Bangladesh and China during high level week of the current General Assembly, we have agreed to form an informal tripartite working group at ambassadorial level in Dhaka. The working group will work together for the successful implementation of the repatriation process on the ground.

Faithful implementation of the bilateral agreement is the only feasible way to resolve the issue of the displaced persons. The international community's support to the bilateral efforts would help accelerate the repatriation process.

NVC and Citizenship

Mr. Chairman,

Let me touch briefly on the citizenship issue. The Government of Myanmar has made its position very clear. Citizenship will be granted in accordance with the 1982 Citizenship Law.

The verified returnees will receive a National Verification Card (NVC) upon their arrival at the reception center after taking biometric data. There are misconceptions over the NVC. NVC is a temporary identification card to be used as a first step before getting citizenship status. Possession of an NVC is a solid proof of residency in Myanmar. Myanmar applies procedures that are similar to those of other sovereign states concerning the application of citizenship. NVCs are issued throughout the country and not confined to the Rakhine State. NVC holders who meet prescribed requirements are entitled to apply for citizenship.

Accountability

Mr. Chairman,

It is critically important that the report of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) is credible in handling accountability question.

Members of the ICoE have visited Bangladesh from 17-22 August 2019 to prepare the groundwork. The Commission is now awaiting approval from the Bangladesh Government for the ICoE's Evidence Collection and Verification Team (ECVT) to visit Cox's Bazar to interview and collect evidence from the alleged victims. We call on Bangladesh to allow the visit of ECVT as soon as possible.

A military investigation into Rakhine-allegations is also currently being undertaken by the Office of the Judge Advocate General. A recent announcement suggests that there will soon be a court-martial.

It would be in the best interest of all including the affected persons that the international community gives support for the success of the domestic efforts to addressing the accountability.

Rakhine Advisory Commission Recommendations

Mr. Chairman,

While we are addressing the issues which need our urgent attention, we don't lose track of the implementation process of the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

We have made great stride in implementation of the majority of the recommendations. Some recommendations are for short terms or immediate implementation but, some may need longer time. Some results are visible and countable. But, some may not immediately bring about tangible results.

We are now focusing on human aspects by prioritizing implementation of recommendations on citizenship, freedom of movement, closure of IDP camps and promotion of education and health sector.

Mr. Chairman,

For almost 30 years since 1992, Myanmar has been under the intense human rights scrutiny by the HRC appointments of five Special Rapporteurs. From 1995 to 2016, three Special Envoys had been appointed under the Good Offices role of the Secretary-General with the intension to help Myanmar in its democratization process. We have never failed to cooperate with the UN mandates in good faith throughout these long years.

Today, Myanmar is in the critical juncture of it transition to democracy. The transition is yet incomplete. The democratic government is relentlessly striving to deliver its commitments to peace and national reconciliation, prevalence of rule of law, social and economic development and amending the present constitution to be fully in line with democratic norms and principles.

Despite grappling with numerous daunting challenges, the Government and People of Myanmar are determined with full confidence to realize their long held aspiration of building a democratic federal union that would guarantee peace, development and human dignity among the family of nations.

The United Nations and the international community have ample opportunities to help the people of Myanmar in fulfillment of their aspirations by constructive engagement and rendering assistance to Myanmar's national efforts with good will and sincerity.

Thank you.

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