MYANMAR

General Statement by H.E. U Hau Do Suan,
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of
the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to United Nations
on the resolution "The Human Rights Situation in Myanmar" (A/C.3/72/L.48)
at the 3rd Committee Meeting
(15 November 2017)

Mr. Chairman,

- My delegation requested recorded vote for the draft resolution entitled "The Human Rights Situation in Myanmar" (A/C.3/72/L.48) tabled by Egypt, on behalf of the member states of the OIC.
- Myanmar consistently opposes any politically motivated county specific resolution in the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Myanmar always upholds the principles of non-politicization, non-selectivity, objectivity, impartiality, respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states in considering human rights situations.
- Moreover, tabling a country-specific human rights resolution at the General Assembly is procedurally unwarranted. The General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 established the Human Rights Council and universal periodic review mechanism with the objective to build constructive engagement based on mutual respect and cooperation in promotion and protection of human rights. My delegation believes that the universal periodic review process is the most appropriate mechanism for addressing human rights situations.
- With this spirit, Myanmar has all along been cooperating in good faith with the Human Rights Council over the past 27 years. Despite our goodwill and cooperation with the Council, we had also been the subject of selective human rights scrutiny by the Third Committee of the General Assembly for 25 years until recently.

- It is time to stop this selective, unfair and discriminatory treatment of a member state in the United Nations system. Myanmar is a nascent and fragile democratic nation struggling to overcome daunting challenges many of which are chronic in nature, inherited from the successive administrations.
- As the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi declared loud and clear to the world in her statement at the 71st session of the UNGA, the democratic government of Myanmar is not afraid of human rights scrutiny. Promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of its people is the Government's priority. We welcome constructive criticism and cooperation. We are willing and ready to work with countries and organizations including the UN.
- However, we will not accept imposing coercive measures with the intention of exerting political pressures under the cloak of human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

- Let me turn to the draft resolution in question. The draft resolution is, to say the least, flawed in its substance and dubious and questionable in intent. It is based on one-sided accusations and falsely claimed evidence.
- Using controversial and self-designated nomenclature throughout the draft resolution also undermines the sovereignty of a nation and tantamount to insulting its people.
- The drafters of this resolution have failed to recognize Myanmar Government's relentless efforts to find a lasting solution to the Rakhine situation ever since it came to office 18 months ago. Most importantly, they turn a blind eye to the primary cause of the recent humanitarian problem.
- The unprovoked and premeditated terrorist attacks against 30 Myanmar police stations and one military base that took place a few hours later the submission of Mr. Annan Commission's report cannot be a coincident. The terrorist group of religious extremists, the so-called Arkan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) is led by a Attaullah Abu Ammar Jununi. Most interestingly, according to the intelligent sources, he is not a native muslim from Rakhine. He was born in Pakistan and raised in Saudi Arabia. The International Crisis Group (ICG) in its 2016 report mentioned that the

terrorist group is led by people living in Saudi Arabia and their members have trained abroad.

- It was evident that ARSA and people behind them wanted to undermine the Government's efforts to solve the problem of Rakhine in a peaceful and sustainable way.
- Regarding the issue of the Rakhine State, the State Counsellor has been wrongfully accused of indifference to the plight of the peoples of Rakhine State. Far from ignoring the situation, she has made it one of the country's top priorities and taken bold steps as soon as she came into office 18 months ago. Those steps include the establishment of the Central Committee on Peace, Stability, and Development of the Rakhine State; launching of National Verification Process to address the key issue of statelessness and to ensure granting of citizenship to all those eligible under the 1982 Citizenship law.
- In addition, despite strong opposition from many quarters, the Government formed the Rakhine State Advisory Commission led by Dr. Kofi Annan in August 2016 to assist in finding long-term solution to the issue of Rakhine State. The recommendation of the Advisory Commission represents a viable roadmap to forge forward. The implementation committee for the recommendations has already been formed and work is in progress.
- Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. It is home to 135 officially recognized ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and adherence to different faiths. We have been living in this land in peace and harmony throughout history. Out of the total population of 51 million, 89.89 percent are Buddhists, 6.31 percent Christians, 2.2 percent Muslims and 0.5 percent profess Hinduism. For every 694 Buddhists there is a monastery; for every 454 Christians there is a church; for every 260 Muslims and 239 Hindus, there will be a mosque and a temple respectively. There are 4407 Mosques and 459 registered Islamic schools in Myanmar.
- To promote religious harmony and peace among different communities, we have established Interfaith Friendship Group at national level representing all religions. There are 127 interfaith friendships sub groups across the country. In 2017 alone, 112 interfaith dialogues, awareness talks and combined prayers services have been held all over the country.

- The situation that we are facing today in Rakhne State is not a religious issue. The genesis of this extremely complex issue dates back to the time when the British colonialists annexed Rakhine in early 19th Century. It is the combination of political, economic and irregular migration issues over long decades. The long standing problems of Rakhine need a comprehensive and lasting solution, taking into account preserving the human rights of all communities without discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

- We take it seriously about human rights violations in Rakhine State and in other parts of the country. We are committed to taking action against human rights violations and all other acts that impair stability and harmony and undermine the rule of law. They are being addressed in strict norms of justice.
- This position was restated again by State Counsellor in her speech delivered to the nation on the government efforts on national peace and reconciliation on 19 September 2017.
- The 25 August 2017 terrorist attacks and following terrorist acts triggered one of the most tragic situations in Rakhine State. Innocent civilians from different communities had to flee, some fled to south of Rakhine State and others to Bangladesh side for various reasons.
- We do recognized and feel deeply for the suffering of all the people who have been caught up in the conflict. Those who have had to flee their homes are many – not just Muslims and Rakhines, but also small minority groups, such as the Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi, and Hindus of whose presence most of the world is unaware.
- With a good neighborly spirit, we are working steadfastly with Bangladesh on the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the population who are taking refuge in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Home Minister has visited Myanmar in October during which the issue had been discussed between the two sides.
- We are currently working with Bangladesh on the arrangement for repatriation. The repatriation process will start in 3 weeks after signing

bilateral agreement for the arrangement. A joint working group will be set up to coordinate the process of repatriation.

- The Bangladesh Foreign Minister has also been invited to Myanmar later this month. We are hoping to sign the bilateral agreement on repatriation arrangement during his visit so that the process could start as soon as possible.
- On our part, we have established the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine. The Union Enterprise is now implementing the three main tasks, namely, (1)repatriation and provision of humanitarian assistance to returnees, (2) resettlement, and rehabilitation of all displaced communities and (3)establishment of sustainable peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.
- We are also working with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and Red Cross Movement for providing humanitarian assistance to the people in need in accordance with humanitarian principles. The Red Cross Movement is now providing tens of thousands of people with food and other services already.
- Moreover, WFP and FAO are also working on the ground.
- We continue to maintain our cooperation with the United Nations. We are engaging with high-ranking officials from UN Secretariat, UN Fund, Programmes and Agencies.

Mr. Chairman,

- The attempt to bring the issue of Rakhine State to the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Security Council in parallel is against the principle of the United Nations to avoid duplicity of its work. Moreover, the issue is also under active consideration of the Human Rights Council. Some elements contained in the draft resolution, particularly requesting the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy on Myanmar, are unnecessary and would be a waste of the UN's already stringent budget.

Mr. Chairman,

- Many countries, friends from far and near have helped Myanmar throughout its struggle for democracy. The country is still a fledgling democracy encountering numerous serious challenges among which the Rakhine issue is only one of the many. We are truly concern about the negative consequences of the undue political pressures and coercive measures imposed upon the country. We cannot afford to have anything that derails our democratization process. I hope this is not the intention of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution.
- At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the international community join hands with us to ensure that democracy takes firm root and that we will succeed in carrying out our responsibility to establish peace, stability, and development in Rakhine State and in the whole of Myanmar.
- Therefore, I would like to appeal to the Member States to stand together on principle and to support the people of Myanmar by voting against the draft resolution.
- I thank you, Mr. Chairman.