Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hau Do Suan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations, Informal meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the mandate on children and armed conflict

New York – 8 February 2017

Madam Chair,

I thank the President of the General Assembly for holding this important commemorative meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the distinguished panelists for their insightful deliberations. I would particularly wish to pay a special tribute to you, Madam Leila Zerrougui, for your dedication and tireless efforts to bring hope and brighter future to tens of thousands of children around the world affected by armed conflicts. Thank you.

Looking back into the past 20 years, three SRSG have been appointed with a view to pay serious attention to the situation of children affected by armed conflicts. A lot of progress had been made. The Security Council has places the issue on its agenda, put under close attention. Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism proposed by the Secretary-General was endorsed. Plans of Actions have been agreed upon. "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign was launched to end child recruitment by government armed forces in conflict. As a result, more than 115,000 child soldiers have been released since 2000.

Myanmar has been a strong supporter of the mandate of the Special Representative and the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign. In June 2012, the government signed a Joint Plan of Action with the United Nations. And, in September 2014, a work plan was adopted to accelerate the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action. A year later, in September 2015, we signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of

children in armed conflict. Moreover, consultations have been held regularly between the relevant ministry and CTFMR to verify complaints, to discharge and reintegrate, to raise awareness, and to conduct field visits. Here, I wish to express my government's appreciation to the UNICEF for its support in our collaborative efforts.

Since the signing of the Plan of Action in 2012, a total of 800 child soldiers had been discharged from the military service and reunited with their families. The government also took legal actions against the perpetrators, both civilians and military personnel. Additional measures were taken to assist 553 victims to have education, vocational training and health care.

We are committed to providing our children an environment where they can grow up free from violence and exploitation as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda. We strongly believe that peace and cessation of conflict is the only way to alleviate the plight of children in armed conflicts. Keeping this in mind, peace and national reconciliation has been on the highest agenda of the Government of Myanmar. Sustainable peace is essential for achieving sustainable development as we strive to achieve the SDGs.

Sustainable Development is the only solution for us to give our children the life that they deserve. It is our responsibility to create an environment and society that ensure quality health and education, dignity and basic rights. We are exerting our utmost efforts to ending armed conflict that has been going on over 6 decades and to build a democratic federal union. We are confident that the strong determination of the people of Myanmar for peace will prevail, and all children of the Union will soon enjoy in fullness their rights of freedom and better future.

I thank you.

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