



MYANMAR

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STATEMENT
BY
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OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
ON
AGENDA ITEM 68: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF
THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN
AT
THE THIRD COMMITTEE
OF THE 70TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
16 October 2015, New York

Mr. Chairman,

1. My delegation appreciates the Secretary-General, Special Representatives and Special Rapporteur for their mandated work in the area of promotion and protection of the rights of children.

2. We have celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which enabled us to look back the journey we took for children together with the achievements and challenges. [Despite the progress made, more need to be done in addressing the persistent and growing inequalities that today's children have been experiencing.

3. It is encouraging to learn that, in fifteen-year time, we were able to reduce under-five mortality rate saving approximately 17,000 lives a day. Number of underweight children has also declined more than half. Additionally, the number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half and 90 percent of children in developing countries are now in primary schools.

4. Nevertheless, the overall progress fell short of our expectations for the children, particularly of the developing world, who face different forms of inequalities. Children also face other forms of complex humanitarian crises arising from natural disasters, conflicts and epidemics. At the same time, harmful traditional practices, child early and forced marriage are negatively affecting the well-being of millions of girls.

5. Against this backdrop, we have set targets for improving children's health and education in the Sustainable Development Goals. It is now time for us to formulate national policies and plans to reach the targets by 2030 for our children.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Overwhelming membership of 196 state parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child reflects the universal acceptance of the Convention and commitment of the world to better protect the rights of children. Since its accession to the Convention in 1991, Myanmar submitted its periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Myanmar will submit its 5th and 6th combined National Report to the Committee in 2017.

7. Myanmar acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in 2012. The initial report has been developing with the participation of the line ministries.

Mr. Chairman,

8. This year is particularly significant for Myanmar. Myanmar has finalized the years-long consultations and preparations to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Myanmar has signed the Optional Protocol on 28 September 2015 on sidelines of this UNGA session. Domestic process is ongoing to implement it, and for its ratification.

9. After the current administration took its responsibilities, Myanmar signed the Joint Action Plan with the United Nations in June 2012 to further accelerate its efforts in preventing underage recruitment. From its signature to date, Myanmar Tatmattaw has extended full cooperation to the country task force. The Myanmar Tatmattaw (the military) has discharged over 600 underage recruits. At the same time, a total of 56 officers and 283 other ranks were held accountable for underage recruitment.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Our Tatmattaw (military) is a professional army and recruitment is voluntary. Technical difficulties in age verification including insufficient documentation have led to some underage recruitment cases. Age verification is now conducting based on reviewing five kinds of document, interviewing parents or guardians and examining wrist x-rays.

Mr. Chairman,

11. It is unfortunate that contents contained in the respective reports on children and armed conflict do not reflect the situation on the ground of Myanmar in a timely fashion. For instance, the UN country task force has not yet finalized its progress report on Myanmar for the period of June-December 2014. However, the children and armed conflict report was issued already in June 2015 for the year 2014. There is a gap in reporting what really has been done in addressing the allegations and challenges. The allegations contained therein mislead the readers of the report.

12. At the invitation of the Government of Myanmar, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict, Madam Leila Zerrougui visited Myanmar July this year. The visit was instrumental in closing the gaps leading to zero-underage recruitment endeavours jointly implementing by the Government and the UN country task force in Myanmar. As such endeavours are consolidating, Myanmar Tatmattaw Kyi should be delisted in the near future. We stand by the SRSG's "Children Not Soldier" campaign and we wish that the desired goal be reached by 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Now, allow me to touch upon other progress that Myanmar has made in promoting and protecting the rights and well-being of our children.

14. Myanmar is reviewing the Child Law and a series of consultations with the relevant UN agencies and civil society organizations are taking place in addition to the discussions among the line ministries.

15. From 2010 to 2013, 86 sensitization trainings on child rights, child law, and child protection were conducted across the country. Community based child protection system has been established in 25 townships in cooperation with the UNICEF since 2010.

16. We have made progress in providing healthcare services to children in fifteen-year time. In Myanmar, infant mortality rate and under-five mortality rate have reduced by half. Thanks to the national school enrollment campaign introduced in 1999, the enrollment of five years old children has reached 98 percent in 2014-2015. Last week of May is designated as enrollment week when education personnel, NGOs, CSOs, well-wishers of education, business and local community collaborate together to ensure all school-age children are in schools.

17. Every child has to be healthy physically, mentally, socially and psychologically. To this end, early childhood care and development services have been provided in Myanmar since 1953. Myanmar enacted the Law Relating to the Early Childhood Care and Development in February 2014. The Central Early Childhood Care and Development

Resource Center was set up in Yangon in 2011. Myanmar adopted the multi-sectoral policy in 2014 for all round development of children under-eight.

18. Improving access to and quality of health is high on the Government agenda. Accordingly, the Government has increased health expenditure 8 folds between 2010 and 2015. We are working towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and reducing financial burden on the poor and vulnerable groups including children.

19. In consultation with the World Bank, ILO, WFP, and INGOs and NGOs, the national social protection strategy was adopted in 2014. The comprehensive and innovative strategy sets new standards for the Asian region. One strong focus is on universal cash transfer programmes for pregnant women and children up to 2 years of age and to children with disabilities. The strategy also includes long term support for children up to 15 years and a school feeding programme among others.

20. Free primary education was introduced has been introduced in Myanmar since 2008. The programme has expanded to lower secondary education in 2014. Plans are initiated in 2015 to expand the free education to the secondary level.

21. At the regional level, Myanmar is working together with the fellow Member States in implementing the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children and its plan of action adopted in 2013.

Mr. Chairman,

22. Children are jewels of every society. It is crucial for us to protect them from diseases, violence, natural and manmade disasters. Furthermore, it is for us to shape and craft their future so that they can reach their fullest potential through providing highest attainable education, social and health services. Myanmar is committed in this beautiful jewelcrafting process. To this end, we will be closely working with the regional and international partners for all children everywhere.

23. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
