

**Intervention by H.E. Mr. Kyaw Tin,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to UN
at the High-level Side Event on Migration
(New York, 30 September 2015)**

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation thanks the Secretary General for organizing this High-level event on this important issue. My delegation thank the distinguished lead speakers for their insightful presentations from different perspectives on how to strengthen cooperation on migration movements.

The migration problem has now come to the fore of global attention due to the ongoing massive influx of migrants and refugees into Europe and the heart-breaking images of loss of lives of children on their perilous journey at sea.

Myanmar fully shares the growing concern about the plight of the people caused by the growing problem of human smuggling and trafficking and illegal migration in many parts of the world. We believe that the issue of migration must be resolved through cooperation and collective shared responsibility without politicization or finger pointing approach.

Even without politicization, the issue of illegal migration and human smuggling has been complex enough due to different levels of development, population and employment opportunities among nations. In the case of Asia , most of the boat people are economic migrants seeking greener pastures.

The irregular migration problem that surfaced in the Andaman sea last May and June was mainly caused by ruthless human trafficking and smuggling rings who preyed on innocent people seeking better economic opportunities or trying to escape poverty.

Some has tried to blame a particular situation, as the root cause of the outflows of the boat people in our region. Some has created a wrong impression that the migration crisis unfolded in Andaman sea was simply a manifestation of the situation in the western State of Myanmar. It would be a great mistake to conclude that solution of the irregular migration in Andaman Sea lies only in Myanmar.

On the contrary, it was a complex issue mainly caused by ruthless human trafficking and smuggling that require much wider regional cooperation. Root causes also include demographic and poverty-related pressure, growing lucrative

business of human trafficking and lack of adequate actions to suppress those criminals in certain countries.

Even if the human rights situation became perfect anywhere in the region, similar outflow of boats carrying economic migrant will still go on, so long as this growing problem of human trafficking and smuggling could not be effectively uprooted through law enforcement and enhance cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination countries.

Most of the migrants or boat people would conveniently chose to claim themselves as minorities escaping from persecution to enjoy the refugee status and resettlement in a better destination.

In addressing the issue of migration and refugees, we should not single out a particular country. We must solve the issue with collective responsibility from holistic approach and from wider perspective of addressing human smuggling and trafficking, poverty alleviation, job creation and equitable development, providing humanitarian assistance and providing shelter.

During the time of boat people crisis, Myanmar has also joined its neighbours in the rescue efforts to save lives on humanitarian ground and provided humanitarian assistance and temporary shelter to those rescued at sea off our coast.

The findings from identity verification of those people rescued by Myanmar and elsewhere in the region clearly show that majority of the boat people are economic migrants not originated from our country. We have repatriated them in close cooperation with the country of origin.

There is no discrepancy with our findings from the rescued persons. Their shared stories sadly show how much the issue is misinterpreted leading no practical solution. Some of them were tricked with false promise of a well-paid jobs. Some were sold to human traffickers by close friends and some were forcibly brought to the boat. Among them, persons whose family could pay ransom are sent to destination counties or back to the county of origin.

The real culprit of these tragic story of these boat people in our region none other than the ruthless gangs of human smugglings and human traffickers. Myanmar has therefore responded constructively to the call for regional meetings and participated in the regional meetings to address the irregular migration and human trafficking.

Poverty, overpopulation and lack of job opportunities in many developing countries are indeed a push factor. The traffickers took advantage of such

vulnerable groups by luring or forcing them to better destinations. The traffickers are covering up their illegal activities by portraying trafficked victims as refugees fleeing from right abuses.

In our region and beyond, there are millions of poor people seeking better lives and economic opportunities. At the same time, there are industries hunting for cheap and unregulated labourers. We also need to recognize this demand factor as well. In the absence of inclusive and effective bilateral or regional mechanisms to address the issue, this vacuum is being exploited by traffickers.

Thus, Myanmar has been extending its cooperation through existing bilateral and regional mechanisms such as ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and the Bali Process which address human trafficking and smugglings. We believe that with unity, shared responsibility among countries of origin, transit and destination, we can collectively address the problems effectively.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.