Statement by Mr. Ye Minn Thein, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations at the High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace

New York – 7 September 2017

Mr. President,

Mingalarpar. Myanmar's everyday greeting to one another, meaning "let peace and auspiciousness be upon you".

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this high level forum & SG's Senior Adviser, Key note speakers and for the soothing, peaceful music of Sri Chinmoy.

The resolution 53/243 on "The Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture of Peace" which was adopted on 13 September 1999, provided us with the framework to strengthen culture of peace around the world. But the driving force of peace in our world resides in the very hearts and minds of human beings, which has the power to drive to establishing the culture of peace. The culture, meaning, creation of an environment for peace to be able to thrive, to expand to all dimensions.

Mr. President,

On the western part of the country, Myanmar is being attacked by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), the religious extremist group linked to larger terrorist groups in the region.

The terrorist atrocities continue to claim many innocent civilian lives killing men women and children, old people of different communities, including Buddhist, Muslims, and Hindus, being horrifically killed by ARSA. These violence cause refugees fleeing into our neighbor and to safer places within our borders. Peace was utterly threatened and terrorism displaced thousands of people with fear in their hearts. For the National Ethnic Rakhine people living in the area lives in fear of violent extremism and cannot enjoy peace. Terrorism must be addressed in all of its manifestation by all peace loving countries and provide humanitarian assistances to all those in need, together with the government.

Religious tolerance and violence extremism must be deterred and interfaith dialogues, intra religious dialogues can contribute significantly in this regard to promote peace. New media also plays very important role, to promote the culture of peace, as it dictates our daily lives.

Mr. President,

Myanmar fully recognizes the importance of the Declaration for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, especially the future generations.

We are committed to provide 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 achieve prosperity and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Peace and National reconciliation has been on the highest agenda of the Government of Myanmar. Therefore, we have designated 2017 as the "Year of Peace".

Myanmar has suffered internal armed conflicts for almost seventy years. Through our domestic peace process, the Government is making sincere utmost efforts to ending the armed conflict by peaceful means of dialogues with the NSAs to create lasting peace in the country which is the basic ingredients for all dimensions of development.

It is never easy to find common ground amidst differences. Nevertheless, we have been trying to find similarities despite our differences for the common ground through peaceful negotiation.

In this regard, the government has been convening series of Union Peace Conference: 21st Century Panglong with the goal of "emergence of a democratic federal union based on democracy and federalism".

37 agreements for the principles of the Union Peace Accord have been agreed at the Union Peace Conference —21st Century Panglong 2nd session. That was a significant step on our path towards peace, national reconciliation, and the emergence of a democratic federal Union.

Through unity, empathy, solidarity and the Panglong spirit, I believe that it is not too far to witness the ray of hope for a better future which our people have been waiting for so long.

Mr. President,

I would like to stress that every person in this world has one thing in common despite different faiths, cultures and social characters. That common goal is nothing but peace, stability and security of all human kind.

We all want our world peaceful and prosperous. All religions teach us compassion, love and tolerance.

I would like to emphasize that the constitution of Myanmar grants all citizens, freedom to profess any religion they believe in, without any discrimination.

It is crucially important to understand the very essence of different religious faiths, to commit ourselves to tread on the common path to ensuring peace, security and stability of the world.

I firmly believe that peace and stability will enable our world to realize its potential as a united and prosperous dwelling place that will be the refuge and the pride of all human kinds. The energy, faith and effort that we put in to achieving peace can be a beacon of light for all peoples of the world.

I thank you.

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