MYANMAR

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Statement by Mr. Kyaw Moe Tun,

Director-General and Representative of the Myanmar Delegation

on Agenda Item 68: "Promotion and Protection of the rights of children"

at the Third Committee of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

11 October 2017

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Children are the future of our country. They are most valuable asset of the nation. With this reason, the government of Myanmar pays high attention to children. Education is a key for their right development and it is indeed the backbone of the country's economy, good governance and prosperity. The Constitution of Myanmar guarantees all children access to free and compulsory primary school education.

Public spending for education has significantly increased. With the vision of the education available for all school aged children, the government initiated a new system that waive school fee for high school students at all level throughout the country. Moreover, the government provides free textbooks, exercise books and school uniforms for all primary school students. Textbooks are provided with free of charge to lower secondary school students. In addition, efforts are being made to reduce school drop-out rate in the country.

Mr. Chairman,

Peace, stability, and harmony are the main conditions to create society where children can grow productively. Myanmar has been facing internal arm conflicts for more than six decades. Thus, building a peaceful and harmonious society is our national goal. To lay the solid foundation of peace and stability, the government revitalizes the peace process and use Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Conference as a vehicle towards that end.

At the second meeting of 21st Century Panglong Conference, held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in May 2017, the Union Peace Accord Part-1 was signed. It consists of 37 agreed principles. It includes raising the quality of life of the elderly person, people with disabilities, women and children and effectively safeguarding their basic entitlements and rights without discrimination based on regardless of ethnicity, religion and wealth. This is the significant step taken by all stakeholders involved in the peace process to heal the conflict-affected vulnerable societies such as women and children.

Mr. Chairman,

We appreciate the Office of the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF for "Children, not soldiers" campaign. Since the introduction of the Plan of Action for the prevention of Recruitment of Minors from the Military Services in 2012, Myanmar is working closely with UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting to prevent underage recruitment into the military and discharge those found to be underage recruits. Since the

signing of the Action Plan, the Tatmadaw has discharged 877 underage recruits. A number of Officers and other ranks were held accountable for under underage recruitments and action had been taken against them.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement provides assistance to the discharged minors with the collaboration of UNICEF, INGO and NGOs. It includes providing psycho social support, vocational training and finding appropriate jobs for them.

Mr. Chairman,

As a state party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Myanmar is steadfastly promoting rights of children in accord with letter and spirit of the Convention. Myanmar is now preparing a 5th and 6th combined report to UN CRC. More than 80 INGOs and NGOs are involved in the preparation exercise.

To be in line with changing circumstances, we have reviewed the existing Myanmar Child Law 1993. The new Child Rights Law has been submitted to the Parliament for its approval. The new draft law was developed with a wide-range consultation with INGO, NGO and CSOs.

Myanmar has signed the Paris Principles on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups early this year. With the spirit of the Paris Principles we will be implementing the reintegration process effectively.

I would like to inform this committee that last week, Myanmar deposited with the UN Secretary General the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which contains provisions, particularly Article 10 and 13, protecting and promoting rights of the children.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.