MYANMAR

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Statement by Mr. Tun Lin Swai, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations on
Agenda Item 70: Rights of Children
at the Third Committee of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 10 October 2018

Madam Chair,

Myanmar aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

I would like to thank Secretary-General for the reports under this agenda item and the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and Violence Against Children for their briefings.

Children represent the future and the hope of a nation. They are also the most valuable asset for the development and prosperity of a nation. The Government of Myanmar therefore attaches great importance to the protection of the rights of children. The Government has also placed all-round development of children at the core of its national development agenda which also support full realization of the 2030 Agenda.

Investment in education is the best investment for the future of children. The Constitution of Myanmar guarantees all children access to free and compulsory primary school education. In recent years, the Government has significantly increased public spending on education. With the vision of education for all children, the government has put in place a new system that allows high school students throughout the country to be able to enroll without paying any school fees. These efforts have resulted in a significantly reduced school drop-out rate in the country.

Madam Chair,

Myanmar believes that sustainable peace is the only way to alleviate the plight of the children in armed conflicts. Peace is essential to sustainable development and perpetuity of democracy and human rights. The Government of Myanmar has placed peace and national reconciliation as the highest priority in the national agenda. Therefore, the Government has been holding Union Peace Conference or the 21St Century Panglong to deliberate and strife for achieving a lasting peace, and building a democratic federal union.

At the Third Session of the Union Peace Conference, held in Nay Pyi Taw in July this year, an important agreement was reached to mainstream child protection and prevention of violations into the peace process. It was agreed to "set up and conduct programs to ensure children's rights, abide by

the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child for all-round development of children and eliminate Six Grave Violations against children" which is a critical development for the prevention of violations against children by all parties involved.

Madam Chair,

Myanmar has made significant progress in its efforts to ending and preventing violations and abuses against children since the signing of a Joint Action Plan with the Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict in June 2012. Since the signing of the Action Plan, more than 900 former under-aged recruits have been released and reintegrated into communities. In this regard, a number of Officers and other ranks were held accountable and legal actions had been taken against them. As a significant achievement, there has been no report of new recruitment in 2018. We are now working closely with the office of the SRSG for an early completion of the Joint Action Plan.

Madam Chair,

As a responsible party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Myanmar ratified the Optional Protocol, the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labour (no 182/1999) in December 2013 and is now in the process of ratifying the other Optional Protocol of the CRC.

After becoming a party to the CRC, Myanmar enacted the National Child Law in 1993. Currently the Parliament is in the final stage of adopting a revised Child Law drafted to be in conformity with prevailing international norms. The revised Law is stipulated to be the most comprehensive child law in Myanmar with extensive provisions on the rights of children and prevention from all forms of violence.

Myanmar has signed the Paris Principles on Children associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups in February 2017. Moreover, the Myanmar Youth Policy adopted in 2017 specifically identifies former child soldiers as one of the 11 categories of vulnerable youth and children who need special attention and protection.

In addition, Myanmar has signed the MoU with ILO in September this year to implement the Myanmar Decent Work Country Program (2018-2021) which includes developing and implementing a National Action Plan on Child Labour.

Madam Chair,

Myanmar reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfillment of the rights of the child and will continue to work closely with the international community to this end with the intension of leaving no child behind.

I thank you.

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