MYANMAR

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**Statement by Tun Lin Swai, Counsellor,**
**Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations on**
**Agenda Item 68: Rights of Children**
**at the Third Committee of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**
**New York, 08 October 2019**

**Mr. Chair,**

Myanmar aligns itself with the statement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) delivered earlier this morning.

I would like to thank the 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 important briefings.

This year is very significant in our collective efforts to further the rights of children globally as we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which is regarded as the most important global instrument for children. Since adopting CRC 30 years ago, the lives of millions of children have been improved through the gradual implementation of rights and fulfillment of obligations enshrined in the Convention and its Optional Protocols.

Every government has the responsibility to support every child to reach their full potential in fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure no child is left behind. While concrete advancements have been achieved, the situation of children is still critical in many parts of the world and many challenges remain to ensure the full realization of their rights. Today, Member States as well as the UN get an opportunity to reflect on what has already been achieved and what the gaps are and to reaffirm our commitments to ensure children's rights.

**Mr. Chair,**

The Government of Myanmar attaches great importance to the protection and promotion of the rights of children as the children are the future of a nation. The Government has placed all-round development of children at the core of its National Development Strategic Plan(NSDP) which also supports toward realization of the 2030 Agenda.

After becoming a state party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, the government ratified the Optional Protocol, the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labour in 2013. Myanmar ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) during the 74th UNGA High Level Week, to reinforce our on-going efforts to protect and promote child rights to fulfill our international commitments.

As a responsible party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Myanmar enacted the National Child Law in 1993. The Child Law has been revised and adopted by the Union Parliament on July 2019 to align the national policies and regulatory frameworks with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Under the newly enacted Child Rights Law, children born in Myanmar are guaranteed to the fundamental and unconditional right to register at birth. Birth registration is the first right of the child and a stepping stone to enjoying other rights such as the right to health, education and protection.

The new Child Rights Law is the most comprehensive child law in Myanmar with extensive provisions on the rights of children and prevention from all forms of violence against children. Most significantly, a whole chapter is devoted exclusively on Children and Armed Conflict and criminalizes Six Grave Violations. It recognizes that children affected by armed conflict need special protection and are provided with stronger legal protection in the context of armed conflict.

The introduction of diversion and alternative mechanisms for children in conflict with the law demonstrates a significant departure from a punitive-focused juvenile justice system to a more child-centred, restorative and rehabilitation-oriented one. It also includes a chapter on the protection and assistance of child victims and witnesses who come into contact with the law.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention of the Six Grave Violations during Armed Conflict was established on 7 January 2019 and is currently developing an action plan for prevention of killing and maiming, and sexual violence against children during armed conflict.

Since the signing of Joint Action Plan with the UN in 2012, almost 1,000 former child soldiers had been released and reintegrated into the community. In order to accelerate implementation of the Joint Action Plan and to raise greater awareness on the prevention of grave violations, the government has conducted training workshops in cooperation with the Office of the SRSG and nation-wide public awareness campaign to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children has been launched since 2013.

The Myanmar Youth Policy was adopted in 2017 which identifies former child soldiers as one of the 11 categories of vulnerable youth and children who need special attention and protection. Myanmar is also cooperating with ILO to end forced labour including establishing a complaint mechanism. The Myanmar Decent Work Country Program (2018-2021) is also being implemented which includes developing and implementing a National Action Plan on Child Labour.

**Mr. Chair,**

Peace is essential for sustainable development and perpetuity of democracy and human rights. Sustainable peace is ~~and~~ the only viable way to alleviate the plight of the children in armed conflicts. That is why the Government of Myanmar has placed peace and national reconciliation as the highest priority in the national agenda. The government has reconvened the Union Peace Conference- the 21$^{St}$ Century Panglong to deliberate and strive for achieving a lasting peace, and building a democratic federal union. During its third session held in July 2018, the Conference adopted "elimination of Six Grave violations against children and protection of children's rights" as one of the Social Sector basic principles.

Besides the on-going efforts for peace, the government is also supporting and encouraging engagement between the Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting of Children and Armed Conflict (CTFMR) and Nation-wide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signatory ethnic armed groups to prevent recruitment and use of children. Efforts are being made to find a lasting solution of the on-going armed conflict through political means.

**Mr. Chair,**

Myanmar is committed to the promotion, protection and fulfillment of the rights of children and will continue to strive for the full realization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will continue to work closely with the United Nations and relevant stakeholders to fulfill our national objectives, and achieving international commitments for children's rights.

I thank you.

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