

As of 6th November 2015
(0800) hrs

**Situation of Rakhine State and
Cooperation with UNSG's Special Advisor**

Mr. President,

1. I am Maung Wai, Permanent Representative of Myanmar. Let me start off with **situation in Rakhine State**.
2. Today, peace and stability in Rakhine State has been restored and since 2012, there is no recurrence of inter-communal violence.
3. It should be underlined that the communal violence in 2012 caused loss of life, property and displacement to both the communities in Rakhine State. To investigate and address the root cause of the incident, the Government formed a Commission of Inquiry comprising prominent leaders and experts from a broad range of the sectors. Following the Commission's finding, a Central Committee for Implementation of Stability and Development in Rakhine State was established. The Committee is now implementing its objectives in key areas of maintaining law and order and security, enhancement of relief activities to all people, creating economic development and job opportunities, enhancing cooperation with local and international partners, and conducting citizenship verification process. We are making progress in this mission.

4. As development is crucial for Rakhine State, the United Nations and the International Community should play more active role in it.

5. The Government has provided food, healthcare and education services to all displaced people. The humanitarian access is also given to over 20 international organizations to provide assistance to all displaced people. Non-discriminatory **humanitarian assistance** was never denied.

6. Inclusive development and **education** are keys to resolving the communal issue. In Buthee Taung and Maung Taw Townships, the literacy rate is 69.9 percent for 90 percent of the population there. There are over 4,000 high school students, over 3900 university graduates and over 162 post-graduates from this community. Access to education is equal to all children in Rakhine State.

7. Likewise, access to other basic services such as health care, food, water, sanitation and livelihood is never restricted to any community. Everyone can enjoy **basic services** to a level as a developing county can provide to its population. Similarly, their living conditions are not worse than some Myanmar families living in poor villages in remote areas of the country. One needs to compare such living conditions with other poor people in this second poorest State in Myanmar. Only then, can we make an objective assessment.

Mr. President,

8. The communities will be reintegrated eventually. This temporary arrangement for some areas is to keep both communities safe and to prevent recurrence of violence. As harmony and peace is returning, some 2,000 displaced households have been voluntarily resettled to their original or new places. Cash grants and construction materials were provided to the re-settled families. Further **resettlement and reintegration** will continue as circumstances permit.

9. Let me now turn to **citizenship verification process**. The aim of replacing the temporary identity cards with new identity cards is to accelerate the citizenship verification process. A pilot project for citizenship verification was launched in Rakhine State in 2014 and so far, citizenship has been granted to more than 900 persons. There is a need for broader cooperation and participation in the verification process which will lead to more access to citizenship.

10. There is **no restriction of movement** in those areas where the communities have learned to live in harmony. In Buthiduang and Maungdaw Townships, the two communities are now engaging in inter-communal trade and business. Their children are attending school together. The continued presence of the security forces in some areas is only at the request of the communities themselves.

11. Myanmar is a multi-ethnic and multi-faith country. People belonging to different faiths have been living harmoniously throughout our history. The Government does not tolerate any **hate speech** from any quarters for any reason and in any form. To deter and counter hate speech, the Government and civil society are promoting **interfaith dialogue** across the country. The Interfaith Friendship Group comprising representatives of all faiths and its sub-groups were formed on a nationwide scale. They hold monthly meetings and pay visits to religious sites. Various civil society organizations, community leaders and volunteers are also playing their part in building bridges between different communities.

Mr. President,

12. Myanmar is deeply concerned about the suffering and life-threatening fate of **boat people** as the consequences of people smuggling and human trafficking in our region. Saving lives is the first priority, and Myanmar stands ready to provide humanitarian assistance to anyone who suffered in the sea regardless of their origin.

13. With this sprit, Myanmar rescued about 1050 boat people on three occasions between May and July this year. Myanmar is providing temporary shelters, food and necessary healthcare assistance to the rescued persons. It was verified that over 80 percent of them are from a neighbouring country. Verified persons were repatriated to their country of origin. Those who originated from Myanmar are treated as victims and handed back to their families.

Mr. President,

14. A landmark in our national reconciliation effort is the signing of the **Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement** with 8 major armed groups on 15 October 2015. The agreement serves as a platform for national reconciliation, and it will be followed by a political dialogue. As peace will prevail, more development will be brought to the border regions.

Mr. President,

15. Let me turn to a recently adopted Law on the Health Protection, Coordination on increase of Population. This Law is to close the gap between development, living standard, maternal and child healthcare services of people and their rapid growing population. There is no compulsory birth spacing and no penalty. More importantly, the Law does not intend for a particular group of people or region. If a need arises, it would be applicable to anywhere in the country.

16. I thank you Mr. President.

Death Penalty

Myanmar inherited the Common law Legal system and death penalty is prescribed under the law to be imposed for the serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime.

However, this penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgment made by the Supreme Court of the Union. Although it could be imposed by the law to deter serious crimes in Myanmar, the death penalty has never been actually carried out since 1988.

Moreover, offenders below the age of 16 years and youth at the time of the commission of the crime shall not be sentenced with the capital punishment.