



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at Human Rights Council – 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Universal Periodical Review Geneva, 6 November 2015

MYANMAR

Mr. President,

The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of Myanmar on the occasion of the presentation of the second National Report to the Universal Periodic Review.

My Delegation acknowledges the various efforts made by the Myanmar government to enhance peace and dialogue among different religions by the creation of the Interfaith Friendship Group and its interaction with the UN Special Advisor and the UN Special Rapporteur. The reconstitution of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) in accordance with the Paris Principles is a good step forward. Efforts to reduce poverty and promote development, the National Social Protection Strategy to provide further assistance to elderly persons, the new measures to protect persons with disabilities and children, in particular becoming a member to the Convention on the Persons with Disabilities and to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, all indicate positive progress.

My Delegation would like to present the following recommendations:

- 1. To make every effort to guarantee the right to religious conversion and to respect the freedom of religion, in particular, enabling religious practice.
- 2. To review the laws and measures about marriage, especially of people belonging to minorities.
- 3. To reinforce and implement the protection of vulnerable groups, namely children, women, disabled, elderly, and to make a greater effort to include ethnic and religious groups in the life of Myanmar society.
- 4. To abolish the death penalty.

Thank you Mr. President.