*As of 22 January 2021(2000 hrs)*

**Opening statement by His Excellency U Tun Tun Oo, Union Attorney General of Myanmar at 37th session of the UPR Working Group of Myanmar (25 January 2021)**

**Madame President, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my privilege and pleasure to lead the delegation of Myanmar to the UPR Working Group’s Review Session of the third cycle of Myanmar’s UPR. The report that we submitted to the third cycle in November last year reflected the efforts made by the Government to promote and protect the human rights of the people of Myanmar and our respect for the international obligations.

The Government of Myanmar, throughout its current tenure since 2016, has never lost sight of its ultimate goal to establish a peaceful and developed Democratic Federal Union on a solid and firm foundation. The socio-economic development, rule of law, protection and promotion of fundamental rights are the prerequisites for fulfilling the people’s aspiration of achieving a genuine democracy.

In a multi-ethnic country like Myanmar, making unity out of diversity to ensure sustainable peace is a great challenge. It is the ultimate goal of the present Government to hold political dialogues with all ethnic nationalities in order to peacefully resolve over seven-decade-long internal strife and ethnic grievances for durable peace and national reconciliation. In this regard, the Government has convened four sessions of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Conference. At the fourth session held in August last year, the signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and all stakeholders in the peace process signed the Union Accord Part III which includes basic guiding principles for a clear plan that lays out a step-by-step process for implementation of a democratic federal union-building process.

In the past five years, we have been examining various legislations; repealing or amending the existing laws to align with democratic standards and our international obligations, as well as introducing appropriate reform measures in executive, judicial, and legislative sectors. We have amended, repealed, and promulgated a total of 185 laws since 2016. The enactments of Legal Aid Law (2016) and the Child Rights Law (2019); the amendment of Bar Council Acts amongst others, are some good examples of the legal reform process in Myanmar.

To improve its legal framework of economic, social, and cultural rights, we have introduced new Investments Law(2016), Consumer Protection Law (2019), Companies Law(2017), and Laws on Intellectual Property Rights (2019).

**Madame President,**

We share the view that sustainable development goals must be attributed to the promotion, protection, and realization of human rights and the fundamental freedom of all. The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) was launched in 2018 as an institutional framework, focusing on a long-term vision to integrate development and human rights.

The current threat of the COVID-19 pandemic is an experiment on our collective resilience. Myanmar has taken a “Whole-of-Nation” approach to respond to this pandemic. Mobilizing the strength of the people, educating the public about the virus, and seeking public participation through volunteerism and philanthropic spirit are pivotal to the success of the national efforts to fight against COVID-19.

With a view to ensuring that no one is left behind, the Government is launching an intensive public awareness campaign about the virus and disseminating health guidelines and directives for all communities throughout the country including Muslim villages and the IDP camps in Rakhine State. To effectively support the Myanmar Government’s efforts in prevention and control of the COVID-19 outbreak in Rakhine State, an Action Plan has been adopted between Myanmar and ICRC in May 2020. To date, there has been no serious outbreak in any IDP camp.

In April last year, the Government has adopted the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) to mitigate financial, social, and economic impacts of the pandemic. After a review of CERP, the Government is drafting the Myanmar Economic Resilience and Reform Plan (MERRP) which is to set out a recovery plan to rebuild the economy for the longer term.

We share the concerns raised by some countries about issues of justice and accountability in Myanmar. We are implementing a Five-Year Judicial Strategic Plan (2018-2022) focusing on five areas such as Facilitate and Expand Public Access to Court Services; Promote Public Awareness; Enhance Judicial Independence and Administrative Capacity; Promote and Ensure the Professionalism, Accountability and Integrity of the Judiciary; and Promote Efficient Case Management and Court Specializations. Our continued efforts in ensuring accountability, including ongoing investigations on findings of Independent Commission of Enquiry- ICoE’s report by the Union Attorney-General Office and the Office of the Judge Advocate-General highlight progress in the domestic accountability process. A country should be given time and space, and respect for its domestic accountability processes to meet its commitments and international obligations.

We also pay high attention to preventing any kind of hate speech. Section 364 of the Constitution forbids the abuse of religion for political purposes. The President Office issued the Notification on prevention of incitement to hatred and violence on 20 April 2020. Nation-wide anti-hate speech awareness campaigns and activities are being conducted to advocate people for the proper use of social media and enhance awareness of norms and standards, ethics and practice through newspapers, TV channels, radios, and websites. The Protection against Anti-hate speech Bill is under the drafting process.

**Madame President,**

Over the past five years, the people of Myanmar enjoy greater freedom of democratic rights than ever before. With the strong determination and participation of the people, the General Election was successfully held in November 2020 in a free, fair and transparent manner. The new Government will also step up its efforts to establish a Democratic Federal Union through undertaking practical measures for the socio-economic development of people in the next five years. We would highly appreciate understanding, constructive engagement and continued support from our friends and partners as we move forward our democratic reform process.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you for your attention. My delegation stands ready to constructively respond to your questions. We believe that this kind of dialogue would create opportunities to enhance our efforts for a better implementation of human rights. We look forward to having constructive dialogues with all countries.

I thank you.

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