**Intervention by H.E. U Myint Thu,**

**Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**at the 37th Session of the UPR Working Group**

**Geneva, 18-29 January 2021**

**Third Universal Periodic Review on Myanmar**

**Madame President,**

 My intervention will focus on four areas, namely, General Election; Democratic Transition; Peace Process and Rakhine State.

1. **General Election**

**Madame President,**

The Government shares the sentiments of the people to successfully carry out the Multi-party Democracy General Elections in a free and fair manner.

The Union Election Commission (UEC) has laid down five principles for free, fair, credible, and transparent General Election.

The UEC also extended invitations to international and regional election observers, including Carter Centre, Asian Network for Free Elections and  EU Election Observer Mission to freely observe the General Election in Myanmar.

The Multi-Party Democracy General Election was successfully held in Myanmar on 8 November 2020. Out of 38,271,447 eligible voters, more than 27,512,855 voters came to the Voting Stations to cast their votes in a free, fair and displined manner.

During the General Elections, the people of Myanmar have shown their wholehearted supports, with their ballots, to the National League for Democracy (NLD) Party.

Such overwhelming support clearly reflects Myanmar people’s wholehearted trust and approval of the leading role of the State Counsellor and the present Government during the past five years.

**II. Democratic Transition**

**Madame President,**

Five years ago, in 2016, the present Government came to the Office with strongest support of the people towards democratic transition, peace and stability and development in the country.

 Over the past five years, the Government has given special emphasis on introducing good practices of democracy, good governance, accountability, and accelerating administrative, economic, and social reforms leading to a democratic federal Union.

The Government is now nurturing the democratic institutions, promoting rule of law, fighting corruption, promoting and protecting the basic human rights, and strengthening accountability and transparency.

1. **Peace Process**

**Madame President,**

It is the aim of the present Government to hold political negotiations with all ethnic nationalities with a view to bringing lasting peace and national reconciliation.

To achieve lasting peace, it is imperative to secure a nationwide ceasefire as a first step, and to establish a new political culture of resolving conflicts through dialogue.

With this in mind, the Government inaugurated the first 21st Century Panglong Conference or Union Peace Conference in August 2016. It was followed by three successive Conferences in May 2017, July 2018, and August 2020.

Through the Union Peace Conferences, the Government will continue to make strenuous efforts to realize the ‘New Peace Architecture’ in the post-2020.

1. **Rakhine State**

**Madame President,**

 Resolving the issue of Rakhine is one of the priorities of the present Government.

Since our independence, there has been deep-rooted mistrust and fear among various communities and vicious cycle of violence and insecurity in Rakhine State.

Therefore, the Government has set up a number of mechanisms, including the Central Committee for Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State, and the Kofi Annan’s Commission, to seek lasting solutions to address the complex challenges in Rakhine State.

The Government welcomed the Kofi Annan’s Commission’s Report on 24 August 2017 and pledged to implement its recommendations to the fullest extent possible.

Moreover, the Government has given emphasis on five priorities areas, namely, citizenship, freedom of movement, closure of IDP Camps, education and health sectors in Rakhine State.

Over the years, the Government has made significant progress in the area of infrastructure development, such as roads, electricity, construction of reception centres and homes, and creating conducive environment for the potential returnees in Rakhine State.

We shared the concern over the allegations of human rights violations in Rakhine State.

Based on the Final Report of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE), the Office of the Union Attorney-General and the Office of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) have been conducting investigations of allegations.

On the repatriation of displaced persons, we have put in place bilateral mechanism with the signing of the Arrangement at the Ministerial level on 23 November 2017.

We firmly believe that bilateral cooperation is the only way that can effectively resolve the repatriation issue between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

 We have convened four Joint Working Group Meetings in January 2017, May 2018, October 2018 and May 2019 to implement the Arrangement and to commence the repatriation of verified returnees.

 Moreover, Myanmar has sent two high-level delegations, together with ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT), to Cox’s Bazar in July 2019 and December 2019, and they met with representatives from various camps including Hindu and Christian communities.

 Myanmar has also closely cooperating with ASEAN in facilitating repatriation of verified displaced persons in Rakhine State. We have convened three High-level ASEAN-Myanmar Coordination Committee Meetings in December 2018, May 2019 and July 2020 to approve ASEAN projects.

In July 2020, Myanmar and ASEAN identified four joint projects, namely, improving access to information to facilitate repatriation process; capacity building for verification process at the reception centres; provision of agriculture equipments; and livelihood recovery programme in Rakhine State.

Furthermore, the Government invited the UNDP and UNHCR to facilitate the repatriation and resettlement process as well as livelihood development of all communities in Rakhine State.

 The Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Myanmar Government and UNDP and UNHCR on 6 June 2018. The MoU has been extended annually until June 2021.

 The UNDP and UNHCR have been assessing the immediate needs of different communities from 120 villages, covering 75 Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), which include community infrastructure, skill trainings, and income-generating projects.

We remain steadfast to receive verified returnees in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner under the bilateral agreement reached between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

In our concerted efforts to achieve democracy, national reconciliation and peace and development, we look forward to engage constructively with the United Nations and the international community.

Thank you.

May I now invite the representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make her intervention.

The floor is yours, Madame.