**Intervention on Closure of IDP Camps, Gender Equality, Rights of Women, Child Rights, Rights of Persons with Disabilities, LGBT and Gender-Based Violence**

**at the 37th session of the UPR Working Group of Myanmar**

**(25 January 2021)**

**Madame President,**

1. I am Dr. San San Aye, Director-General of the Department of Social Welfare from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

**Closure of IDP Camps**

2.We cannot achieve a lasting solution without safety, economic development and social cohesion, especially in the areas where deep-rooted and long-standing conflicts between communities exist. Our Government is fully committed to striving for lasting peace, stability and development in Rakhine State. Closure of IDP camps is among top priorities of the Government.

3. There are many barriers in closing down the camps. Even to find a new location acceptable to all communities is really challenging. Despite those challenges, we have shown positive results in this area.

4. The National Camp Closure Strategy was launched, aiming at providing a framework for closing IDP camps, rehabilitation and finding solutions to end their displacement. Relevant state-level committees and camp-level subcommittees have been formed under a national-level steering committee. Authorities continue to focus on holding of public consultations with IDP dwellers and host communities for choosing selected areas favourable for resettlement. Guideline for the development of Action Plans to implement the National Strategy has also developed and practiced on the ground.

5. The Government will provide better infrastructure by spending more allocation. The Government will compensate current owners of the land where the new site is located. Therefore, it is very encouraging to say that the process for implementing the strategy is gaining momentum although COVID-19 has posed certain limitations.

**Gender Equality, Rights of Women and Addressing Sexual Violence**

6. Ensuring gender equality with the full entitlement of women’s rights is the one with much heartening progress in our country. Non-discrimination and equal opportunity in all functions are not only the constitutional rights but also the core principles of our country.

7. Myanmar upholds the zero-tolerance policy against any form of sexual violence. To demonstrate its commitment to addressing conflict-related sexual violence, the Government signed a Joint Communiqué with the UN on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence in December 2018. A National Committee was established and has developed an Action Plan to identify prioritized implementation areas such as the issuance of clear directives by the military, investigation of alleged violations and prosecution of perpetrators, capacity building of law enforcement officers, legal reform measures, strengthening of service delivery for survivors.

8. Moreover, the Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women (PoVAW) Law, which is currently in drafting process, will offer a real opportunity for Myanmar to effectively combat violence against women at both international and domestic level, when it is approved. After enacting the law, more public awareness campaigns are planned to be conducted.

**Rights of Children including Children in Armed Conflicts**

9. Following the enactment of the new Child Rights Law in July 2019, the Rules for Child Rights Law is being discussed with the key stakeholders. It is expected to be enacted very soon. The new law sets the age of children as 18. All children are guaranteed the right to register at birth and other protection including prohibition of all forms of violence against children. Recently, a National Committee on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (CRC-OPAC) led by Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has been formed to effectively implement the Optional Protocol in line with the international standards and domestic laws.

10. We have also started working on a comprehensive child protection policy which will ensure the four inherent rights of children and effectively protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation. We have also established the Nationwide Case Management Supervision Unit in October 2020 for better supervision on social cases and exchange of information.

11. We have significant developments in the area of promotion and protection of children in armed conflict. In August 2020, the National Action Plan for protecting children in armed conflicts from injury, death, and sexual violence has been approved. In line with the work plan, the military will issue directives to prevent killing and maiming and sexual violence against children; set up a complaint mechanism and monitoring and evaluation committee; cooperate with UNICEF to conduct awareness-raising activities.

12. Furthermore, Myanmar is constructively cooperating with the UN to implement the Joint Action Plan to address the recruitment of child soldiers since 2012. In June 2020, the UN positively responded to the positive measures undertaken by the military and delisted it from the list that recruits child soldiers for combating purposes. The Government will continue cooperating with the UN to resolve this issue sustainably.

**Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

13. There are 2.3 million people with disabilities in Myanmar, which is equal to 4.6 percent of the total population. To provide sufficient standards of protection for the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of persons with disabilities is among the Government’s top-most priorities.

14. In line with the CRPD Convention, the Government enacted the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2015, the Rules on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017, and a Strategy on Development of Persons with Disabilities for 2016 to 2025. Under the guidance of the national committee, chaired by Vice President U Henry Van Thio, we have made considerable progress such as developing National Action Plan and Barrier Free Tourism Pilot Project, and launching rehabilitation schools, special education programmes and other social integration schemes. These activities ensure full participation of persons with disabilities in the society and protection and promotion of their rights.

15. Currently, we are developing a national strategic master plan for people with disabilities (2020-2025) in line with the 2030 Agenda. Model facilities for the persons with disabilities are now available in some parts of our capital city to develop a Barrier Free Community. The pilot projects for disability rating and registration for the persons with disabilities are also being carried out in some Regions and States. It is also learnt that more funds will be allotted, totaling Kyats 3 billion capital amount and there will be loan processes for the persons with disabilities.

16. Despite various challenges, we have a strong determination to respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights of all people regardless of their place of origin, ethnicity, race, religion, gender and disabilities in line with our international commitments and agreements. We are committed to accelerating our continued efforts and very willing to work together with our partners.

17. I thank you.

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