**Second 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,**

I wish to express our appreciations and sincere thanks to the UPR Working Group, the Members of the Troika and the UPR Secretariat for their support and cooperation during the Third UPR Review on Myanmar.

**Madame President,**

Allow me to make brief summary and additional comments on the queries made by the Member States.

We have listened attentively and taken note of the recommendations made by Member States. We also appreciate their interest on the prevailing situation in the country.

We have also received four batches of Advance Questions before the Third UPR on Myanmar.

I believe that members of the Myanmar delegation have covered comprehensively on those questions during their interventions.

1. **Provisional Measures contained in the ICJ’s Order dated 23 January 2020**

**Madame President,**

Some Members States raised questions on the concrete actions taken by the Myanmar Government to implement the Provisional Measures contained in the ICJ’s Order of 23 January 2020.

During the public hearing before the International Court of Justice in December 2019, State Counsellor H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reaffirmed that if war crimes or human rights violations have been committed, they will be investigated and prosecuted by Myanmar’s Criminal Justice system.

In April 2020, the President Office issued three Directives to Government Officials, which underlines to act in compliance with Treaty obligations under the Genocide Convention; to prohibit from destroying or removing any evidence of possible crimes related to criminal investigations; to denounce and prevent all forms of hate speech; and to participate in and support anti-hate speech activities.

It is therefore imperative that domestic legal process must be allowed to take its course without outside interference, intervention and politicization. The integrity of these independent accountability process should not be compromised by international actor’s interest and political manipulation.

**II. Women Peace and Security Agenda**

**Madame President,**

Allow me to make additional comments on the Women Peace and Security Agenda and the steps taken by the Myanmar Government to operationalize UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

The present Government has put gender equality and women’s empowerment at the heart of the National Development Strategies towards a people-oriented democratic society.

Since the gender perspective is an important part of the Peace Process, it has already been integrated into the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signed in 2015.

The Government is also implementing the Women Peace and Development Plan for the Advancement of Women in Kayin, Kayah and Mon States for the period of 2020 to 2022 in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Moreover, the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022) was based on the Beijing Platform for Action and the Principles of CEDAW, which includes women’s empowerment, prevention of violence against women and girls, women’s participation in politics and public offices, and women, peace and security, among others.

We will continue to engage and work constructively with relevant UN Agencies to advance women, peace and security in the country.

1. **Race and Religion Laws**

**Madame President,**

Some Member States shared their concern over the four Race and Religion Laws, especially on religious conversion and population control.

In a nutshell, Myanmar adopted the Four Laws on Prohibition of Extramarital Affairs, Religious Conversion, Interfaith Marriage, and Population Control for the protection and promotion of the rights of Myanmar women in 2015.

These Laws do not prohibit the interfaith marriage. Instead, it ensures Myanmar women a legal marriage with different faiths without being forced or coerced to convert their religion after marriage.

Moreover, the purpose of the Population Control Healthcare Law was aimed to address poverty and food insufficiency and provide awareness on reproductive healthcare and infant mortality, especially in remote areas where women are not aware of reproductive health, family planning and birth control.

1. **Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women**

**Madame President,**

Allow me to make a short intervention related to the protection and prevention of violence against women.

The Judicial Authorities have been filing lawsuits against perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls under relevant Sections of the Penal Code.

The Anti Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Law also includes provisions for women’s mental and physical security, outrage of women’s modesty and protection of sexual violence against women.

In order to create more conducive environment for legal protection of women and girls, the Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women (PoVAW) Bill has already been submitted for Parliamentary review process.

The new Bill covers legal protection against domestic violence, physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, rape, harassment at work place, among others.

1. **Landmines**

**Madame President,**

Some Member States also made questions on the activities of the Myanmar Government related to landmines and IED.

Although Myanmar is not a State Party to the Anti-personal Landmine Convention (APLC), she supports the initiatives taken under the Convention, including mine awareness, mine risk education, and victim assistance.

Myanmar has established the Mine Risk Education Inter-Agency Working Group since 2012. The Working Group has been conducting awareness raising campaigns on the risk of landmines and providing financial and humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programmes to the mine victims.

Moreover, the Government is in the process of establishing a National Mine Action Centre in the country. Respective Ministries have also been studying to organize the National Mine Action Authority in order to conduct systematic demining.

Myanmar Observer Delegation attended the Oslo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World in Norway in November 2019.

Recently, Myanmar also participated in the 18th meeting of the State Parties to the APLC in November 2020 as an Observer delegation.

**Madame President,**

Once again, I wish to express our appreciation and sincere thanks to the UPR Working Group, the Members of the Troika and the Secretariat for their support in making a successful UPR Review on Myanmar.

We reiterate our commitment to work closely with the UPR mechanism, which, we believe, is the best suited mechanism for promotion and protection of Human Rights.

We will accordingly respond to the recommendations made by Member States as in the previous UPR Reviews.

Thank you.

May I now invite His Excellency U Tun Tun Oo, Leader of Myanmar Delegation to make his Closing Statement.

It will be a pre-recorded Video Statement.