



MYANMAR

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Statement

by

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar and
Representative of the Union of Myanmar**

in the Third Committee

at the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

on

Agenda Item 67(b) :

**Human Rights Questions including alternative approach for improving the
effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom**

Agenda Item 67 (d):

**Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs
and representatives**

(New York, 27 October 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

We are deliberating on human rights issues in this Committee for the first time after the historic creation of the Human Rights Council. We have now entered into a new era where the whole United Nations human rights mechanism is under fundamental transformation. With the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council, we all have agreed to effectively address the human rights issues with a new approach devoid of the shortcomings of the previous mechanism.

My delegation believes that the work of this Committee in dealing with human rights issues must also be adjusted in line with the fresh approach taken by the Human Rights Council. The Secretary-General, in his address to the historic opening session of the Council on 19 June, clearly reminded us that "*In place of the culture of confrontation and distrust, which pervaded the Commission in its final years, we must see a culture of cooperation and commitment, inspired by mature leadership*". His message underlined the widely accepted view that constructive dialogue and genuine cooperation should form the bedrock for promotion and protection of human rights in all fora including this esteemed Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

It is worth recalling here the set of rules laid down by the General Assembly resolution 60/251 for our future work on human rights. First and foremost, the Council was mandated for promoting universal respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner. More importantly, the General Assembly decided that the work of the Council shall be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation, with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights including the right to development. In the light of these guiding principles, this august Committee should not be allowed to continue doing business as usual, especially in dealing with the country specific proposals targeting on a few selected countries.

Promotion and protection of human rights must henceforth be addressed in a global context through a constructive, dialogue-based and non-confrontational approach. We believe that only cooperation rather than politicization of human rights issues could bring about better improvements in remedying the human rights situations in the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 reaffirmed the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. At the World Summit, the world leaders agreed to strengthen the UN human rights machinery with the aim of ensuring effective enjoyment by all of all human rights, including the right to development.

Yet, it is disheartening to note that despite promises at the World Summit, the number of people suffering from hunger has increased to 852 million around the world while it could produce enough food to feed double the world's population. Every five seconds, a child will die from hunger and malnutrition. Allowing this to happen is not only a shame for the international community but also a serious violation of human rights. Given this alarming situation, the right to food and the right to development are the most crucial rights that deserve urgent attention of the international community. We believe that the realization of the right to development should be given a place of high priority on the agenda of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Chairman,

In many developing countries, the right to development is indeed more pressing than any other rights, although we all subscribe to the ideal of the principle of universality and indivisibility of human rights. In my own country, the government attaches greater priority to fulfilling the fundamental right to development of its entire population. It has invested huge amount of resources in border areas and rural development programmes and in massive construction of infrastructures such as roads and dams to bring a balanced development to every corner of the country and to boost agriculture production and ensure food security.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has all along strongly supported the position of the Non-Aligned Movement which opposes and condemns selectivity and double standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, exploitation of human rights as pretext for political purposes. We are pleased to note that this position has now virtually become a universal position since the adoption of the historic resolution on the establishment of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Chairman,

My country, Myanmar, has long been a victim of a systematic and well-orchestrated disinformation campaign launched by anti-government elements, generously funded by some Western quarters. Through the powerful media of internet, they are exploiting every sensitive

issue under the sun, be it the issue of children, women or religion, to smear the image of the government in pursuit of their own political agenda. The groundless allegations emanating from anti-government elements have gradually found their way into the Special Rapporteur's reports and eventually into the United Nations documents. We wish to stress here the need for thorough verification of the validity of information and the reliability of its sources before letting them into the reports of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Recently my country was unjustifiably labeled as a threat to international peace and security by a powerful country in its unwarranted move to bring the issue to the Security Council in pursuit of its own political agenda. Myanmar is obviously not a threat to its neighbours, let alone to regional or international peace and security. This has been attested to by her neighbours and countries in the region. Placing the issue, which is not a threat to international peace and stability, on the Security Council agenda would not only be a violation of the Article 24 of the UN Charter, but would also be a clear case of encroachment by the Security Council on the functions and powers of the General Assembly. This is a clear example of politicization of human rights. The issues related to human rights, illicit narcotic drugs and HIV/AIDS should be left to the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

Cooperation with the United Nations is the cornerstone of Myanmar's foreign policy. The areas of cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations do not exclude the field of human rights. Myanmar had welcomed the visit of the former Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for a total of 14 occasions and the Special Rapporteur Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro on 6 occasions.

Our cooperation with the United Nations was further demonstrated when we welcomed the recent visit of Mr. Ibrahim A. Gambari, Under Secretary General of the United Nations to Myanmar last May. The visit was deemed as successful by all quarters and even constituted a new chapter in the history of Myanmar's relationship with the United Nations. I am pleased to inform the Committee that he has been invited to visit the country again.

The list of international instruments on human rights and transnational crimes acceded or ratified by Myanmar is also expanding. Myanmar has long been a party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). She is also a State Party to the United Nations Convention against

Transnational Organized Crime and its two supplementary Protocols. Recently, Myanmar has ratified the Convention on Financing of Terrorism, joining the nations that have ratified or acceded to almost all UN instruments related to terrorism.

In Myanmar, the National Human Rights Committee has been put in place for promotion of human rights through public awareness activities in the country. Human rights education has also become part of the school curriculum in the country. In the area of child protection, the government is implementing a plan of action under the supervision of a high level Committee to prevent the military recruitment of children under 18 years of age. We will continue our efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights, especially of the vulnerable groups of children and women.

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding, my delegation would like to reiterate the vital importance of strict adherence to a set of rules laid down by the General Assembly resolution 60/251 in promoting and protecting human rights, namely principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization. We shall continue to lend our full cooperation to the United Nations in the area of human rights as long as it is guided by those cardinal principles, which we hold dear.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.