



MYANMAR

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STATEMENT
BY
HIS EXCELLENCY U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN
UNION MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION
OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 27 September 2011)

Mr. President,

Allow me to extend our congratulations to Your Excellency on your assumption of the Presidency of the Sixty-Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that with your wide knowledge, experience and diplomatic skills, we will be able to achieve fruitful results in our deliberations in addressing important and critical issues on the international agenda.

I would also like to convey our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss for his able leadership and contributions to the 65th United Nations General Assembly. May I also take this opportunity to once again extend our congratulations to the United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon for his re-election and we wish to express our sincere appreciation to him for his dedication and untiring efforts for the cause of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Since I am addressing this august Assembly for the first time after the emergence of the Constitutional Government and as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to apprise the Assembly of recent developments and significant changes taking place in my country. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has emerged as a new democratic nation in accordance with the Constitution approved by the overwhelming majority of the people. Multiparty democracy general elections were held in Myanmar in November 2010 in line with the Seven-Step Road Map. Thirty seven political parties including 19 parties from different national races contested in the elections. Today, elected representatives are exercising their democratic rights in the legislative bodies.

The President in his inaugural speech to the first regular session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2011, stated that all elected Hluttaw members, including the President are all duty-bound to honour and safeguard the constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The new Government pledged that all citizens shall enjoy equal rights in terms of law and is determined to reinforce the judicial power. The government also assured the nation to amend and revoke existing laws and adopt new laws as may deem necessary to implement the provisions of the fundamental rights of the citizens.

Mr. President,

With the view to maintaining and promoting friendly relations with all countries in the world, Myanmar is reaching out to the international community. In the past five months, Myanmar has received the visits of State leaders and high level delegations from our neighbouring countries as well as from other regions and international organizations. In return, President U Thein Sein paid official visits to the Republic of Indonesia and the People's Republic of China. The President also attended the 18th ASEAN Summit in Jakarta.

Mr. President,

The new government has launched a series of economic, social and policy reforms to improve the socio-economic life of the people. One of those measures is stepping up its efforts in reduction of poverty.

In Myanmar about 70% of the population resides in rural areas, engages in agricultural and livestock farming. In order to boost the production and to enhance the economic

development of rural area, the Government has adopted forward looking economic policies. These policies will lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth which will in turn increase employment opportunities, promote agriculture development and reduce poverty. In doing so, the new government has adopted the National Rural Development and Poverty Reduction Plan to alleviate poverty and to improve the livelihood of people residing in rural areas. The Central Committee and Work Committees were formed to supplement the eight tasks laid down in accordance with the National Plan.

Furthermore, the new government has increased pension allowances of retired service personnel in commensurate with the changing economic and social conditions of the country. With the view to encouraging foreign trade, the government reduced export tax from 8% to 2% and granted exemption of export tax on all agricultural and timber products.

It is regrettable that the Government's efforts to improve the livelihood of the people are hampered by the economic sanctions. Therefore, I would like to call upon countries that have imposed unilateral sanctions on Myanmar to lift their restrictions. It will also contribute to our efforts in achieving our MDG targets.

Mr. President,

Myanmar attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. The fundamental rights of its citizens are guaranteed by relevant provisions of the State Constitution. With a view to promoting and safeguarding the fundamental rights of the citizens as prescribed in the Constitution, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission was formed on 5th September 2011.

Myanmar's cooperation with the United Nations has been clearly demonstrated by the Government's acceptance of the fourth visit of Mr. Quintana, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar in August 2011.

Mr. Quintana welcomed and recognized the steps taken by the Government to improve the human rights situation in Myanmar. He also welcomed the Government's stated commitments to reform and priorities set out by the President.

Myanmar has been cooperating closely with the Human Rights Council. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Report of Myanmar was submitted and reviewed by the UPR Working Group last January and adopted at the 17th Session of the Human Rights Council last June. Myanmar has agreed to accept 52.4 percent of the total recommendations.

We strongly believe that the UPR process is the most dependable and uncontroversial monitoring mechanism to address and rectify the human rights situation of all countries.

Mr. President,

As for national reconsolidation, the Union Government offered an olive branch to all the national race armed groups by decreeing Announcement No, 1/2011 on 18 August and some of those groups have accepted the Government's offer. The President also granted an amnesty on 16 May 2011 and 20,000 inmates were released till end of July.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the General Assembly that the President in exercising the mandate vested upon him by the Constitution will further grant an amnesty at an appropriate time in the near future.

The President invited people to work together for the interest of the nation despite differences. Accordingly he received Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 19 August 2011 and had cordial and candid discussions to find out potential common grounds to cooperate in the interest of the nation and the people, putting aside different views.

These are some of the significant progress which we have achieved in our democratization process.

Mr. President,

As an agro-based country, Myanmar is following with keen interest on issues surrounding the effects of climate change. Since agriculture is highly dependent on the climate, the implications of climatic situation on agriculture cannot be ignored. Lately, floods and draughts have devastated crops and agricultural production in our region. It is evident that developing countries are more vulnerable and will be the first to suffer from global warming and climate change.

We, therefore, look forward to reaching tangible outcomes at the upcoming 17th Conference on the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties (CMP 7) to the Kyoto Protocol in Durban, South Africa. Although the road to Durban will be a difficult one, my delegation shares the view that our discussions on the issue should be placed within the context of promoting the sustainable development. In this regard, we would also like to stress that all three pillars, namely economic development, social development and environment protection need to be promoted in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner.

Mr. President,

Myanmar strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In today's world, terrorism and transnational organized crime are increasingly threatening the human society. Myanmar was also among the countries which had been the victims of the scourge of terrorism. In this regard, we would like to express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the victims of terrorism around the world. We welcome the UN Secretary-General's commitment to conduct a global threat review to re-assess security threats in the wake of deadly attack in Abuja, Nigeria.

Myanmar stands ready to cooperate at regional and international levels to prevent and combat terrorism and transnational organized crimes.

Without stability and peaceful environment, there would not be sustainable development for the people in a country as well as in the region.

Mr. President,

The Millennium Declaration set 2015 as the target for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was formulated to address the welfare and the needs of the people around the world. Despite some progress, the development efforts are hindered by various reasons such as, slow economic growth, diminishing resources, increasing food prices and

ongoing concern over food security, increasing frequencies of natural disasters as well as the challenges posed by climate change.

Each country has the primary responsibility to generate ways and means for social and economic development. However, national efforts for achievement of economic and social development need to be supported by the international community.

For our part, Myanmar is determined to promote better living standards and equitable development of its people. To generate income, microfinancing schemes are introduced at the grassroot level. According to UNDP, the poverty rate in Myanmar has decreased from 32% to 26% in recent years. However, we have to redouble our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goal-1 by the year 2015.

Mr. President,

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament and to promote cooperation and ensure access to nuclear energy. As a signatory to the NPT, Myanmar remains committed to the three pillars of the treaty. Being a strong advocate to nuclear disarmament, Myanmar has been tabling the resolution on nuclear disarmament every year since 1995 which enjoys wide support of the member states.

Myanmar firmly opposes the proliferation and production of nuclear weapons and strongly supports any effort for the realization of the world free from threats of nuclear weapons and its byproducts.

Mr. President,

In the recent past, the world around us has changed. We have seen changes in the governments and political landscapes.

Myanmar has transformed towards a democratic nation in a smooth and peaceful manner. We have now embarked on a series of reform process in various sectors to bring about democratization, economic development and improved livelihood of the people.

The steps taken by the government of Myanmar are concrete, visible and irreversible. We will ensure that the reform process is incremental, systematic and dynamic. Myanmar has strong determination to continue implementing the democratization process amidst all the challenges.

At this critical juncture, the encouragement, understanding and support of the international community are crucial to Myanmar's transition to democracy.

Thank you, Mr. President.