



# MYANMAR

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STATEMENT

BY

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PRESIDENT

OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

AND

CHAIRMAN OF THE MYANMAR DELEGATION

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE

SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION

OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 27 September 2012)

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Delegates,

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate you on your well-deserved election as the President of the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your country, Serbia, and Myanmar has traditionally enjoyed the close friendship and cooperation. Under your able leadership, the General Assembly will make deliberations on measures to address the challenges being faced by the world today. I am confident that your vast wisdom, rich experiences and high diplomatic skills would guide our deliberations to produce desired outcomes.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, H. E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his outstanding leadership at the 66<sup>th</sup> session.

Mr. President,

Myanmar consistently pursues an independent and active foreign policy. One of the basic tenets of our foreign policy is to actively contribute towards the maintenance of international peace and security. In so doing, we encourage efforts to settle differences among nations by peaceful and amicable means. This position of ours matches well with the essence of one of the high-level themes of the current session, namely, "Settlement of disputes by Peaceful Coordination or Means".

Mr. President,

There exist differing views and assessments on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Brazil in June this year. A number of important decisions were taken on various issues such as the renewing of commitments, the linkage of sustainable development to the Millennium Development Goals-MDGs, the renewable energy and the establishment of arrangements for a better coordination on the sustainable development. It is necessary for the member states to turn these decisions into actions in order to leave behind the legacy of a safe and sustainable environment to our future generations.

Mr. President,

Since becoming a member, Myanmar has always adhered to the founding principles of the United Nations. Our participation in the General Assembly here in New York amply demonstrates our commitment to an active participation in and cooperation with the work of the Organisation.

The world today is replete with new challenges and opportunities. Urbanization and industrialization are taking place in developing countries in an unprecedented scale. The rapid progress in information technology is giving an impression that our world is getting smaller. On the other hand, the natural environment and climate is encountering new threats and challenges. In short, the world is changing as never before.

In addition, it is also timely and appropriate to pay our attention to issues like the post-2015 Development Agenda and Rule of Law during the current session.

Mr. President,

Myanmar is making progress on her democratic path. But this has not been an easy task. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to share our experiences in this regard.

In the ongoing reform process, we are facing challenges as well as opportunities. Within a short time, the people of Myanmar have been able to bring about amazing changes. I feel greatly privileged and honored to dutifully serve the people as their President at this crucial time in the history of our nation. I truly take my people as my own parents and elders.

After taking office about 18 months ago, the Parliament, the Judiciary, the Armed forces, the national races, political parties, civil societies and the people at large have been taking tangible irreversible steps in the democratic transition and reform process. Leaving behind a system of authoritarian government wherein the administrative, legislative and judicial powers were centralized, we have now been able to put in place a democratic government and a strong, viable parliament following a practice of check and balance.

Despite the challenges, we can now witness encouraging progress and significant developments in the country. They include granting of amnesties to prisoners; the coming back with dignity of the exiled political forces; the successful convening of 2012 by-elections in a free, fair and transparent manner; the abolition of censorship of media- the fourth estate; freedom of internet access; the establishment of workers' and employers' organizations and the increased participation of the people in the political process.

At the current stage of the political process, we can witness the emergence of democratic characteristics such as increasing of participation from different political forces and their mutual tolerance, the magnanimity, expansion of the scope of political participation of and representation and the accountability. Our government and other stakeholders have now been able to foster a new political culture of patience and dialogue.

Mr. President,

The then main opposition leader Noble laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now participating in the Pyithu Hluttaw (Parliament) not only in her capacity as an MP (Member of Parliament) but also that of the Chairperson of the Rule of Law and Stability Committee of the Parliament. During this week she is also in New York. As a Myanmar citizen, I would like to congratulate her for the honours she has received in this country in recognition of her efforts for democracy.

The political progress in our country is enhancing its political legitimacy. This, in turn facilitates the creation of basic political stability thereby paving the way for economic and social transformation necessary for better living standard of the people.

Mr. President,

The legislative body has also been progressing well and functioning more effectively at each session and the parliament has now been able to adopt landmark laws through the democratic practices.

Laws and bylaws are being promulgated bearing in mind that: the economic development must not lead to the widening of the rich-poor gap; citizens' rights are to be protected; the natural environment is to be preserved; our workers are to enjoy rights in line with international standards. We are giving a careful attention to the investments in the extractive sectors like the energy to ensure transparency and impartiality.

Mr. President,

We believe that cessation of all armed conflicts are a prerequisite for the building of genuine democracy. As such, we place high priority on achieving a lasting peace in the country. In accordance with our motto "From War to Peace", we are working hard to bring an end the longstanding difficulties in the regions of our ethnic nationalities. We have so far achieved ceasefire agreements with 10 armed groups. While further strengthening confidence building measures, we will continue the peace talks. National level peace negotiations will then continue to reach a final peace agreement that would completely end the armed hostilities.

In order to redress the situation in northern part of Myanmar, the leaders of the Government Peace Work Committee and the Kachin armed group (KIA) are holding informal consultations and working to further strengthen the confidence building measures. We consider any loss of life and property from either side in the armed conflict as a loss for the country.

Mr. President,

While the Government is resolutely pursuing political, social and economic reforms, some unfortunate and unexpected issues have come up in our way. A case in point is the recent communal violence in *Rakhine* State. In this connection, I would like to mention in the first place that the people inhabiting in our country, regardless of race, religion and gender, have the rights to live in peace and security.

As you are aware, a national level independent investigation commission has been established to investigate the issue. To ensure impartiality, the composition of the Commission is made up of representatives from all strata of the society, including the widely-respected personalities from the Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Hindu faiths. Upon completion of its task, the Commission will be submitting its findings and recommendations to me.

Demonstrating our determination to resolve the issue in a transparent manner, we have facilitated field visits to the *Rakhine* State by the representatives from the OIC, ASEAN, UN agencies, the United States and resident foreign diplomats in Myanmar. When it comes to the relief assistance, access is being facilitated to those organizations who are willing to provide it to both the communities without discrimination.

The issue at hand cannot be solved overnight. It will be resolved by taking short-term and long-term measures through a multi-faceted approach taking into account political, economic and social aspects. I sincerely believe that as an independent and sovereign state, Myanmar has the right to secure our borders and also to safeguard and protect our sovereignty. We will do our utmost to solve this issue in line with international norms.

Mr. President,

I am well aware of the fact that Myanmar's democratic transformation process would be a complex and delicate one that requires patience. To complete this process, we certainly need the understanding and support from the United Nations and its member states, the international community as a whole and, last but not least, the people of Myanmar. At the same time, it is equally important that Myanmar should be viewed from a different and new perspective. It is also necessary for us to be able to work in a more conducive and favorable environment than never before.

Mr. President,

Myanmar is now ushering in a new era. As a member in the family of nations, Myanmar will be participating more actively in the activities of the United Nations in various fields. Standing as a responsible and respectable nation on the world stage, we will take the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a bold and resolute manner.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, allow me to mention briefly about an important figure. It is none other than U Thant, a brilliant son of Myanmar who had served as the third Secretary General of the United Nations. Even during his days, U Thant had had a vision of "One World". He envisioned a global society that is guided by a spirit of "One World"- a world safe for diversity and a place of peaceful co-existence where global citizens practice the virtues of tolerance, cooperation, understanding and compassion. We believe that if we materialize his vision, we will be speedily achieving a state of the world which is more peaceful and prosperous.

U Thant's tireless endeavours for peace and his achievements during his tenure as the Secretary General of the United Nations will never be forgotten. The people of Myanmar will always take pride of and remember him as a great son of Myanmar.

I thank you.