



MYANMAR

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Statement by
H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi,
State Counsellor
of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
at the General Debate of
the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 21 September 2016

**Madame Vice President,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. As the first representative of the new government of Myanmar to speak before this Assembly, it is my duty, and my privilege, to reaffirm our faith and confidence in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The strength of this Organization lies in its universality and legitimacy, anchored in the Charter and in the fundamental principles of international law. For all its imperfections and limitations, the United Nations remains a receptacle of our hopes for a more peaceful and prosperous world, a kinder, more compassionate home for all mankind.

2. My country joined the United Nations as the newly independent Union of Burma in 1948. It was an era of determined hope, when the peoples of the world rose out of the ravages of war to build anew their countries and their faith in the human capacity for achieving peace with equality, prosperity with justice. Now, once again, it is a time of determined hope for Myanmar. When our people cast the overwhelming majority of their votes in favour of the National League for Democracy during the elections last November, they were demonstrating their support not just for a political party but for a political culture founded on a belief in their rights, and their capacity, to fashion the future of their country in the shape of their dreams and aspirations. And these dreams and aspirations echo those that had led to the founding of the United Nations.

3. The dream of turning swords into plough shares, or to use a more modern idiom, converting weapons of destruction into farm machinery, is one that our people, who have long been compelled to sacrifice their sleep and their fields to the exigencies of conflict, understand with their hearts and their minds. To be safe in our own homes, to be confident in our capacity to realize our full potential, to be happy in the promise of progress for our young and security for our elderly, to be strong in our rights and duties as citizens of a peaceful and

prosperous Union. These are our simple aspirations. Simple, but, it hardly needs to be said, not easy to achieve. And the only path that will lead us to our goals is the path of peace, the path that we must follow with hope and determination.

Madame Vice President,

4. The people of Myanmar have long been deprived of their inherent right to live in peace and security, to fundamental freedom and to development, in the context of our 2030 goals, *sustainable* development. For a country that has experienced over six decades of internal armed conflict, nothing is more important than the achievement of lasting peace and national reconciliation. It is a difficult and complex task that the new government of Myanmar is taking on as a major challenge and a high priority. Recently, we convened the first session of the Union Peace Conference, also known as the 21st Century Panglong, as it embodies the spirit of Panglong, the conference of 1947 that paved the way to the founding of the independent Union of Burma. Attended by representatives of the Government, the Parliament, the Armed Forces, ethnic armed groups, political parties and civil society organizations, the Union Peace Conference is based on the principle of inclusiveness and embodies the spirit of Union. The Conference is not an end in itself. It is the first vital step on our journey to national reconciliation and lasting peace that will save succeeding generations from the scourge of fraternal strife, which has brought untold sorrow to our peoples.

Madame Vice President,

5. Over the last few years, the world has focused its attention on the situation in the Rakhine State of the country. As a responsible member of the community of nations, we do not fear international scrutiny. We are committed to a sustainable solution that will lead to peace, stability and development for all communities within the State. Our Government is taking a holistic approach that

makes development central to both short and long term programmes aimed at promoting understanding and trust. The Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State was established soon after our new Government took office. We are undertaking the tasks of establishing security, peace and stability and rule of law; scrutinizing immigration and citizenship; facilitating settlements and implementing socio-economic development; and coordinating and cooperating with the UN Agencies and international organizations for providing humanitarian assistance.

6. To buttress our efforts to address the issue comprehensively and more effectively, we have also established the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Dr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

7. There has been persistent opposition from some quarters to the establishment of the Commission. However, we are determined to persevere in our endeavour to achieve harmony, peace and prosperity in the Rakhine State. Here, I would like to take the opportunity to ask for the understanding and constructive contribution of the international community. By standing firm against the forces of prejudice and intolerance, we are reaffirming our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person.

Madame Vice President,

8. Peace and national reconciliation are prerequisites for the successful implementation of policies and programmes aimed at fulfilling the social and economic needs of our people. Myanmar's 2016 national economic and development policy is designed to meet many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the enhancement of infrastructure investment, agriculture, private sector, SMEs and, in particular, poverty alleviation. National reconciliation, job creation and preservation of natural resources, capacity

building and creating opportunities for the young are the key objectives of our people-centered and inclusive policy.

Madame Vice President,

9. Many of our shared concerns as members of the United Nations have been discussed comprehensively in this assembly since the general debate opened yesterday. I will therefore touch upon just a few issues, migration, terrorism, nuclear disarmament, mindful of your exhortation to keep within the limits of the time allotted to us.

10. Durable solutions to problems can be found only by investigating their roots. The unprecedented scale of migration in recent years and the consequent sufferings makes it an imperative to address the two most important causes of irregular migration: lack of peace and lack of development. While talking about building peace and development, we cannot neglect the important aspect of enhancing respect for human rights, equality, diversity and tolerance with a balanced implementation of multi-dimensional economic policies. This is a challenging task and there is a need for countries to work in collaboration to seek just and comprehensive solutions in compliance with international law. Migrants contribute to the economies of their host countries as well as to the global economy. Therefore, I believe that building cooperation and collaboration between the host country and the country of origin in ensuring the rights of migrant workers will be mutually reinforcing for both. Our planet is a place to be shared by all. Sharing values and wealth will create a better world for all of us.

Madame Vice President,

11. We must be united in standing together against all forms and manifestations of violent extremism related to religious, cultural and social intolerance. Having identified extremism as the root of terrorism, we need to

explore the causes of extremism. Lack of social and economic security no doubt are important factors but we also need to consider the possibility that lack of purpose, of a sense of direction in life, could also be a force that drives many, especially the young into the snare of ideologies that appear to offer certainty.

Madame Vice President,

12. Myanmar advocates a world free of nuclear weapons. The annual resolution tabled by my country on nuclear disarmament aims at achieving peace and security for present and future generations. Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world contributes to this goal. I am happy to inform this Assembly that we will be depositing our instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty-CTBT this afternoon.

Madame Vice President,

13. We have known the cost of contention and suffered the wound of strife. It is something that we do not wish for anybody or any country in our world. I would like to thank all those who have helped us along our road to build a truly democratic federal Union. It has been a hard road that we have been helped by compassion, by loving kindness and by understanding. We would like to call for more of these factors in facing the problems of our world today. I have seen too much anger and hatred and resentment, demands, not offer of services. We would like our world to be a kinder world, a world that gives places giving above receiving. Whilst we are taught in Burma that the causes of corruption are greed, anger, fear and ignorance, I am not talking of corruption simply as the taking of bribes, or the offering of bribes, but of the corruption of human nature. Anger, greed, fear and ignorance corrupt human nature and it corrupts our whole world. I would like to call on all to help us in making this world truly a better place for us to live in for our grandchildren and great great grandchildren

to live in. And where but in this gathering of nations, can I make such an appeal. So, I appeal to you that we all stand up against anger and hatred, against fear and ignorance and find a way to a better world through our capacities for compassion, for loving kindness and for the ability to be happy in the good fortune of others.

I thank you, Madame Vice President.
