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# MYANMAR

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Than Swe, Ambassador and  
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission  
of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations**

at the

**Seventh Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum  
on Indigenous Issues**

on

**Item (4): Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated  
areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium  
Development Goals**

**New York, 24 April 2008**

Madam Chairperson,

First of all, my delegation would like to express our appreciation to you and members of the Forum for your dedicated and tireless efforts to promote the interest and welfare of the indigenous people around the world.

The Forum secretariat has published a desk review; MDG Reports and Indigenous Peoples, it is a commendable effort that aims to analyze recent achievements and challenges of indigenous peoples. It covers 10 countries including my own. However, with regard to Myanmar, my delegation failed to understand why the report refused to consider one national ethnic group comprising some 68% of the population that has continuously resided in the country for some two thousands years as one of the Myanmar's indigenous people.

Madam Chairperson,

In December 2004, the General Assembly proclaimed the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, beginning from 1 January 2005. The objective is to strengthen the international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development. The time frame for the Second Decade coincides with the target set for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). My delegation concurs with the view that without giving attention to the development and welfare of the millions of indigenous people, the objectives of the MDGs cannot be fully attained.

Madam Chairperson,

Myanmar is a multi-ethnic nation of eight major ethnic groups comprising over 100 national races that lived together in weal and woe for two millenniums. All are indigenous to the soil. Therefore in Myanmar, the indigenous people are referred to as national races. However, many of the national races that reside in the border areas have lagged behind in development because of insurgency. Accordingly, the development of the border areas and national races commands priority attention of the Government. In this connection, my delegation wants to update the Forum on the measure taken by the Government in the context of the development of national races particularly in the border areas.

Because of the national reconciliation policy of the Government the insurgency that had plagued the country for over 40 years has virtually ended. Peace and stability has come to almost all corners of Myanmar. The Government is therefore able to promote the development projects in the border areas. In 1989, the Central Committee for the Development of the Border Areas and National Races was formed with our Head of State as Chairman. In 1992, eight years before the Millennium Summit, a separate Ministry was set up to promote the development of the national races in the border areas. The objectives are, inter alia, to narrow the development gap, to cherish and preserve the culture, literature and customs of the national races and to preserve and maintain peace and tranquility of the border areas. In 1993, the Government has enacted the Border Areas and National Races Law. Development activities are being implemented in eighteen regions, where Kachin , Kayin, Kayah, Wa, Pa-O, Shan, Palaung, Mon, Rakhine and Chin and Naga

reside. This development programme in border areas has greatly facilitated on our national reconciliation. Seventeen out of 18 ethnic insurgent groups, with over 100,000 armed persons had now returned to the legal fold.

Madam Chairperson,

Vast transformations are taking place with the improvement of the socio-economic infrastructure in the border areas. As of February 2008, 3498 miles of earth road, 2501 miles of gravel road, 416 miles of asphalt road, 81 large bridges, 1048 small bridges and 46 suspension bridges have been constructed. In energy sector, there are 265 diesel generators for electricity supply are installed and 7 hydro power stations have been constructed.

There are also major improvements in the education and health sectors. To improve the accessibility of health care services in the rural and border areas, Rural Health Development Scheme has been developed and implemented since the year 2000. The rural health development plan focuses mainly on the construction of new health care centers, development of human and material resources on health in order to increase access of basic health services including water and sanitation by the rural community. So far, 80 hospitals, 102 dispensaries and 62 rural health centers were established in the border areas.

In Myanmar, mothers and children constitute over 60% of the total population. Maternal and child health care services are crucial components of National Health Plan. Myanmar is striving not only to achieve MDG 4 and 5 but is also targeting to reduce the maternal, newborn, infant and children morbidity and mortality by 50% in 2011. At the country level, including in the far-flung border areas, the following strategic plans are set and carried out-

- Promotion and phase implementation of an essential package of reproductive health interventions.
- Improve quality, increased access, and reduce delay in care provision.
- Development and strengthening of reproductive health partnerships and networks.
- Strengthened monitoring and evaluation.
- Increased resource allocation.

Madam Chairperson,

Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are designated as disease of national concern in the National Health Plan (2006-2011). Under the guidance of the State Peace and Development Council, Ministry of Health is putting tremendous efforts to fight these three diseases.

In case of Malaria, target is set to reduce 50% of malaria morbidity and mortality by the year 2010. The fatality rate which in the year 2000 was 3.3% had been reduced to 2.9 % by 2005.

National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) has been established since 1966. Currently, there are 13 State and Divisional TB centers operating the tuberculosis control activities covering various States and Divisions including Kachin, Mon, Shan, Kayin, Kayah, Rakhine and Chin States. The Government of Myanmar has been able to provide Directly

Observe Treatment Short Course (DOTS) to cover all townships in the country with the technical and financial support from WHO, Global Drug Facility (GDF), Japan anti-TB Association (JATA), Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. The basic health staffs, voluntary health workers and National NGOs, Myanmar Red Cross Society and local voluntaries are working together right down to the grass root level to deliver DOT to tuberculosis patients.

Case Detection Rate (CDR), one of the important targets of the TB control programme, has significantly improved. In 1994 it was 32% and in 2005, it reached 95%. There are also improvement in Cure Rate (CR) and Treatment Success Rate (TSR). In 1994, CR and TSR was 61% and 78% respectively and in 2005, it reached to 75% and 84% respectively.

Madam Chairperson,

In 2006, National Strategic Plan was developed using participatory processes, with direct involvement of all sectors aims at reducing HIV transmission and HIV-related morbidity, mortality, disability and social and economic impact. The Three Ones principles are implemented as guiding principles for an effective, harmonized and scaled-up response to HIV and AIDS. A national monitoring and evaluation strategic information framework was established for all partners in Myanmar since 2004. With the tremendous increase in prevention efforts, especially those focusing on condom promotion for sex workers and their clients, 100% Targeted Condom Promotion Programme have expanded from four sites in 2001 to 170 sites in 2006; and on drug users, various elements of a harm reduction strategy were implemented in pilot areas such as Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina and Lashio since February 2006. The HIV prevalence rate decline from 1.5% in 2000 to 1.3% in 2005.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me now turn to the government efforts in the education sector. Where very few existed before, 855 primary schools, 90 middle schools and 92 high schools were built in the border areas. Where there were only 1500 students in 1988, there are now 180,000 students studying in the border areas. Additionally, 27 training schools for the development of national youths in the border areas and 2 Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree Colleges have been opened. Government provides accommodation, food and clothing including education expenses to the nationalities youth from border areas who are attending courses in 27 Training Schools. There are 34 vocational training schools for basic and higher dress making, cooking, weaving and knitting skill. From 1992 to 2007 altogether 22,282 trainees have completed the courses from the Vocational Training Schools.

Madam Chairperson,

Since 1989, the Government has invested 198 billion Kyats plus 550 million dollars for the development of the border areas. On a personal note, these are not mere statistics for me. Since the year 2000, I have been implementing the Border Areas Development Programme as Director General and Secretary of the Work Committee for the Development of the Border Areas and National races.

Madam Chairperson,

While economic, social and cultural conditions of our national races are being promoted, they are not left out in the nation's political process either. In September 2007, the National Convention completed its task of laying down the fundamental principles to be enshrined in a new state constitution. Six hundred and thirty five delegates out of 1080 delegate took part in the National Convention process were ethnic nationalities. Under the fundamental principles adopted by the National Convention, in addition to the existing seven states and seven divisions, the ethnic nationalities with sizeable population will be allowed to form themselves into self-administered zones, each with its own legislative assemblies.

Madam Chairperson,

I wish to stress once again that Myanmar is a Union made up of eight major ethnic national races, all of whom are indigenous people. The task that has been embarked by the Government is to maintain and enhance stability, national unity and economic and social development of the entire country, particularly the national races that constitute the Union.

I thank you.

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