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Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative U Win Mra,  
Member of the Observer Delegation of the Union of Myanmar  
at the Ninth Session of the Working Group on  
Indigenous Populations

31 07 11  
JAN 5

Madame Chairperson,

Since the delegation of Myanmar is taking the floor for the first time during this session, I would like to congratulate you on your unanimous election to chair the Ninth Session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Your re-election to this important post to preside over the work of this Working Group is a clear indication of your invaluable contribution for the Working Group. Our congratulations also go to the other distinguished members of the Working Group.

Madame Chairperson,

In the past sessions of the Working Group, the delegation of Myanmar had had an opportunity to present its own views on definition of the term "indigenous populations" and that in the Union of Myanmar there are no indigenous population in its true sense of the word as there are no distinct early comers or late comers among the national races of Myanmar. I shall, therefore, refrain from repeating them here again.

Madame Chairperson,

In reviewing the situation pertaining to the development of the national races of the Union of Myanmar, it is our delegation's pleasure to inform the Working Group of the unprecedented progress that has been achieved in my country.

The government has been implementing the Programme for the Development of Border Areas and National Races since May 1989 as a national priority yielding important results. On 10th May 1991, the University for Development of National Races (UDNR) was established by the State Law and Order Restoration Council. This institution is unique in the sense that it was set up with a very clear mandate and definite commitment for development of national races. The aims, functions and duties of the University have also been clearly enunciated. The aims of the UDNR, inter alia, are: to strengthen the Union spirit in the national races of the Union; to preserve and understand the culture and good traditions of the national races of the Union; to promote the spirit of desiring to serve in order to raise the standard of living of the national races; and to keep alive and promote the spirit of desiring to preserve the causes of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and ensuring the perpetuity of the sovereignty of the state.

In order to accomplish the aims and objectives of this University, the State Law and Order Restoration Council has formed the UDNR Council. This indeed is an important step undertaken with immense goodwill for the development of the national races.

Madame Chairperson,

In yet another important development, the government of Myanmar has signed project documents with UNDP for providing assistance by United Nations Agencies for the development of border areas and national races. The projects are the first of the UN inter-agency assisted projects for border areas development. These UNDP assisted projects will complement the present activities of the State for the development of border areas and national races.

Madame Chairperson,

Prevalence of peace and tranquillity is essential for the development of a country which had been troubled by internal insurgency since the gaining of independence. As a consequence of the untiring efforts of the government, some

of the insurgent groups which took up arms and opposed the government at one time have forsaken their policy of armed insurgency and are now working hand in hand with the government in the development of the border areas.

For the first time in the history of Myanmar as many as eight underground armed groups have returned to the legal fold to join hands with the government for the development of their respective border areas. Needless to say, this positive trend will contribute towards more development activities in other border areas which remain to be developed.

Madame Chairperson,

You have very pertinently stated in your opening remarks that the Working Group should not be used as a "chamber of complaints" and should not overlap with the communications procedure already existing in the United Nations. Despite this wise ruling, this forum has once again been used to propagate malicious propaganda by an individual who represents an illegal organization acting against the government of a Member State of the UN. The allegations made by this individual are not only irrelevant but also go against the principles and mandate of the Working Group. Participation of such dubious characters from insurgent groups cannot in any

way promote the advancement of the good work in the Working Group and, therefore, it should be prevented now and in the future.

Since the allegations levelled against my country have all been appropriately addressed in accordance with the relevant procedures of the UN human rights mechanism, I shall not respond to them here. All these allegations are totally unfounded and they do not deserve any attention whatsoever. My delegation totally rejects them all.

Thank you.

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