

Objective outlook on Human Rights

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IF we need to scrutinize, criticize and assess something, we are required to do objectively without any prejudice over it just after thinking in every way we like. Failing that, it would be an unreasonable criticism influenced by bias or unfairness.

A press statement made by Ms. Yanghee Lee, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, on 21st July just after her mission ended in Myanmar was found to have included unsubstantiated allegations. As regards her statement, the Ministry of the Office of the State Counselor, Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued a press release regarding her statement that Myanmar was disap-

pointed with the Special Rapporteur's end of mission statement. Before her official visit to Myanmar, the UN Human Rights Council passed at its 34th Session passed a resolution that called for the dispatch of an international fact-finding mission to Myanmar. The resolution was based on unsubstantiated allegations. Additionally, the establishment of the fact-finding mission would do more to inflame, rather than resolve, the complex and challenging situation that confronts the country.

Though it has been hoped that the statement of the Special Rapporteur would have taken into consideration the difficulties encountered in resolving the problems which are legacies of internal conflicts, isolation and underdevelopment piled up during

several decades, the Special Rapporteur's statement contained a lot of general allegations and many factual errors. Being a mission that came here with wrong opinions conceived initially, it issued a statement which was not acceptable to the Myanmar Government. In reality, it should make a correct assessment, as an international organization which represents the whole human society.

It is regretful that the organization has neglected the national reconciliation and peace process of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar which has been doing its best to bring peace and stability to the country against all odds. It is a fact that Myanmar has been cooperating with the United Nations. Regarding

human rights, it should assess and decide based upon the actual situations in the whole country. The statement should be the kind which helps to find just solutions to the problem after studying actualities happening in the Rakhine State. Otherwise, it can be said to be just biased allegations made based on one-sided perspectives.

Whatever it is, the emergence of a peaceful Democratic Federal Republic is the ultimate goal of Myanmar citizens. Forging a lasting nationwide peace is our first priority.

The government is committed to building a Democratic Federal Republic based on the principles of freedom, equal rights, and justice for the whole populace including all national ethnic brethren. ■

The 50th Anniversary of ASEAN and ASEAN Traditional Dance Competition

Hnin Myat Thu (Culture)

THE 50th anniversary of ASEAN, falls in 2017 is a milestone for ASEAN as well as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Myanmar also meets 20th anniversary of ASEAN membership in 2017. It has remarkable potential to show up the evolutions and achievements of ASEAN throughout the past 50 years, emphasizing the inter-cultural harmony among ASEAN countries, and inspiring ASEAN people to take part in ASEAN integration now and in the future.

“Culture” is a vital role for emphasizing the above-cited points as well as the foundation of the ASEAN spirit. As a result, promoting the ASEAN spirit through cultural celebrations during the 50th anniversary of ASEAN in 2017 is the continuing efforts within ASEAN sectors.

Moreover, the ASEAN strategic Plan for Culture and Arts 2016-2025 cites that the culture sector will “encourage a multi-stakeholder approach in promoting an ASEAN spirit and identity to increase appreciation for the ASEAN Community's histories, cultures, arts, traditions and values.”

On 8th August 2017, ASEAN will meet its 50th anniversary. The celebration of the 50th anniversary is also an opportunity to raise the awareness of ASEAN people about the ASEAN community. Due to this regard, activities at the regional and national levels are being planned by the ASEAN countries to celebrate the achievements of the ASEAN people.



One of the elements of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 is to realize “a dynamic and harmonious community that is aware and proud of its identity, culture, and heritage”. In order to create a dynamic and harmonious community during the Milestone event of ASEAN, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture of Myanmar will be celebrating the cultural event, “**ASEAN Traditional Dance Competition**” on 7th August, 2017 at the National Theater (Yangon). To celebrate 50th anniversary of ASEAN, “The ASEAN Traditional Dance competition” will carry out with the following aims:

- To attract audiences to high-visibility of ASEAN's cultural event
- To communicate with people through the cultural dynamism of the ASEAN community
- To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN
- To promote awareness of ASEAN
- To realize the importance of

Performing Arts especially in Dance

- To implement programmes formulated in the plan of action on ASCC Blueprint

Since Dance is a very ancient art form, and originated from prehistoric time, it was used as a tool of social interaction that promoted cooperation as well as used for the method of expression. In order to promote the mutual understanding between ASEAN, the “**ASEAN Traditional Dance Competition**” is the cultural event which aims to reveal the traditional dances of ASEAN Member States. Through this competition, the different style of traditional dances of ASEAN countries can be introduced to the public. This is one of the significant ways to promote the awareness of ASEAN to the public and a chance to raise knowledge and understanding of people about the ASEAN.

To facilitate the awareness of ASEAN and its traditional dances, this dance competition will foster the dissemination of the wealth culture of the ASEAN member countries. It can

also increase awareness about the culture of ASEAN member countries as well as the ASEAN awareness which is truly cross-cutting issue in ASEAN. In this regard, culture is a potent medium to drive ASEAN message not only just about the cultural vibrancy of the region but also in promoting inter-cultural dialogue.

To be making it sure, the message of ASEAN inter-cultural understanding would be communicated to the public. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture takes the responsibilities to communicate with a wider public by giving the message of ASEAN as one community by highlighting the cultural dynamic of ASEAN.

“ASEAN Traditional Dance Competition” not only brings the spotlight of the 50th anniversary of ASEAN but also fosters tolerance and acceptance among ASEAN people, and promotes solidarity in the region. This event will also facilitate the participation of a wide variety of audiences and participants (i.e. people at all ages, gender, income and races).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture of Myanmar is pleased and honored to invite everyone at all genders, races, nationalities and religions to witness the commemorative event for the 50th anniversary of ASEAN “**ASEAN Traditional Dance Competition**”, which will be held on 7th August 2017, at the National Theater (Yangon) by highlighting the role of culture for raising ASEAN awareness and promoting inter-cultural understanding for years to come. ■