



MYANMAR

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**Statement by Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to
the United Nations at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly Plenary on
Challenges and Measures to Prevent and Combat Corruption and Strengthen
International Cooperation
(New York, 2-4 June 2021)**

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure and honour to address this special session on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation. This special session highlights the fact that despite the unprecedented socio-economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the world cannot afford to ignore one of the pre-existing plagues that threatens the stability and security of societies: CORRUPTION.

Corruption is a source of injustice and creates negative consequences to our societies. It erodes public trust in governance institutions and undermines the rule of law and democracy, posing a grave threat to peace, human rights and sustainable development of societies, especially in the developing world.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the existing challenges we face and significantly hinders the measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation. Corruption is an international problem that needs an international solution and cooperation. While the corruption reduces access to health care, education and social protection services, corruption disproportionately affects the most vulnerable and marginalized people.

With the adoption of UN Convention against Corruption in 2003, the world has the most comprehensive instrument to prevent and combat corruption at the national and global levels. While it provides a key framework for stronger cooperation between states in fighting corruption, national-level implementation of the Convention remains a higher priority. In this regard, Myanmar welcomes the adoption of political declaration of “our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation”.

Mr. President,

My country, Myanmar, has experienced decades of military dictatorship where fear and corruption dominate everyday life of the people. The military dictators misused the military institution for political and economic power. Our vast natural resources were exploited for their own benefits at the expense of ordinary people’s welfare, creating inequality and injustice. Their culture of corrupt practices and lack of any accountability directly undermined the rule of law, subsequently leading to the erosion of trust in public institutions, especially in the security sector.

Eradication of corruption has become a national priority of the elected civilian government. Since taking office, the democratically elected government led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has relentlessly worked to prevent and combat corruption across sections and institutions as well as to address its root causes. Accordingly, the government improved the legal framework including the 2018 amendment to anti-corruption law to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in the public governance. The Anti-Corruption Commission was given broader power and independence to discharge its responsibility.

Due to these concerted efforts, the 2020 report by the Global Corruption Barometer – Asia found that the overwhelming numbers of Myanmar people think that the elected government is doing a good job combating corruption. According to Transparency International, Myanmar is a significant improver on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2020, increasing 13 points since 2012 because of its increased political will and implementation of legal and institutional reforms against corruption.

Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, adopted in 2018, also integrated the strengthening of anti-corruption related legislation and enforcement measures and policies into revenue mobilization and good governance strategies.

Mr. President,

Corruption is one of the greatest threats to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. It is no doubt that individuals and institutions that benefit from corrupt systems do not want to see democratic values thriving. In Myanmar, under the civilian government, the military views that transparency and freedom of press undermine their interests as their conglomerates have lost lucrative economic privileges and they are subject to increasing scrutiny from the free media. They consider the government's efforts to promote accountability and the rule of law as a threat to their power. This is one of the various reasons that the military staged an illegal coup on 1 February 2021, overthrowing hard-won democratic reforms and development gains achieved over the past decade.

Since then, the illegal military junta has engaged in brutal and inhumane acts against the people of Myanmar in a targeted and systematic manner. As of today, more than 820 people including women, girls and children were murdered. Many were tortured to death in their custody. More than 4,300 people including our President, State Counsellor and many others remain in detention unlawfully.

What is outrageous more is that, as widely reported, the junta forces even charged families around 85 USD to retrieve the dead bodies of relatives murdered by them in their brutal crackdown. This is just a stark reminder of how dark the future of the people of Myanmar will be under the brutal and corrupt military rule. The illegitimate military council will continue to crackdown everyone that opposes to their actions and exposes their unlawful and corrupt behaviours. They have already cracked down the independent media by revoking media licenses for 8 media outlets and arresting at least 88 journalists since the coup.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi pointed out in her address to the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly that we are taught in Myanmar that the causes of corruption in terms of human nature are greed, anger, fear and

ignorance. The greed of a few military generals and their fear of losing power to the government duly elected by the people have opened up a dark chapter of tragedy for the people of Myanmar.

However, the people of Myanmar are resilient. Together with our determination and unwavering quest for democracy, we will overcome this dark moment and restore democracy in Myanmar. The National Unity Government will carry out everything it can to bring the perpetrators to justice and hold them accountable for their crimes against the people of Myanmar. In this regard, the international community should provide strongest support towards the people of Myanmar and the NUG.

Therefore, I wish to appeal to the international community to help the people of Myanmar in pursuit of a peaceful, just and inclusive democratic society, in order to be an active and responsible country in regional and international cooperation to fight corruption of all forms under the framework of UN Convention against Corruption.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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