

**UNICEF statement on the occasion of the Interactive Dialogue with
the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar**

19th session of the Human Rights Council, 12 March 2012

Madam President, Excellencies,

UNICEF would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar for his report and congratulate with his fourth successful visit to the country. UNICEF considers the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar vitally important especially during the current stage of political transition in the country.

UNICEF fully recognises the efforts made by the Special Rapporteur to facilitate the release of political prisoners. His continued support to the Government of Myanmar in exercising the independent authority of the judiciary in compliance with full democratic principles, which the government of Myanmar has committed to, is equally important.

UNICEF also recognises the Government's determination to end human rights violations and conflict. The recent signing of the ceasefire agreements with a number of ethnic armed groups is a welcome development in this direction. Previous visits of the Special Rapporteur to some of these conflict areas are important steps in this peace process.

As part of UNICEF's mandate under the Security Council Resolution 1612 UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Defence to release underage child recruits from the army. The assistance of the Special Rapporteur in raising this issue with senior government authorities has been a useful part of our advocacy efforts against underage military recruitment. More work remains to be done to eventually eliminate underage recruitment in Myanmar.

UNICEF will continue to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and would appreciate further efforts of the Special Rapporteur to facilitate humanitarian access to certain geographic areas in the country. UNICEF is fully cognisant of the Government's security and sovereignty concerns. Nevertheless, humanitarian access is one of the key international humanitarian principles that must be honoured.

Thank you