

MNHRC to stress commitment to effectively fulfil its mandate of promoting and protecting human rights and to contribute to democratization process of country to the best of its capacity

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Dec—*The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issued a Statement on International Human Rights Day today.*

The full text of the Statement is as follows:-

Statement by Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2011

1. The atrocities committed during the Second World War and resultant large-scale violations of human rights shocked and galvanized the world community into embarking on serious efforts to create a world organization "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". These efforts led to the creation of the United Nations Organization. The provisions set out in Article 55 of the United Nations Charter include "universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all". The efforts of the international community to realize this purpose of the Charter resulted in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Myanmar, which became the 58th member of the United Nations in April, 1948, voted for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when it was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly held in Paris on 10 December 1948, the date which has now become known as International Human Rights Day. The Declaration constitutes a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations. In other words, the human rights standards set in the Declaration are to be achieved by all nations. Its adoption was the very first step in the common efforts of the international community to set standards and norms in promotion and protection of human rights. Accordingly, it is the source of inspiration and has been the basis for drawing up two important instruments on human rights; namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and other existing international rights instruments. In addition, many nations of the world use the Universal Declaration of Human rights as basis for human rights provisions in their respective constitutions. The Constitution adopted on 29 May, 2008 overwhelmingly by the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar also enshrines these fundamental human rights.

3. Since the adoption of the Declaration, the international community has relentlessly taken steps to establish a global system of human rights protection. In doing so it has always supported and encouraged the establishment of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) for they can serve as national monitoring system concerning violations of human rights and can advise the competent authorities in seeking remedies to them in disseminating human rights information. Those states committed to human rights established national human rights infrastructure, including national human rights institutions, to promote and protect human rights.

4. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, which is also national human rights institution, was established on 5 September 2011, by Notification No. 34/2011 of the Government of the Republic of the Union of

Myanmar with a view to promoting and safeguarding the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. It is the first national level human rights body in Myanmar and the fifth of its kind in ASEAN. It was formed on the basis of Paris Principles, with fifteen experienced retired officials from different professions and various national races as members.

5. The Commission held its inaugural meeting on 12 September and has been functioning in full swing since then. Regarding protection of human rights, an announcement was made on 4 October for accepting complaints on violations of human rights. The complaints received are being examined with the utmost sensitivity on a daily basis.

6. Concerning promotion of human rights, the Commission is trying to set up contact with the relevant organizations inside and outside the country. It has received a delegation from Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Sweden, which has been arranging human rights training, courses for over ten years and offers institutional support to a wide range of human rights institutions in developing countries. The Commission was actively engaged in organizing a Human Rights Seminar for officials of the Myanmar Government on 14-15 November by the Regional Office for Southeast Asia, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bangkok. The success of the Seminar received encouraging responses from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, when she said that these officials, many of them from an emerging younger generation, were very positive, interested and energized. At present, the Commission is planning to organize another workshop on awareness of child rights and human rights education in January 2012 in cooperation with UNICEF in Myanmar. Plans are also underway to organize a similar workshop with special focus on national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in February 2012. In late November, under the sponsorship of UNICEF, Yangon, five members of the Commission visited the Philippines to study its national infrastructure for human rights promotion and protection, including the Philippines Commission on Human Rights.

7. During three months after establishment, the Commission has finished drawing up its draft rules of procedure and draft complaint and investigation procedure.

8. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are an integral part of a democratic society. As such, on this important occasion of the anniversary of human rights, the Commission would like to stress its commitment to effectively fulfil its mandate of promoting and protecting human rights and to contribute to the democratization process of the country to the best of its capacity.

**Date: 10 December 2011
Yangon**