

Myanmar

Permanent Mission of the Union of Myanmar

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Statement

by

U Nyunt Swe,

**Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Union of Myanmar**

at the

Fourth Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, 23 March 2007

Mr. President,

Let me respond to the statement made by the Special Rapporteur, Professor Pinheiro.

His report to this Session is essentially the same as the earlier one he presented to the Council in September last year.

Mr. President,

In my statement I should like to focus on some specific issues during the time allotted.

The National Convention met from October to December 2006 and successfully completed consideration of the remaining seven chapters of the Constitution. Thus, out of the fifteen chapters, eight have been adopted and deliberations on the remaining seven chapters have been completed. So, the National Convention process will be concluded in 2007. The drafting committee will write the new constitution based on the detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention. Therefore, let me reiterate that Myanmar Government is fully committed to the successful implementation of the seven-step road map to democracy.

Mr. President,

In January 2007, the Government granted general amnesty to 2831 prisoners. With this, the Government has granted amnesty to 22147 prisoners during the last two years. This demonstrates the Government's goodwill and commitment to national reconciliation.

Mr. President,

Regarding the forced labour issue, I should like to update the latest developments in Myanmar's cooperation with the ILO on the eradication of forced labour in the country. Myanmar has fulfilled the priority requirement of the Governing Body of the ILO, namely, to conclude an agreement with the International Labour Office on a mechanism to deal with complaints of forced labour. The Government of the Union of Myanmar and the ILO signed the Supplementary Understanding on 26 February 2007. This agreement sets up the necessary mechanism to deal with complaints of forced labour.

This achievement clearly reflects Myanmar's willingness and seriousness to cooperate with the ILO in the eradication of forced labour in the country.

Mr. President,

On the issue of Child Soldiers, I should like to inform the Council on the actions taken by Myanmar since 2004.

Since the inception of the Committee for Prevention against Recruitment of Minors, steady progress has been achieved on this issue. Arrangements were made for UN agencies such as the UNDP and UNICEF to meet with new recruits at the recruitment units. Field trips were undertaken by the UNDP and UNICEF together with the ICRC to meet the new recruits in Mandalay last October. Diplomats and Military Attaches of foreign missions in Yangon also visited the Recruitment Unit in Yangon and the Training Depot in Phaunggyi.

Between 2004 and 2006, 567 persons were discharged from the armed forces as they neither met the minimum age nor the necessary qualifications.

Upon the instructions of the Judge Advocate-General, officers and other ranks of the different Military Commands have been lectured and explained on the prevention of military recruitment of under-age children.

No forced recruitment is carried out and all soldiers joined the armed forces of their own accord. No one under the age of 18 are allowed to join the military service even out of their own willingness.

Mr. President,

The Special Rapporteur stated that the second national report to the CEDAW is overdue. I am pleased to inform the Council that Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs is taken the necessary steps to submit the combined second and third reports to the CEDAW Committee. Myanmar is in touch with the Secretariat of CEDAW regarding this matter.

Mr. President,

I wish to reiterate that Myanmar is not a nation in a situation of armed conflict. With the return to the legal fold of 17 out of 18 armed groups, the country is enjoying unprecedented peace and tranquillity since independence in 1948.

Only the KNU (Kayin National Union) and remnants of the former narco-trafficking armed groups are fighting the Government. In spite of this, the Government continues to extend the olive branch to the KNU. Recently, a KNU/KNLA Peace Council led by Commander Major-General Htay Maung came into the legal fold and has joined hands with the Government to develop their region.

We also reject the accusation that the armed forces targeted civilians in its counter-insurgency activities. Diplomats and media persons have been able to take a tour organized by the Government to Kayin State and Bago Division to enable them to see for themselves the acts of terror committed by the KNU insurgents.

Mr. President,

Myanmar consistently cooperates with the United Nations in the field of human rights by responding to communications sought by the country and thematic rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council.

Our desire to cooperate with the United Nations was clearly demonstrated by the acceptance of the visit of Mr. Ibrahim A. Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations two times. Both these visits were deemed successful by all concerned.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Myanmar is fully aware to improve and promote human rights. We are doing everything possible to this effect and will continue to do so. At the same time, we believe that human rights issues must be addressed with objectivity and non-selectivity. There should not be double standards nor politicization of human rights issues. Myanmar firmly believes that only genuine cooperation and constructive dialogue would best serve the promotion and protection of human rights.

I thank you Mr. President.