Remarks of Federica Mogherini at the joint press conference after a meeting with the State Counsellor in Brussels

Remarks of High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the joint press point following the meeting with the State Counsellor and Foreign Minister of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Check against delivery!

It was really an honour, a pleasure for me to welcome the State Counsellor here to Brussels, to the EU institutions, for her first official visit after the formation of the government one year ago. I take it as a particular honour also the fact that, in her first visit to Europe, she is visiting the European institutions.

It is really a sign of recognition of our strong friendship, partnership that has deep roots and also very concrete elements in the work we do together. I started by thanking her for a very warm message she delivered on the relevance of the European Union on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. This might not be the central point of the relations between the EU and Myanmar, but seeing how our friends and partners in the world value the partnership with the European Union is something that us Europeans should keep in mind a bit more often and hearing her words on that occasion was particularly important – for me personally and I believe for all of us.

We discussed during a very warm, useful, frank, open, interesting and lively discussion today first of all the ways in which the European Union can continue to support, in the best possible way, the democratic transition of the country, the peace and reconciliation process. The European Union is one of the few international signatories of the Peace Agreement [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] as a witness and so we exchanged views on how we can - even better and more - support this process, which is fully in the hands of the people of your country, but that needs to be accompanied by all those who believe in democracy, peace and reconciliation. Any reconciliation and peace process needs time, energy, determination, political leadership that Aung San Suu Kyi has shown in a remarkable manner over decades and in these last months, in very difficult conditions. This is what the European Union continues to support and will continue to support with all our means and all our strength – both politically and financially.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gives a press conference with European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini in Brussels. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

We have also discussed our humanitarian support. Commissioner Stylianides has joined us during our meeting; he will visit Myanmar next week and we took also the opportunity also to prepare his visit. We also discussed the political process; perspectives for the change in the Constitution. We also discussed the situation in Rakhine State that is for us an area of concern but also an area where we are providing key humanitarian support for all communities. This will also be part of the work the that Commissioner Stylianides will do next week.

We also exchanged views on the broader regional situation – the work that the European Union is doing with ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], strengthening our partnership in many different fields and the fact that we will be in Myanmar in November with all the EU Foreign Ministers for the ASEM Ministerial Meeting that her excellency will host and chair. That will be another occasion for us to meet and continue our cooperation that, as I said, is for the European Union a key partnership, and if I can, also a key way to show and live in concrete ways our friendship with the people of the country - all of them - in this new era that the country as started to live.

Any new era is a challenge, is difficult, is interesting, but mainly is difficult. Friends are there to accompany difficult processes; that's what the European Union is determined to do. Sometimes we have some bumpy moments ahead of us but the determination, the sense of direction is the same: that of strengthening and supporting the democratic transition and the reconciliation process in the country, knowing all the challenges that are ahead but in a sense of respect, friendship and mutual understanding and support.

I thank you very much for the honour you gave us of being here today.

Q. I just wanted to ask both of you, actually, what exactly the High Representative has encouraged you to do with regards to the Rakhine and whether you believe that any of her suggestions might be things that you'll be putting into practice? If there's anything specific you can tell us about your discussions on that issue?

I can confirm completely what Aung San Suu Kyi just said. For us what is essential is that the living conditions of all communities are improved as a matter of urgency. Let me start by saying that we always condemn any forms of violence, including the ones that took place on 9th October [2016]. And we did it, I think, as the first international actor, condemning and publicly denouncing attacks on the security forces. We believe that all communities need to see an improvement in their lives and we discussed mainly how we can better support the authorities in the country to implement the recommendations of the Annan report. This is, for us, the roadmap. We have appreciated the determination and the endorsement that the State Counsellor made clearly about the recommendations and indications of the Annan report and we believe that is the way forward. So the fact of the matter is that we are ready to support and we discussed practical ways in which, including through humanitarian aid, the European Union can help and support the full implementation of the measures indicated in the report.

Q: This is a question for both of you. What is your position on the calls for an international investigation into the situation of the Rohingya?

The decision by the [United Nations] Human Rights Council to dispatch an independent international fact finding mission is probably one of the very few issues of disagreement between us, if I can say so. Actually, I have not detected any other. We believe that this can contribute towards establishing the facts for the past provided that, as we said before, we fully agree on the need to work together on the way forward. The fact finding mission, to our understanding, is focussed on establishing the truth on the past and we agree on the need to focus on the future and the implementation of the recommendations that are included in the Annan report as I said.

Thank you ■

Second day of 10th Union Joint Monitoring Committee meeting in Yangon

Ye Khaung Nyunt

The second day of the 10th meeting of the Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) was held yesterday at National Peace and Reconciliation Center (NPRC) office in Shweli Road, Yangon.

Matters relating to landmine clearance in Kayin State, forming Local Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-L) offices in June, appointment of staff in the state-level Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC-S) offices and people's militia, inclusive of border guard force (BGF) were discussed.

JMC-L offices in Shan, Kayin and Bago will be opened before end of June and the decision will be made by JMC-S.

The government will accept only groups that are invited to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) to attend the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong (UPC).

JMC-U Secretary Colonel Wunna Aung said the Tatmadaw will take the lead to clear landmine and technological and material support will be accepted if offered from abroad. Discussions were conducted with KNU as the landmine clearance will start in Kayin.

Discussion on BGF and people's militia was made and Tatmadaw is working on a command understanding.

Appointment of staff in the JMC-S will be made in two months.