Seventh Session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Myanmar (March 12, 2008)

Statement by H. E. Mr. Swashpawan Singh, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of India

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro for his report and presentation on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

2. Myanmar is a close and friendly neighbour with whom we share multifaceted and traditional linkages of geography, culture, history and religion. We, therefore, attach importance to our relations with Myanmar and developments in that country are of direct concern to us.

3. The Foreign Minister of Myanmar visited India in early January 2008 and briefed us on initiatives taken by the Myanmar Government for political reform and national reconciliation. This was followed by a visit by Foreign Secretary of India to Myanmar in February 2008. In our interactions, we have stressed the need for greater urgency in bringing about political reforms and national reconciliation in Myanmar. We have also emphasized to Myanmar that this process of political reforms and national reconciliation should be broad-based to include all sections of society including Aung San Suu Kyi and the various ethnic groups. In this regard, we have taken positive note of the recent announcements by Myanmar concerning a National Referendum and holding of elections by 2010. We do not believe that sanctions will be useful, and may well be counter-productive.

4. India fully supports the UNSG's good offices and his Special Advisor Mr. Ibrahim Gambari's mission to initiate a process of dialogue. We have maintained a close dialogue with the Special Advisor. We also believe that consideration of the situation in Myanmar in the Human Rights Council should be undertaken in a manner so as to support Mr. Ibrahim Gambari's ongoing dialogue with Myanmar. India will continue to play a constructive role, along with like-minded countries, to this end.

Thank you.