ORAL STATEMENT

Worldview International Foundation, International Federation for Human Rights
7th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item (4) 12 March 2007

Mister President,

The International Federation for Human Rights and Worldview International Foundation welcome the reports of the Special Rapporteur on Burma, Professor Pinheiro. This is the end of his term and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to him for his commitment to the situation of human rights in Burma for the past seven years. In February 2008, the Burmese junta announced that a constitutional referendum will be held in May, to be followed by elections in 2010,

The election-winning National League for Democracy (NLD) walk out from the National Convention as the process was not transparent and democratic. The draft was elaborated to legitimize military rule and falls short of providing the necessary guarantees for the promotion and protection of human rights in Burma. There are numerous exception clauses to provisions related to basic civil and political rights, and the constitution does not provide for an independent judiciary, nor will it secure the rule of law. We are disappointed that Burmese military regime rejected the recommendations made by Mr. Gambari during his recent visit to Burma.

On 5 February, Mr. Pinheiro, stated that *"political and human rights activists continue to be arrested, detained and sentenced to prison terms under the security laws"*.The recent arrest on 5 February 2008 of two journalists, Thet Zin and Sein Win Aung of *Myanmar Nation* magazine at their office in Rangoon, demonstrates once more the total denial of freedom of expression in Burma.

While the UN Special Advisor was in Burma, the Burma Army had launched fresh attacks on civilians in northern Karen State, causing the displacement of over 2,100 villagers. Furthermore, military operations are continuing in eastern Burma and a strong military presence persists in most ethnic minority regions. They committed atrocities against civilian population in the conflict zone, including rapes, forced labor destruction, forced relocation and destruction of crops creating a situation of humanitarian emergency. Meanwhile, severe restrictions continue to be imposed on political parties, including ethnically based parties, and civic organisations.

In addition, the Burmese regime has yet to respond to the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council as outlined in resolution S-5/1 and resolution 6/33. Mr. Pinheiro has not been allowed either to conduct a second visit before the March session of the Human Rights Council. This constitutes a blatant lack of cooperation with the UN mechanisms.

We consequently call upon the Council:

- To adopt a resolution requesting the government of Myanmar to create conditions for genuine dialogue and reconciliation by putting an immediate end to the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and by releasing all political prisoners.

- to request the regime to accept permanent offices in Rangoon for the UNSG Special Envoy's good offices mission and for the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

- that the government effectively cooperate with the Council's Special Procedures. In particular, Special Rapporteur for Myanmar should be able to visit the country as often as is required for the effective fulfilment of his mandate.

Only the combination of these steps can provide reasonable chances of bringing human rights to Myanmar.