

**Statement by H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi,
State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of
Myanmar at the General Debate of the 71st session of
the United National General Assembly
New York, 21 September 2016**

Mr. President,

*Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and
Gentlemen,*

1. As the first representative of the new government of Myanmar to speak before this Assembly, it is my duty, and my privilege, to reaffirm our faith and confidence in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The strength of this Organization lies in its universality and legitimacy, anchored in the Charter and in the fundamental principles of international law. For all its imperfections and limitations, the United Nations remain a receptacle of

our hopes for a more peaceful and prosperous world, a kinder, more compassionate home for all mankind.

2. My country joined the United Nations as the newly independent Union of Burma in 1948. It was an era of determined hope, when the peoples of the world rose out of the ravages of war to build anew their countries and their faith in the human capacity for achieving peace with equality, prosperity with justice. Now, once again, it is a time of determined hope for Myanmar. When our people cast the overwhelming majority of their votes in favour of the National League for Democracy during the elections last November, they were demonstrating their support not just for a political party but for a political culture founded on a belief in their right, and their capacity, to fashion the future of their country in the shape of their dreams and aspirations. And these dreams and aspirations echo those that had led to the founding of the United Nations.

3. The dream of turning swords into plough shares, or to use a more modern idiom, converting weapons of destruction into farm machinery, is one that our people, who have long been compelled to sacrifice their sleep and their fields to the exigencies of conflict, understand with their hearts and their minds. To be safe in our own homes, to be confident in our capacity to realize our full potential, to be happy in the promise of progress for our young and security for our elderly, to be strong in our rights and duties as citizens of a peaceful and prosperous Union. These are our simple aspirations. Simple, but, it hardly needs to be said, not easy to achieve. And the only path that will lead us to our goals is the path of peace, the path that we must follow with hope and determination.

Peace Process

Mr. President,

4. The people of Myanmar have long been deprived of their inherent right to live in peace and security, to

fundamental freedom and to development, in the context of our 2030 goals, *sustainable* development. For a country that has experienced over six decades of internal armed conflict, nothing is more important than the achievement of lasting peace and national reconciliation. It is a difficult and complex task that the new government of Myanmar is taking on as a major challenge and a high priority. Recently, we convened the first session of the Union Peace Conference, also known as the 21st Century Panglong, as it embodies the spirit of Panglong, the conference of 1947 that paved the way to the founding of the independent Union of Burma. Attended by representatives of the Government, the Parliament, the Armed Forces, ethnic armed groups, political parties and civil society organizations, the Union Peace Conference is based on the principle of inclusiveness and embodies the spirit of Union. The Conference is not an end in itself. It is the first vital step on our journey to national reconciliation and lasting peace that will save succeeding generations from the

scourge of fraternal strife, which has brought untold sorrow to our peoples.

Rakhine Situation

Mr. President,

5. Over the last few years, the world has focused its attention on the situation in the Rakhine State. As a responsible member of the community of nations, we do not fear international scrutiny. We are committed to a sustainable solution that will lead to peace, stability and development for all communities within the State. Our Government is taking a holistic approach that makes development central to both short and long term programmes aimed at promoting understanding and trust. The Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State was established soon after our new Government took office. The Working Committees established under the Central Committee are undertaking the tasks of establishing security, peace and stability and rule of law;

scrutinizing immigration and citizenship; facilitating settlements and implementing socio-economic development; and coordinating and cooperating with the UN Agencies and international organizations for providing humanitarian assistance.

6. To buttress our efforts to address the issue comprehensively and more effectively, we have also established the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Dr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. The mandate of the nine-member Commission will cover humanitarian, development, basic rights and security issues in Rakhine State. There will be a strong focus on conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, rights and reconciliation, institution building and promotion of development.

7. There has been persistent opposition from some quarters to the establishment of the Commission. However, we are determined to persevere in our

endeavour to achieve harmony, peace and prosperity in the Rakhine State. Here, I would like to take the opportunity to ask for the understanding and constructive contribution of the international community. By standing firm against the forces of prejudice and intolerance, we are reaffirming our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person.

SDGs Implementation

Mr. President,

8. Peace and national reconciliation are prerequisites for the successful implementation of policies and programmes aimed at fulfilling the social and economic needs of our people. Myanmar's 2016 national economic and development policy is designed to meet many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the enhancement of infrastructure investment, agriculture, private sector, SMEs and, in particular, poverty alleviation. National reconciliation, job creation

and preservation of natural resources, capacity building and creating opportunities for the young are the key objectives of our people-centered and inclusive policy.

Mr. President,

9. Many of our shared concerns as members of the United Nations have been discussed comprehensively in this assembly since the general debate opened yesterday. I will therefore touch upon just a few issues, mindful of your exhortation to keep within the limits of the time allotted to us. Migration, terrorism, nuclear disarmament.

Migration

10. Durable solutions to problems can be found only by investigating their roots. The unprecedented scale of migration in recent years and the consequent sufferings makes it an imperative to address the two most important causes of irregular migration: lack of peace and lack of development. When we talk about building

peace and development, we cannot neglect the important aspect of enhancing respect for human rights, equality, diversity and tolerance with a balanced implementation of multi-dimensional economic policies. This is a challenging task and there is a need for countries to work in collaboration to seek just and comprehensive solutions in compliance with international law. We must not forget that migrants contribute to the economies of their host countries as well as to the global economy. Hence, I believe that building cooperation and collaboration between the host country and the country of origin in ensuring the rights of migrant workers will be mutually reinforcing for both economies. Our planet is a place to be shared by all. Sharing values and wealth will create a better world for us.

Counter-Terrorism

Mr. President,

11. We must be united in standing together against all forms and manifestations of violent extremism related to religious, cultural and social intolerance. Having identified extremism as the root of terrorism, we need to explore the causes of extremism. Lack of social and economic security no doubt are important factors but we also need to consider the possibility that lack of purpose, of a sense of direction in life, could also be a force that drives many, especially the young into the snare of ideologies that appear to offer certainty.

Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. President,

12. Myanmar advocates a world free of nuclear weapons. The annual resolution tabled by my country on nuclear disarmament aims at achieving peace and security for present and future generations. Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different

regions of the world contributes to this goal. I am happy to inform this Assembly that we will be depositing our instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty-CTBT this afternoon.

Conclusion

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I thank you, Mr. President.
