



MYANMAR

**Full Version of Statement by the Delegation of
the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
on Agenda Item 55: Comprehensive Review of the Special Political Missions
at the Fourth Committee of the
75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York

20 October 2020

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to join the previous speakers to congratulate you and members of the Bureau on your election to guide our Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in fulfilling your important task for the success of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to express our appreciation to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Atul Khare, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support for their introductory statements on 9th October, 2020.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Azerbaijan and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and ASEAN respectively.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report of Overall Policy Matters pertaining to Special Political Missions that covers efforts towards improving expertise and effectiveness, transparency, accountability, geographical representation, gender perspective and women's equal participation and youth participation as well as the information on the implementation of the reforms in the United Nations in relation to special political missions.

Role of SPMs and COVID-19

Mr. Chairman,

Myanmar recognizes the important role of special political missions that help in preserving and promoting international peace and security and in assisting national and regional efforts. We also noted that the Special Political Missions work closely with United Nations development, humanitarian and human rights actors, national authorities, regional and sub-regional partners, women's and youth organizations, and other national stakeholders.

My delegation takes note that special political missions are guided by four key objectives during the COVID-19 pandemic, which are (1) to support national authorities in their response to COVID-19, (2) to protect mission personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations, (3) to ensure that United Nations personnel are not agents of

transmission and (4) to help to assist vulnerable communities and continue to implement mission mandates.

My delegation also takes note of the Special Political Missions' efforts in increasing the use of technology during the pandemic to reach out to communities and all different stakeholders including women and civil society groups while practising physical distancing rules. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the effort of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in organizing the seventh annual interactive dialogue on special political missions on 17th June 2020 through virtual platform, focusing on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for special political missions. As the inclusive and interactive dialogue on overall policy matters related to Special Political Missions is important for the effectiveness of the missions, we are of the view that this kind of active dialogue should be continued by reaching out to member states in prior to the holding of such dialogue to assure extensive and meaningful participation.

Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security

Mr. Chairman,

Myanmar welcomes the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and the efforts of special political missions in promoting the engagement and inclusion of women even during the pandemic through online consultations. We also welcome the increasing momentum of the United Nations in delivering on its women and peace and security commitments.

Furthermore, with recognition to the importance of the engagement with the youths in peace processes and as 2020 also marks the fifth anniversary of the Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, we welcome the increasing engagement and coordination of special political missions with young women and men for achieving their meaningful participation in peace and political processes.

Special Envoy on Myanmar

Mr. Chairman,

Since 1995, three Special Envoys had been appointed under the Good Offices role of the Secretary-General. The Government of Myanmar has been cooperating with the UN mandate holders in good faith and has also been collaborating with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener and the Office of the Special Envoy is fully functioning at present with the establishment of the office in January, 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Government has been extending its full cooperation for the visits of the Special Envoy to Myanmar for ten times. The 10th visit of the Special Envoy was in January 2020. During her visits to Myanmar, the Government organized series of meetings with the relevant authorities and stakeholders from various communities and also arranged visits to Rakhine and Kachin States to observe and better understand the situation on the ground.

During the informal briefing by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar to the United Nations General Assembly on 14th August 2020, she stated that the pandemic has not limited her discussions with Myanmar's civilian and military leadership, regional, religious, civil society actors and others because of virtual engagement. She also stated that key ministries of Myanmar have listened with openness to the assessments and suggestions. She also welcomed the Government's appointment of a Peace Advisor in April, 2020 with the aim to focus on alleviating tensions in Rakhine State.

Declaration of Ceasefire

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of the pandemic, we appreciate the Special Envoy's support to our Government's commitment to a whole of nation approach to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in line with the stated policy of "Leaving No One Behind". We welcome the appeal for a global ceasefire by the UN Secretary-General in response to COVID-19.

As we welcome the Secretary-General's appeal for global ceasefire, Myanmar Armed Forces declared a ceasefire from 10 May to 31 August 2020 except the areas where terrorist groups have taken positions. This ceasefire has been extended two times, the first one: until the end of September and the second one: until the end of October respectively. Extension of ceasefire has shown Myanmar's willingness to support the UN Secretary-General's appeal for global ceasefire and to implement eternal peace in the country as well as to carry out effective prevention, control and treatment measures against COVID-19 pandemic. Some terrorist groups are active in Northern Rakhine State. Like others, we cannot condone terrorism under any circumstance, any form, anywhere and anytime. We should not forget the fact that the present humanitarian crisis in Rakhine is the result of the coordinated terrorist armed attacks on 30 police outposts by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) aka Al Yaqin terrorists which led to the large of displaced persons from Rakhine.

COVID-19 measures

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Myanmar has adopted a whole of nation approach to fight the COVID-19 pandemic making sure that no one has been left behind. Since January 2020, the Government has been disseminating COVID-19 awareness information through free SMS services across the country including the internet suspended areas where security is put as a top priority due to the attacks and acts of violence launched by the Arakan Army (AA) insurgents. However, 2G internet service has resumed on 30 July in eight townships of Rakhine and Chin States in addition to voice and SMS services in those townships. The full internet service will resume once the situation stabilizes. Our government has been making all great efforts to ensure that internet restriction does not hinder the efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in line with the stated policy of “Leaving No One Behind”.

Since mid-May 2020, the Government and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) have formalized an ICRC Action Plan to support the Myanmar Government’s efforts to prevent COVID-19 outbreak in Rakhine. Moreover, the Government has been providing COVID-19 related Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to people living in the affected areas and to all vulnerable communities in conflict areas in collaboration and cooperation with domestic and international partners, including Myanmar Red Cross and International Committee of Red Cross. The State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also regularly conveys important messages of COVID-19 to the public through Radio, TV and Facebook.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the Secretary General’s observation that the cooperation of host countries and other stakeholders, as well as the support of the wider United Nations membership is crucial for SPMs to implement their mandates.

We remain confident that the existing mutual trust and understanding in the spirit of cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the Special Envoy will favourably contribute to our commitment to finding a peaceful, lasting and sustainable solution for resolving the complex and delicate challenges in Rakhine State. We wish the ongoing reform and strengthening of the United Nations system would positively support the Special Envoy in better delivering her mandates.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
