



# MYANMAR

**Full Version of Statement by the Delegation of  
the Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
on Agenda Item 56: “Questions Relating to Information”  
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. Melissa Fleming, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications for her introductory statement on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.

My Delegation associates itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Guyana and Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) respectively.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports to the Committee on Information, including the report on this agenda.

### **Role of Committee on Information (COI) and Department of Global Communications (DGC)**

Mr. Chairman,

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the establishment of a new, more just and effective world information and communication order for strengthening peace and international understanding is important than ever. In this regard, we fully recognize the crucial role played by the Committee on Information in overseeing the work of the Department of Global Communications and providing it with guidance on policies, programmes and activities of the Department. Taking this opportunity, we would like to commend the successful holding of the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee amidst the pandemic under the able leadership of Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco, as Chair of the Committee on Information.

Myanmar also recognizes the essential role of the Department of Global Communications (DGC) in strengthening the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its strategic communications services, its news services and its outreach and knowledge services. Taking this opportunity, Myanmar would like to join others in commending the dedication, professionalism and the work of the Department that helps in communicating the ideals and work of the United Nations to the world; interacting and partnering with diverse audiences; and building support for peace, sustainable development and human rights for all. Myanmar notes with appreciation the efforts of the

Department for its outreach activities to provide comprehensive, balanced, timely, relevant and multilingual information to the public on the tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations with the greatest transparency even during the pandemic. We wish to encourage its continued efforts in this regard in order to draw attention to the global audience and all stakeholders for carrying out necessary actions to make a positive difference across the United Nations agenda.

### **UN Information Centres (UNICs)**

Mr. Chairman,

We support and encourage the crucial role of the UN Information Centres (UNICs) for disseminating information on the up-to-date activities of the UN. As a matter of course, both the Department and UNICs should uphold its principles of objectivity, impartiality and neutrality throughout its continuous efforts to distribute accurate and credible information.

### **United Nations Academic Impact initiative**

Mr. Chairman,

We also take note of the endeavours of the United Nations Academic Impact initiative to continue its outreach to university students, researchers and educators for promoting the energy and innovation of young people and the research community in service to humanity. My delegation fully acknowledges the Department's increasing engagement with the youths through multiple platforms, including innovative platforms such as 360-degree videos, producing short pieces for the Instagram IGTV application and partnering with digital media partners.

### **Coordination with other UN entities**

Mr. Chairman,

We further appreciate the efforts made by the Department, in its close coordination with the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and other UN entities with the aim to promoting the work of the United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, as well as to combating sexual exploitation and abuse, to raising awareness of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and advocacy efforts for the rights of victims of terrorism.

## **Digital Divide**

Mr. Chairman,

We have witnessed that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and much more attention is needed to bridge existing and emerging digital divides to allow all countries to take advantage of digitalization. In this regard, we would like to call upon all stakeholders to work together within their mandates and resources to develop and implement a comprehensive approach in appropriately assessing the digital divide and make their findings available to the international community, as well as to promote public and private initiatives that aim to bridge the digital divide. We also would like to encourage the Department to continue using a blend of new and traditional media in communicating the principles and activities of the United Nations to the global public in order to bridge the digital divide.

## **Fake news, misinformation and disinformation**

Mr. Chairman,

Ensuring everyone has access to credible, timely and accurate information is vitally important, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has proved us that the lives of human beings are put at risk not only due to health crisis but to a surge in fake news, including misinformation and disinformation, which exploit public fear and anxiety. In this aspect, we urge the Department of Global Communications to continue its role as a responsible messenger of the UN to disseminate factual, accurate, dependable and credible information to the global audience. We wish to commend the efforts of the Department in this regard for launching a new COVID-19 Communications Response Initiative called Verified designed to combat the ‘infodemic’ of misinformation based on science, solutions and solidarity.

## **Efforts of Myanmar’s Government in combating fake news and hate speech**

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Myanmar has fully recognized that it is critical to actively take all necessary actions for combating fake news and hate speech and we condemn any kind or act of hate speech. In this aspect, the Government has issued directives or imposed regulations accordingly to combat fake news and hate speech. In particular, on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the President’s Office of Myanmar ordered the state and regional governments to encourage government employees to participate in and support anti-hate speech activities. All government Ministries have instructed staff to follow the Directives of President’s Office to participate in anti-hate speech activities.

All the ministries have been undertaking all necessary measures on combating fake news and hate speech, including participating in media information literacy (MIL) workshop, round table talks and discussions for better understanding on hate speech and anti-hate speech activities. In this regard, the officials of Ministry of Information of Myanmar participated in ASEAN Special Online Workshop on Fake news hosted by the Ministry of Information and Communications of Viet Nam with the aim to combating fake news and misinformation, which was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 and the experts from UNESCO and the European Union to ASEAN, as well as the relevant persons from information sector of the ASEAN, participated the meeting.

Moreover, in terms of combating fake news during COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health and Sports of Myanmar provides the public with timely and real information of COVID-19 and also has collaborated with the Ministry of Transport and Communications to track down people who spread fake news.

### **2020 General Election and dissemination of reliable news and information**

Mr. Chairman,

The 2020 General Elections of Myanmar will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> November in compliance with the 5 norms of being free, fair, transparent, credible and reflecting the will of the people. In this regard, the Union Election Commission of Myanmar (UEC) has conducted election awareness campaigns and organized rules for voters and political parties campaigning to follow, which can all be viewed on the UEC's website. The UEC has close collaboration with the Ministry of Information for the sake of better outreach to the public in timely manner with regard to the reliable information on the elections. Moreover, the UEC is closely cooperating with the Myanmar Press Council to further proliferate the news; with civil society organizations to inform people of voter education in the states and regions; and with Myanmar Music Association to produce songs and short films related to elections. More importantly, the UEC has been making great efforts to ensure there is no conflict arising from hate speech, disinformation and misinformation in close collaboration with Myanmar Press Council and the Facebook Team.

### **Development of the country's ICT industry and media sector**

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Myanmar has laid down and implemented the policy framework for the development of the country's telecommunication/ ICT industry since 2013 as part of the Government's Economic Reforms Initiatives by facilitating competition of two local operators and two international operators in the sector in order to make the telecom services available to the public at affordable prices across the country. Myanmar's telecoms sector has achieved a remarkable development with (208)

operating licenses for various telecoms services, including (4) Nationwide Telecommunications Licences issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Myanmar. The telecommunications sector in Myanmar has grown rapidly with over (157%) Mobile Penetration (SIM Card Penetration), over (96%) total population coverage and noticeable improvement in both affordability and quality of service. In addition to the mobile operators offering mobile broadband access, there are several Internet Service Providers providing fixed wireless Internet and fiber optic connections. Moreover, the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Myanmar developed the Universal Service Strategy for Myanmar (2019 to 2023) in January 2020 with the aim to connecting the remaining unconnected, and provide communications services to those areas.

With regard to the development of Myanmar's media sector over 8 years, the media and press censorship had been abolished since 2012. Moreover, private daily newspapers were allowed to publish, which resulted the formation of media associations and the press council. More discussions and training courses on media have been organized while media personnel have been involved in drafting media laws. Furthermore, to reinforce the balance among the legislative, executive, judicial powers and the media that are the four pillars of democracy, the discussions have been continuously held between media personnel and the officials from the administrative, the legislative and the judiciary sectors with the aim to promoting balanced cooperation among them, which will help providing reliable information to the people as well as strengthening press freedom.

In addition, the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference on Media Development was also held in Nay Pyi Taw in August 2020 under the theme of "Media and Elections in Myanmar", which focused on the role of media and their duties in election with several topics on the elections and safety for journalists, practical use of codes of conduct during elections, elections in the age of social media, and election news, challenges and resolutions in ethnic areas and the states and regions.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Myanmar wishes to reiterate its full support to the Department of Global Communications and remains committed to working with all Member States and stakeholders to achieve our common goal of establishing a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order for strengthening peace and international understanding. We commend the work of the Department of Global Communications, which is the public voice of the United Nations and responsible for disseminating the accurate, credible, reliable and timely information to the global

audience. We remain confident that the Department of Global Communications discharges its duties with professional integrity.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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