

Statement by Myanmar Delegation

at Sixth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Agenda item.5. Promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange

27-11-2013

Madame Chair,

- My delegation is taking the floor to provide this forum with the objective information about Myanmar in connection with Agenda item.5 [“Promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange”.]
- Myanmar is a country where the right to religious freedom is fully guaranteed. Although Buddhism is the religion of the majority of its people, article 362 of the State Constitution clearly states that the Union also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as the religions existing in the Union on the day of its taking effect.
- Therefore, in Myanmar, wherever we look at throughout the country, we can see Buddhists pagodas, Christian churches, Islamic mosques and Hindu temples existing side by side. [We cannot see a similar landscape or skyscape in many other countries. Myanmar is the first among equals where citizens, irrespective of their faiths, fully enjoy their religious rights.]
- My delegation would like to take this opportunity to brief this forum about the efforts being made by Myanmar [on the promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange throughout the country.]
- Advocacy to promote understanding and accept peaceful and harmonious co-existence between the communities of different faiths or races is one of the highest priorities of the government. To this end, President U Thein Sein met with the Interfaith Friendship Group two times this year and called on the people to pay a mutual respect to different faiths, to fight against hatred and to join hands with the government, the civil society and community-elders in further strengthening the interfaith dialogue.
- In October this year, an interfaith conference was organized in Yangon with the participation of the leaders of five religions. President U Thein Sein acknowledges the energetic efforts of the religious leaders by sending a message to the conference.

- It is encouraging to observe that, these days, the interfaith dialogues are taking place more frequently across all spectrums of the society in Myanmar.
- Due to these endeavours, we have now been able to prevent the recurrence of inter-communal violence. The situation has now returned to normalcy. Strict and stern actions are being taken against the perpetrators without any discrimination whatsoever.
- It is very important that the international community fully understand the true situation of our country. The international community should not listen to the people who are maliciously saying negative things about Myanmar. Actually, they are doing a disservice to our on-going endeavours of promoting interfaith dialogues in the country.
- It is regrettable that in the earlier session of this forum, some speakers fictitiously use the word "Rohingya". We reiterate our strong objection to the use of this fictitious term which has never existed in our national history. When it comes to the matter of citizenship, we have the Myanmar Citizenship Law of 1982, and the rights to citizenship is always considered in accordance with this law. This law was born out of necessity, due to our geography, without targeting on any particular group.
- I thank you.
