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Agenda item 2

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Note verbale dated 18 June 2016 from the Permanent Mission of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and has the honour to attach hereto the preliminary response from Myanmar regarding the High Commissioner's report on the "Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" to the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council.

In this context, the Permanent Mission has further the honour to request that the present note verbal and the annex thereto* may kindly be circulated as a document of the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council, under agenda item 2.

* Circulated as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex

[English only]

Preliminary response by Myanmar to the draft report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the “Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar” to the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council

1. The report of the High Commissioner is focused primarily on the Muslim Community in Rakhine State. It contains less information on other minorities.
2. Accordingly, efforts by the new government to address the situation in Rakhine State are provided hereunder:
3. In general, some of the elements in the report are similar to those contained in the report entitled “Situation of human rights in Myanmar” by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. Therefore, in our view, duplication of this nature should have been avoided, taking into account the precious time and resources of UN Member States.
4. Since the new government took state responsibilities on 30 March 2016, it has been addressing the situation in Rakhine State, as one of the highest priorities on its agenda.
5. As development is fundamental for sustainable peace and stability in Rakhine State, the Government formed the Central Committee on the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development of Rakhine State on 30 May 2016, with the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as its Chairperson. The Central Committee is tasked to bring peace, stability and development to all people in Rakhine State.
6. The four working committees were also formed on the same day to ensure successful implementation of the objectives of the Central Committee. These are: 1) the Security, Peace and Stability and the Rule of Law Working Committee; 2) the Immigration and Citizenship Scrutinizing Working Committee; 3) the Settlement and Socio-economic Development Working Committee; 4) the Working Committee on Cooperation with UN Agencies and International Organizations.
7. On 2 June, the Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and Union Minister for Border Affairs, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, accompanied by several Union Ministers, the Rakhine State Chief Minister and other responsible officials, visited Kyaukpyu and Thandwe Townships. On his tour to Kyaukpyu Township, the Vice-Chairman met with regional officials and the local populace and stressed that development of Rakhine State is the key to peace and stability and development of the entire nation. He also highlighted that there is a need to be cautious about external instigation and disturbances in the region. Thereafter, they visited IDP camps in Kanyintaw and Kyauktalon and discussed with officials and local people the work of the subcommittees to ensure peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.
8. The Union Ministers for Border Affairs; State Counsellor’s Office; Education; Health; Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement; and Labour, Immigration and Population also met and explained to the local people their respective missions on contributing to the overall development of Rakhine State.
9. Citizenship verification is central to addressing the issue in Rakhine State. Therefore, a verification process, commencing with the issuance of Identity Cards for

National Verification (NVC) has been launched in Kyaukpyu, Myaepon and Ponnakyun since 7 June 2016. This process is conducted within the framework of the 1982 Citizenship Law. For clarity's sake, we would like to stress that the process is not limited to Rakhine State alone. The same process is also being undertaken or will be undertaken in other regions and states which share common borders with our neighbouring countries.

10. The Government of Myanmar is doing its utmost to find a tangible and durable solution to the issue in Rakhine State, while taking into consideration the concerns expressed by local people and the international community.

11. Since the issue at hand is of a sensitive nature, the government is tackling it carefully. Peace and stability is of paramount importance to the overall development of Rakhine State and to all people who reside there. The use of certain nomenclature would amount to adding fuel to the fire. It would only heighten the tension and widen the rift between the two communities, thereby derailing the government's good intentions and constructive endeavours.

12. The situation in Rakhine State is complex. Therefore, the new government is taking swift and firm actions to ameliorate it. These actions will begin to bear fruit in due course. However, Myanmar needs more time to find durable solutions in this regard.

13. The resolution entitled "Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" in no way help find a durable solution to Rakhine situation. Therefore, the international community, other than tabling such a resolution, should pragmatically and constructively engage Myanmar, with genuine understanding, together with the provision of humanitarian and development assistance.
