



# MYANMAR

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**Statement**

**by**

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**International Organizations and Economic Department**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar**

**and Representative of the Union of Myanmar**

**in the Third Committee**

**on**

**Agenda Item ( 68 ) : Report of the Human Rights Council**

**at**

**the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**( New York : 1 November, 2006 )**

Mr. Chairman.

First of all, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the President of the newly established Human Rights Council, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico for his able leadership in guiding the work of the Council.

Since its establishment this year, the Council has already held two regular sessions and two special sessions. Yet, the newborn Council has a long way to go in the months ahead to address the new challenges in line with the direction given by the General Assembly.

The good work that the previous Human Rights Commission had been doing was undermined by politicization, double standards, selectivity and lack of impartiality with the resultant loss of efficiency, effectiveness and credibility. The growing incidents of misuses of human rights mechanisms by some powerful countries for political purposes led to mistrust and confrontation diminishing the cause of human rights.

We are, therefore, very much encouraged by the establishment of the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. Many countries place high hopes that the establishment of the Council will ensure universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in dealing with the human rights issues, and the elimination of double standards and politicization.

Mr. Chairman,

With the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 60/251, we all have demonstrated our commitments to adhere to the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation. This is with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development.

However, it is regrettable to witness in this Committee that certain countries continue to address country-specific situations to politicize the human rights issue and are working to present country specific resolutions on some selected countries. Old habits die hard. But we must change this mindset. We must not repeat the mistake of the previous Commission and must take a fresh and

innovative approach in dealing with the human rights issues strictly adhering to the set of rules laid down by the General Assembly resolution 60/251.

Mr. Chairman,

In transforming the human rights mechanism, it is important to review the existing system of special procedures maintained by the defunct Commission. In this regard, the Council has already decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group to formulate concrete recommendations on the issue.

In this review process, the effectiveness of maintaining country-specific Special Rapporteurs or Independent Experts should be given a thorough consideration. The number of Special Rapporteurs and experts under the previous Commission were also growing. At present, there are 28 thematic rapporteurs and 13 country mandate-holders putting a heavy strain on the scarce resources.

We hardly need to stress here that factual, objective and unbiased reporting is of crucial importance in dealing with country specific human rights situations. Reports based on unreliable sources and political bias coming from the Special Rapporteurs could not only be misleading but also unjustly damage the image of the country concerned.

I would like to point out that some of the reports of the Special Rapporteurs not only contains glaring errors and inaccuracies but wrongful assertions, contrary to the real situation prevailing on the ground. Let me cite a few examples.

The recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar mentions that the rates of HIV/AIDS and TB infection remain among the highest in Asia. This is a glaring mistake. Both the reports of UNDP and UNAIDS clearly show that the infection rate in Myanmar is only 1.2 percent, which is lower than that of its neighbour, widely regarded as a model in fighting HIV/AIDS. The Special Rapporteur also made a wrongful and alarming assertion that the outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza in March/April in Myanmar poses a potential pandemic threat of serious concern in the country. It is completely contrary to the positive and encouraging statement made by Dr. Nabarro, Senior UN Coordinator for avian and human influenza, that the Government has worked

effectively with the international community to stop its spread and that the Government is ready to handle any future outbreaks.

Again, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, in his recent oral presentation, made a groundless observation that the situation of the right to food is precarious in Myanmar. The recent FAO's food security statistics however portrays that Myanmar has a low level of under-nourishment. It points out that the under-nourishment is only 5 percent of the country's population, which is even lower than Southeast Asia's proportion of 12 percent and Asia and Pacific's 16 percent. The FAO's report also mentions that food supply in Myanmar has improved since the beginning of the 1990s.

The mentioning such glaring errors in the reports without verifying the information should be put to a stop. It is crucial for mandate-holders to maintain their independent status in order for them to fulfill their mandate impartially free from any kind of pressure.

Mr. Chairman,

The Human Rights Council should address all human rights issues through a universal periodic review process without politicization and double standards. Moreover, the Council should not confine its focus only on civil and political rights. It must also pay special attention to the economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. Selection of issues for inclusion in the agenda of the Council should be made in a fair and balanced manner.

Thank you Mr. Chairman..

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