Statement by Dr. San San Aye, Director General for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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Bangkok

Agenda Item 2: Review of the progress and remaining challenges in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Respected Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Government and people of Republic of Myanmar, I would like to extend our warm greetings to all those present in this session and express our gratitude for this opportunity to present our achievements, critical issues, future challenges and responses in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

We would also like to express our gratitude to UN Women Myanmar for its support to prepare the BPFA review report.

Dear Chairperson,

Myanmar, submitted its first Beijing Report this year which provided opportunity for the government, development partners and civil society organizations to look back into past five years of BPFA implementation the achievements, gains and challenges. The process of review also provided opportunity to bring together myriad of actors from Civil
Society, Women Activists and Advocates, Development Partners and different Government Agencies together to jointly assess and build consensus for the answers to the guiding questions that were provided. Hence, we believe the views in this statement reflects voices of all Civil Society and Government alike.

I would like to reiterate that the Government of Myanmar is committed to implement the Beijing Platform for Action together with other international commitments related to gender equality and women’s rights. The commitment towards BPFA is reflected in the fact that “The National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022),” adopted the 12 critical areas of concern of BPFA and identified related local issues, activities and research and data gaps.

In the past five years, Myanmar has made important achievements in a) setting up a nation-wide multi-stakeholder gender mechanism; b) increasing the number of women in decision-making positions; and c) integrating gender in long-term national development plans, e.g. the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan. These achievements form an important base to work towards further progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Myanmar National Committee on Women, led by the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement was reformed including the leading Civil Society Organizations and important Government Departments. This committee is the highest national level committee
that oversees NSPAW implementation, ensures alignment to international norms, values and commitments of gender equality and overall monitoring and reporting of National and International commitments. “The women committees” similar structures with similar compositions have been established in all States/Regions, District and Township level.

For effective Aid and Development Coordination to integrate gender in all sectoral work, a high level Sector Coordination Group on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment was formed in 2017 under State Counselor’s office.

For technical support, coordination and planning four technical working groups were established in the priority areas which includes areas such as- Gender Mainstreaming, Political and Economic Participation, Violence Against Women and Women, Peace and Security. These are highly inclusive groups comprised of relevant government departments, DPs, Civil Society Organizations and experts.

Within the Upper and lower houses- the Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws, women committees were established.

2015 elections saw the highest percentage of female candidates and same election resulted in doubling the percentage of female Members of Parliament (10%). The Union Election Commission is committed to raise women’s representation and has endorsed its gender policy and established internal mechanism to engender electoral process.
Over the years, the % of women’s participation in peace process and dialogues has also increased. In the Union Peace conference held in 2018, women’s participation was 17% and Myanmar in its Peace Accord has target to reach minimum of 30% representation. The nationwide ceasefire agreement has following gender provisions 1) the principle of non-discrimination based on gender and 2) prevention of sexual violence against women and 3) inclusion of women in the political dialogues.

As the third area of significant progress Myanmar would like to share that in the “Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan” which serves as a blueprint for the country’s development till 2030, gender has been recognized as one of the major principles and cross cutting issue. There are total of 46 National Indicators related to Gender which is 17% of the total indicators. 30 of these 46 Gender Indicators are SDG gender related indicators.

The BPFA work was largely driven by different actors on their own will and hence some areas such as Gender and Media, Gender and Environment were less covered. Realizing the importance for Gender Responsive Budgeting, Myanmar is committed to initiate GRB process at the National scale as a priority task in the coming years.

**Dear Chairperson and Delegates,**

Besides the above identified challenges and future plans, Myanmar is committed to fulfill its obligation under the number of international
conventions and agreements that it is signatory to, it recognizes CEDAW as an important instrument to protect human rights of women. In this regard, Myanmar has drafted its first Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women PoVAW Law, Prostitution Law, to protect the rights of prostituted women, Child Rights law that covers Girl child right extensively and Anti-trafficking law. Myanmar will operationalize these laws once they are endorsed.

To protect and prevent sexual violence against women, Myanmar signed Joint Communique and has drafted the joint action place for its implementation involving important stakeholders such as security and justice sectors.

Myanmar strengthened its VAW response mechanism by establishing One Stop Women Support centers, providing free counseling and health services, cash transfer for transportation, shelter homes and skill trainings for rehabilitation etc. It has plans to further strengthen its VAW data in the coming years and services to the survivors of violence.

Myanmar’s Social Protection Strategy pursues a life cycle approach with pregnancy, childbirth and antenatal care forming important part of the strategy and schemes like Maternal and Child Health care and nutrition, Maternity and young child cash transfer to increase infant and young child nutrition, free nutrition program for pregnant and lactating women and assistance to mothers with multiple births (three or more)
have been launched as pilots. In future, Myanmar plans to expand these schemes and coverage.

**Dear Chairperson and Respected Delegates,**

In concluding, I would also like to take this opportunity to remind the chairperson and respected delegates that Myanmar is an emerging democratic country and what other member states have achieved in past 5-6 decades we are trying to achieve in past few years. We have a long way to go and changes to be made but we are committed to accelerating the processes.

We would like to reaffirm our commitment to BPFA in the coming years with systematic, costed operational plan in place and in partnership with wide array of actors.

**Thank you**.