

Intervention by H.E. Mr. Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary of India at the Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Secretary General on Myanmar in New York on September 28, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Secretary General, for convening the Meeting of Group of Friends on Myanmar.

Mr. Secretary General,

We fully share your assessment that the political landscape of Myanmar has been significantly transformed during the last one year. In October last year, we received President Thein Sein and were encouraged to hear of some of the plans of the government. We congratulated the government and people of Myanmar in April this year on the peaceful and smooth manner in which bye-elections were held. When our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Myanmar in May this year, he again conveyed our felicitations to the President of Myanmar on the reform measures taken by the Myanmar government towards greater democratization and national reconciliation. He also commended the efforts underway on political, economic and social reform that also included peace agreements with several groups and dialogue with various political parties including the National League for Democracy. The participation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the Parliamentary process in recent months has made it more inclusive and it is very welcome that she has assumed chairmanship of the Rule of Law Committee of Myanmar Parliament.

As a close and friendly neighbour, India remains committed to extending all possible assistance and support to the process of national reconciliation and the further strengthening of democracy in Myanmar. We are facilitating Parliamentary exchanges between the two countries by sharing our experience. We have begun a program of introduction to and training on Parliamentary practices and procedures for members of the Myanmar Parliament and Parliamentary Secretariat officials. As many as 80 members will be covered by this program.

As Myanmar confronts multifarious challenges ahead the international community as a whole needs to extend all possible support to the efforts of the government in a spirit of trust and cooperation. The UN agencies and international financial institutions have the opportunity now where they could carry out the entire gamut of their developmental activities. We would also urge that unilateral sanctions should be immediately phased out so that Myanmar's economic development can be accelerated. India has consistently emphasized the path of engagement with Myanmar to encourage the advancement of national reconciliation as well socio-economic development.

We are working closely with Myanmar on various infrastructure and other development cooperation projects. We have given particularly attention to capacity building and Human Resource Development. We believe Myanmar could play a great role in

expanding our engagement into ASEAN. We look forward to Myanmar's planned Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014.

In respect of recent developments in Rakhine state, we have noted that the Government of Myanmar has taken steps towards restoration of law and order and ensuring peace and stability in the areas affected by the violence and in meeting the needs of relief and rehabilitation of all the affected communities. The government has also set up a 27 member Investigation Commission comprising people from different walks of life, including members of different religious faiths and political parties, to enquire into the real cause for incidents and to make recommendations. The Government of Myanmar has also demonstrated willingness to cooperate with the international community. We welcome these efforts. The Government of India has also extended assistance of US\$ 200,000 towards immediate relief for all the affected. Representatives of all communities have benefitted from this assistance.

We believe that the Good Offices should continue in a manner that supplements and strengthens Myanmar's own efforts. We will continue to play a constructive role in this process in consultation with other like-minded countries.

Perhaps, time has also come for the Group to consider whether our Meeting should be with the participation of Myanmar. A dialogue on development which will bring in the presence of Myanmar may be the best way forward. I would therefore, join in the sentiments expressed by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia in regard to the annual resolution in the Third Committee.

Thank you.

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