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Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Press Release Team

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4th Waning of Waso, 1375 ME

(26th July, 2013)

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been striving with might and main to build a new peaceful, modernized and democratic nation in accordance with the desire of the entire people.
2. In line with the State Constitution, all citizens of Myanmar have the right to religious freedom of choice in Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism. Throughout history, there has been peaceful co-existence and harmony among different religious groups.
3. Based on a crime which occurred in May 2012 in Rakhine State, series of violence between the two communities in the months of June and October have caused dismay to the entire people of Myanmar. In March, 2013, an incident of violence occurred in Meiktila in Mandalay Region which was sparked by a quarrel among the seller and buyer leading to clashes between groups and series of violence in a few townships in Bago Region. Also in May, 2013, an incident of violence broke out in Lashio in the northern Shan State.
4. The Government of Myanmar took immediate measures to put an end to these incidents of violence and to ensure the prevalence of law and order within a short period of time. In doing so, the Government not only paid serious attention to avoid using excessive force but also exerted legal measures on any person who committed the violence. Moreover, those who committed the crime were charged with appropriate legal actions according to the extent of crimes, regardless of their racial or religious origin. The information on the legal actions including arrests, verdicts and trials has already been mentioned in the State newspapers.
5. The Government of Myanmar, in collaboration with the Ministries concerned, the Rakhine State Government, the United Nations agencies, INGOs and NGOs, has provided necessary humanitarian assistance to the affected people without discrimination of religion or race. Provision of assistance, which was channelled through the

governments of donor countries were equitably distributed to both communities. Out of 960 houses and 1443 quarters to be constructed by the Union Government in Rakhine State, a total of 945 houses and 1413 quarters have been completed and these have been occupied by the affected people. Likewise, out of 937 quarters to be constructed by the United Nations and international organizations, a total of 538 units have been completed while all houses totaling 282 units have been constructed. Measures are continuing for resettlement and rehabilitation of the people who lost their homes.

6. The Government of Myanmar, civil organizations, leaders of different religious groups are fully aware that trust and harmony between the Buddhists and the Muslims are of paramount importance for the lasting peace among the people, and hence, have paid serious attention to this issue. Equally important as the right to freedom of worship in Myanmar, all communities should preserve mutual respect, understanding, empathy and patience. Moreover, all should oppose hostilities of religious extremism and stand against those who are instigating for the escalation of religious divergence and instability.
7. Today, although stability has been restored in Myanmar, certain organizations both at home and abroad are portraying as if there exists severe religious and racial discrimination. All should be cognizant of the fact that such fabrications will further complicate the situation.
8. Upholding the tradition of high dignity of Myanmar in which all citizens and national races have been living with unity and amity, without any discrimination of religion and ethnicity throughout history, we must continue to maintain peaceful co-existence in the future. At the same time, all citizens are solemnly urged to strive for the successful establishment of a new system of politics and economy bearing it in mind as their main duty.
9. The Government of Myanmar will continue to work in collaboration with benevolent States, the United Nations, international organizations and also well-wishers from home for the resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected people and ultimately for the lasting peace and harmony while reaffirming its commitment to religious and racial non-discrimination.