Ministerial Statement to be delivered by His Excellency Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Government of Republic of Union of Myanmar

at 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, AMCDRR in Mongolia  (3-6) July, 2018

Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives from Government of Mongolia,
Distinguished Representatives from Respective Governments and Non-Government Organizations
Distinguished Representatives from United Nations Organizations and our Partner Organizations
Invited guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mingalabar; Good Morning,

It is auspicious to all of us since we are gathered here today to accentuate our firm commitments and efforts on disaster risk management strategies at the national, regional and global levels. For this great opportunity, allow me to convey my profound thanks to the host, the Government of Mongolia for its warmest welcome and hospitable arrangements provided to us. We shall also not forget the incredible contribution of UNISDR to make this Asian Ministerial Conference a great success.
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In light of progress and achievements that Myanmar has made since the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030, I would like to discuss some salient points across four priority areas of SFDRR from our country experiences.

In the first place, I would like to touch upon strengthening risk understanding and awareness. Regarding this, the development of national guidance on vulnerability and risk assessment is underway and it encompasses standardized methodology and tools for risk assessment measures in Myanmar. Moreover, risk modeling for Ayeyarwady Region, which is at high risk of natural disasters, is being developed and will be replicated to other parts of country, which has similar local context. With regards to risk awareness, we are using multiple platforms including social media, mobile applications and community campaigns for raising risk awareness to various stakeholders. Since earthquake occurrence pattern has changed a lot in this year, we make extensive efforts on earthquake awareness and contingency planning in many major cities.

Secondly, in terms of disaster risk governance, we set up a national policy on disaster risk management, with the aim to ensure communities are better prepared for, swiftly and
effectively respond to, and recover from disasters, making entire society more resilient. To institutionalize this policy, Myanmar constitutes National Disaster Management Committee led by Vice President with the membership of all cabinet Ministers and Chief Ministers. Along with this central committee, twelve working committees with specified roles and responsibilities have been stipulated. The National committee along with its working committees serves as a national platform for implementation, coordination, emergency management and working very closely with sub-national disaster management committees (entities). Apart from this, Government counterparts are working hand in hand with DRR Working Group (a group of more than 60 organizations having donor bodies, UN agencies, INGOs, local CSOs) to contribute to policy, capacity building, implementations and public awareness issues. To ensure medium and long-term DRM strategies, NDMC has endorsed Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction- MAPDRR (2017) comprising with (32) priority projects for DRR and it will be a strong impetus to shaping Myanmar’s DRR landscape.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thirdly, regarding the investment on disaster risk reduction, Myanmar Government has remarkably increased national investment for DRR through engineering and non-
engineering work since 2015. Over the last two fiscal years, Government expenditure on DRM has doubled. In 2017 alone, we received 54 million USD from the World Bank as Loan, and invested in weather forecasting, emergency communication, response capacity, logistics support and resilient recovery. Moreover, as per Disaster Management Law, we have Disaster Management Fund in place with (20) Billion MMK (estimated USD 15 million) for Union Government and (1) Billion MMK (about USD 0.75 million) each for sub-national Government for overall disaster management. Additionally Union Contingency Fund with the amount of MMK (100) billion (about USD 75 million) can also be mobilized for emergency of any kind. In this fiscal year, with the use of Disaster Management Fund, we could better prepare for strong wind, drought, riverbank erosion and flood, which are the most common hazards. In addition to the already constructed (206) cyclone shelters in disaster prone areas, Government has funded over 17 billion MMK to construct (87) new multi-purpose shelters across Myanmar. All these measures are aimed at fostering readiness to and resilience against disasters.

Last but not least, in line with SFDRR priority (4), Myanmar is committed to utilizing the science and technology in DRR. In the year 2017, Myanmar became the first ASEAN country to sign the "International Charter on Space and Major
Disasters”. Now we can assess the high-resolution images during disaster to enable timely informed decisions. For that, Myanmar will put stronger effort in building capacity on use of such technology. As a national disaster management Institution, my Ministry has extended its organization and made extensive efforts to equip government and local CSOs with response capacity. We have also promoted our standby arrangements on warehousing, relief supply and logistics. Besides, we have established a new Department for Rehabilitation which will play a crucial role in materializing Build-back-better principle on ground. More importantly, national recovery guideline is under development and it will reinforce implementing resilient recovery for our communities.

With regard to the vital role of preparedness for response, allow me to share one of my experiences during the strong wind response in 2016. I asked an old woman who suffered from that disaster, the way she knew our ministry. She replied “you save lives, and you make it quick”. That word encouraged me very much because it made me realized that saving lives by responding disaster quickly and effectively became the habit of my Ministry and my staff. It also led me to strive to make that habit better and stronger.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Taking this opportunity, let me reiterate the theme of this
year Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction “Preventing Disaster Risk: Protecting Sustainable Development” and the fact that Development that does not take risk into account, cannot be sustainable. So, Myanmar with a high potential for socio-economic development immensely needs integration of disaster risk reduction into national budgeting for sectoral and local development planning. Furthermore, Myanmar has strongly committed to achieving Sendai Target E and in this case, implementation of MAPDRR will be of high priority and will require the resources and technical support from the international community in the coming years.

In conclusion, for developing countries like us, establishment of resilient infrastructure can add more value not only in terms of money but also in terms of protecting lives and properties. And I strongly recognize the value of international partnership and cooperation to make this critical area better. So, in my opinion, Sendai target (F) is the most fundamental and important to meeting the other six targets and to building climate and disaster resilient development.

Thank you.