



MYANMAR

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**Statement by Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations
at the General Debate of the Annual session of the UNICEF Executive Board
(New York, 13 June 2023)**

Madam President,

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation to you and the Bureau for convening this annual session. I also wish to thank the Executive Director, Ms. Catherine Russell for her opening statement. Myanmar echoes her remarks on the importance of putting children at the center of progressing SDGs and the climate action agenda.

Madam President,

We commend UNICEF for its work in my country, Myanmar. It includes among others preventing gender-based violence, monitoring grave children's rights violations, and providing their access to mental health and psychosocial support. We are grateful that UNICEF is also providing access to safe and temporary learning spaces for conflict-affected children.

Madam President,

While we are grateful to UNICEF and the international donors for providing these services even under this difficult circumstance, we all should remain cognizant of the root causes of difficulty in implementation of the social and humanitarian programs that UNICEF has been offering.

They are the direct consequences of the military attempted illegal coup and the junta's indiscriminate violence against its own people, including children. Its targeted attacks on public infrastructures from schools, hospitals to religious buildings are devastating further on the life of children.

Children in Myanmar have no choice but to resort to learning in makeshift camps or bunkers in conflict-affected areas to hide from unabated aerial attacks from the junta. Since the illegal coup, 3.7 million children remained out of school.

Madam President,

In addition to disrupted education, children in Myanmar are also deprived of the right to routine immunizations. Between 2016 and 2020, Myanmar's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) became more comprehensive to include a diverse range of vaccines. According to WHO/ UNICEF Joint Reporting Form on Immunization (JRF), vaccination coverage for preventable diseases for children was greater than 80% even during the pandemic in 2020. Unfortunately, following the illegal military coup, EPI was suspended in many areas across Myanmar and the immunization programs have been nearly non-functional for more than two years. During the past year, nationwide measles vaccination coverage has dropped from 91 percent to 34 percent.

Madam President,

The military continues to commit grave violations of children's rights by torturing, arbitrarily detaining and using children as human shields. Its disproportionate attacks on civilians have caused more than 3,600 civilian casualties, including more than 400 casualties of children since the coup. More than 1.5 million people have been displaced and 5.8 million children are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, **Madam President**, the rights of children in Myanmar remain grim as the military continues to hold their future hostage. Their safe access to education, right to learning and basic health care services have been constrained by the military's "four cuts" strategy. Urgent, principled and coordinated actions from the international community are needed to protect the children of Myanmar, hold the military accountable for its violence against children and to end its pervasive culture of impunity.

I thank you.