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PRESS RELEASE

1. Since the new administration took office in March 2016 in Myanmar, finding a sustainable resolution for peace, harmony and development in Rakhine State has been one of the highest priorities and concrete measures are put in place to materialize it. In this context, Myanmar has been taking a series of measures to address the concern expressed by the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights in the Press Release issued on 16 December 2016, and to promote peace, security and development of the people in Rakhine State.
2. In the aftermath of the October 9 attacks on border police posts in Maungtaw, the security environment remains highly sensitive and thus unfettered access to the region has to be carefully balanced against it. Meanwhile, international humanitarian partners including WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, ICRC, Malteser, MSF, Bridge Asia Japan-BAJ, CARE Myanmar and Action Contre La Faim-ACF are providing humanitarian assistance to all affected people in Maungtaw. To widen media access to the region, an independent 13 members local and foreign media group will be visiting Maungtaw from 19-21 December 2016.
3. Myanmar took the initiative to host ASEAN Foreign Ministers Retreat on 19 December 2016 with the spirit of ASEAN unity and solidarity to brief fellow ASEAN family members on its efforts to address the complex issue.
4. In response to violation of human rights allegations, a national high-level investigation commission led by Vice President U Myint Swe has been formed to probe into, among others, verification of such allegations. The Commission shall submit its report to the President by 31 January 2017.
5. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by former Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan visited Rakhine State in November and December 2016 and met with people from all communities from the affected areas. The Commission was mandated for 12 months and an interim report will be submitted by the end of January, 2017.
6. All such national measures require time and space to run their courses until they are fully exhausted. In the meantime, Myanmar will continue to extend its cooperation as national circumstances permit with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in a best possible manner such as longer stay for three human rights officers operating already in the country, and visits to Rakhine State as in the past.

Dated: 18 December 2016.
