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António Guterres
UN Secretary General

25 March 2019

Excellency,

We write to welcome your initiative to review United Nations operations in Myanmar, and to strongly urge you ensure that the review is open, transparent and that its findings and recommendations are made public.

Given the gravity of the abuses in Myanmar, the review offers an important opportunity to establish “whether everything possible to prevent or mitigate the unfolding crises was done, identifying lessons learned and good practices, making recommendations as appropriate, including on accountability, and enabling more effective work in the future”, as recommended by the International Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar.¹ To this end, we urge you to ensure that:

- **The review is open and transparent, and its terms of reference, final report and findings are made public;**
- **The review team has sufficient resources – human, financial and technical – to conduct its work.** We encourage you to instruct all UN agencies to cooperate fully with the inquiry, including by providing access to relevant information and documents;
- **The review team consults with a wide range of stakeholders**, both inside and outside of Myanmar. Any current and former UN staff, as well as other organizations including INGOs and local NGOs, who provide information to the inquiry must be able to do so without risk of reprisal.
- **The UN reaffirms its commitment to the Human Rights up Front initiative** and takes immediate action to develop a comprehensive plan to more effectively mainstream human rights protection among all UN staff working on Myanmar, both in country and at headquarters. This should include detailed timelines for implementation, clearly identified indicators of successful implementation of the initiative, and the development of a plan for UN agencies to warn the UN Security Council to prevent and respond to serious human rights violations.

As you know, a similar inquiry was undertaken in 2012 on events in Sri Lanka. The public report that came out of that inquiry set an important precedent, and sent a strong message on the UN’s commitment to transparency and accountability within its own system. It also led to the Human Rights up Front initiative, which was an important step towards strengthening the UN’s human rights pillar and making the body more responsive during crises. We believe that the review on Myanmar offers an important opportunity to assess progress since 2012 and to look at the UN system as a whole to ensure that it is fit for purpose and able to respond quickly and effectively to prevent grave abuses. At a time when the protection and promotion of human rights around the world is under increasing threat, a strong, transparent, effective and accountable UN is essential. We would be happy to discuss these important issues with you further.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration,

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Office
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¹ *Report of the detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar*, A/HRC/39/CRP.2, 17 September 2018, para. 1706.

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