ITEM 4: Oral update of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the independent inquiry into the involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar since 2011

HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE AT THE HEART OF UN OPERATIONS IN MYANMAR AND BEYOND

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Madam President,

Amnesty International thanks the Assistant Secretary-General for his update and recognizes the Secretary-General’s leadership in commissioning the internal review of UN operations in Myanmar (the Rosenthal Report), releasing it publicly, and accepting the recommendations. We regret, however, the limited scope of the inquiry which did not meet the Council’s call for a “comprehensive” investigation, and therefore encourage the Council to remain seized of this issue.¹

The report prepared by Gert Rosenthal made clear the need for bolder leadership by the UN, and greater internal accountability, to ensure human rights are truly put “up front” across all operations. In this regard, we hope that the Secretary-General’s recent call to action will translate to a genuine, effective, and coordinated UN action plan that addresses ongoing human rights crises around the world, including in Myanmar, developed in close consultation with local and international civil society. We call on the Secretary-General to publish annual updates on progress in the implementation of that action plan; as well as on the alarmingly similar recommendations made in both the Rosenthal and the Petrie reports.

Unfortunately, despite the Rosenthal report, we have yet to see a significant change in the UN’s approach in Myanmar, and continue to observe a failure to speak out, and to speak with one voice, on human rights in the country. The situation is made worse by the Myanmar Government’s refusal to co-operate with the UN human rights mechanisms. At present, we regret that OHCHR has had only sporadic and unpredictable access to the country posing serious challenges to the implementation of their mandate.

Madam President,

The Rosenthal report identifies one of the core issues to be “accountability, in terms of the United Nations actions – or inactions – regarding the nature and scope of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law that occurred (and continue to occur) in Myanmar”.

We would like to ask the Assistant Secretary-General if and how the Secretary-General intends to better guarantee accountability for the continuing failures within the UN system – both individual and institutional – to ensure protection of human rights, and prevent the same mistakes from being repeated?

Thank you, Madam. President.