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Thursday, 19 December 2019

Speech delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi about experiences of oral proceedings at International Court of Justice to public

(18th December 2019, Nay Pyi Taw)

AT the public sitting of the International Court of Justice held on Wednesday 11 December 2019, I said that it was an honour to appear as agent of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. It was indeed an honour for my delegation and myself to represent our country at the ICJ, but it was also a grave responsibility as the case submitted by The Gambia accused Myanmar of the most serious of crimes, genocide. Our delegation discharged this responsibility to the best of our ability, constantly keeping in mind the honour of our nation, the aspirations of our people, the future of our Union, and our obligations as a member of the international community.

We built our defence firmly on a foundation of honesty and respect for the rule of law, never losing sight of our ultimate goal, which is sustainable peace and harmony among all the communities in our country. Our legal team understood our concerns as well as our aspirations and I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the outstanding legal expertise, dedication to justice and good will that they brought to our case. Acting as our Counsel and Advocates were:

Mr. Christopher Staker, member of the Bar of England and Wales,

Mr. William Schabas, OC,



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivering a speech about her experiences of oral proceedings at International Court of Justice to public. PHOTO:MNA

MRIA, Professor of International Law, Middlesex University and Professor of International Criminal Law and Human Rights, Leiden University,

Miss Phoebe Okowa, Professor of Public International Law, Queen Mary University of London, Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Every country passes through difficult times and Myanmar is no exception. Such trials provide us with an opportunity to assess our strengths and weaknesses, to reinforce one and rectify the other. To grow and develop, we need the courage and wisdom to face challenges honestly and constructively. The challenge that we are now facing at the ICJ stems back not just to the events of the last few years but to the missed opportunities in decades past to address the social, economic and political ills of Rakhine squarely. The past cannot be changed but we can make the best of the present to enable us to build a happy future.

I have often said that no national enterprise of any note can be successfully accomplished without the willing cooperation of the people. And such cooperation, to be truly effective, must be based on a sound understanding of the issues involved. The support of our people, given generously and unquestioningly,

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