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**STATEMENT
OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
HE MR IYAD AMEEN MADANI**

**TO
OIC CONTACT GROUP
ON THE ROHINGYA MUSLIM MINORITY IN MYANMAR**

**ON THE SIDELINES OF ACM
29 SEPTEMBER 2015,
NEW YORK, USA**

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished Members,**

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to this meeting of the Ministerial Contact Group on the Rohingya of Myanmar taking place on the sidelines of the Annual Coordination Meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers in New York.

Since the last meeting of this Contact Group on the sidelines of the 42nd CFM in Kuwait on 28 May 2015, the immediate crises of the Rohingya boat people in the Andaman Sea has subsided. In this regard, I would like to commend the decision of Malaysia and Indonesia, to accept the boat refugees and acknowledge the support provided by other member countries to the humanitarian effort. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the suffering of the Rohingya people continues in numerous other ways and the conditions for them in Myanmar remains serious.

The Myanmar authorities continue to present obstacles to the full recognition of the Rohingya and their right to nationality. The revocation by the Myanmar government of “white” identify cards in May has left hundreds of thousands of Rohingya in a tenuous situation and vulnerable to expulsion. Alternative identification cards which have been proposed still require the Rohingya to deny their identity and register as ‘*Bengali*’, which only exacerbates and prolongs the discrimination.

I would like therefore to underline the need for the OIC Member States to intensify their efforts, bi-laterally and at the international level, to wield pressure on Myanmar to halt its segregation treatment against the Rohingya Muslims and reinstate their citizenship right unequivocally. The OIC has actively engaged with the international community on this issue and at the last session

of the UN Human Rights Council, a resolution was passed on Myanmar, in close coordination between the OIC and European countries.

Also, greater efforts must be made to mobilize humanitarian relief for their benefit and find proper routes to ensure that the required aid is channeled to the people in need.

Excellencies,

At our last meeting the OIC Special Envoy for Myanmar, Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar presented his report which was adopted by this Contact Group. As part of his efforts on the ground Minister Albar has successfully established an NGO, known as *Humaniti*, which has received permission from the Myanmar authorities to operate in the country. Member States may wish to avail of this facility to channel food aid and other assistance to the needy. Minister Albar's mission remains challenging as he works with all stakeholders to promote better cooperation and coordination on humanitarian assistance, economic development and community reconciliation in Myanmar.

No doubt the situation on the ground in Myanmar is complex. But this should not deter us from working together collectively and strategically. Our member countries, particularly those in ASEAN, should use their good offices to continue to engage with the Myanmar authorities on this issue to ensure that the Rohingya attain peace, justice and the return of their rights.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to our discussions on how we can move forward in our efforts to alleviate the plight of the Rohingya Muslim minority of Myanmar.