

Thank you Madame Chair,

<<Grateful to be here>> in Rohingya

My name is Yasmin Ullah, and I am a Rohingya –an indigenous group that belongs to Arakan, Myanmar

I currently serve as the Board Chair of Alternative ASEAN Network for Burma.

As a UN Minority Fellow this year, I express my deep gratitude to have been a part of an important movement for **change** that is the fellowship programme.

My hope today is to shed light on a small part of the Rohingya struggle as a refugee community in Indonesia. As the Myanmar state has perpetrated genocide against Rohingya, **my people** have had to seek refuge in the neighbouring countries.

Last week, a number of boats arrived in Northern Sumatra carrying **over 1,000 Rohingya refugees** increasing the number of Rohingya refugees in the country **by 33%**. These desperate journeys place **heavy burden** on the **ill-equipped** ASEAN infrastructure. It leaves a gaping hole in the Rohingya crisis response and further fuels the hate campaign against Rohingya.

For the existing refugee children, though educational opportunities are in place, their access is **never truly secure** simply because they are **seen as refugees first** before they are seen as **children**. If we fail Rohingya children, can we truly build a cohesive ASEAN?

For socioeconomic empowerment of Rohingya in ASEAN, I implore relevant stakeholders and states to take the following measures.

1. To build a strong cohesive society, all stakeholders **must invest** in countering the hateful narratives towards Rohingya and other minority groups in ASEAN through **meaningful dialogue, influencing narrative change** and **centering Rohingya** in all discussions related to us.
2. To ensure that Rohingya in Indonesia and other host countries become **self-reliant**, relevant stakeholders **must push** for Rohingya **socio-economic inclusion** at all levels, especially the right to education for children, capacity building for the Rohingya community overall, and access to livelihood.

Thank you.