STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO MS JANET JACKSON, UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR (A.I.) IN MYANMAR

(YANGON: 20 April 2016). I was deeply saddened by the tragedy which unfolded on 19 April when a boat locally reported to be transporting more than 60 people capsized in rough waters near Thae Chaung in Sittwe Township.

The toll now estimated to be 21 dead, including 9 children, is expected to rise as there are still a number of people unaccounted for. At least 6 injured people received treatment at Sittwe General Hospital and Thet Kae Pyin health clinic. UN and NGO staff on the ground have provided support in the transport of injured people and have been providing extra medical capacity to the Thet Kae Pyin health clinic. The UN has been in contact with local authorities to follow up on this incident and to confirm the number of fatalities and casualties.

From the information we have, the majority of the passengers on the boat were internally displaced people (IDPs) from the Sin Tet Maw camp in Pauktaw Township who were on an authorized day trip to rural Sittwe to make purchases at the market.

This accident serves as a tragic reminder of the vulnerability that many communities and families face in this area of Rakhine where their only option is to use this mode of travel in order to access markets, livelihoods, and other basic services that are essential for a dignified life.

On behalf of the United Nations, I would like to express my sympathy and offer condolences to the families and communities of the victims of this tragic accident. The United Nations will continue its efforts in support of the Government and local authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of all people in Rakhine State, irrespective of religion, ethnicity and citizenship.

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