1. Information received is that the project for the cultivation of long fiber cotton was made compulsory for wheat growing cultivators of Myaung, Sagaing Division by the authorities who claimed that they were acting under instructions of the area military commander.

2. Since 1997, this substitution of cotton on wheat growing soil was commenced to earn dollars which was the expectation of the area commander. When the farmers and those with expertise explained that the soil and climate was not suitable for cotton growing, the response was "If you do not obey orders the land will be confiscated. Civil servants will suffer dismissal and action for sabotage will be taken against cultivators ".

Two years in succession the farmers have suffered because the cotton cultivation proved unsuccessful and they have had no wheat.

3. Whether it be cotton or wheat that is to be grown, the suitability of the soil, the expected output, and the feasibility in economic terms must be first studied. Though the crop yield may be successful in agricultural terms, if the market price is not favourable, a loss could result. The average yield of wheat per acre is 32 baskets. Calculated at Kyats 2000/- per basket you can expect an income of Kyats 64,000/-. With cotton the average yield of 240 viss per acre sold at Kyats 100/- per viss, the expected income will be only Kyats 25000/-. Therefore even though the yield is according to expectations, the difference in return is a loss of about Kyats 40000/- per acre.

4. This year (1999) cotton growing is made compulsory on 5000 acres of wheat land. Loss of Kyats 40000/- per acre means a total loss of two thousand lakhs. Should the yield be as unsuccessful as the last two years, losses will be further increased because of cost of seed and other agricultural costs that cannot be recovered.

5. Our information is that the compulsory cultivation of long fiber cotton forced upon people who do not have the expertise or experience, on unsuitable soil and climatic conditions which has resulted in losses is causing great distress (physical and mental) to the people of Myaung.

6. We therefore urge the authorities holding power to investigate the matter that is causing such hardship and suffering to the people of Myaung and to put a halt to the project.
Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
7 June 1999