Second Development Partnership Roundtable and Development Forum held

NLM: 18/12/09

Jointly organized by Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Second Development Partnership Roundtable and Development Forum on economic policies for growth and poverty reduction: lessons from the region and beyond was held at the hall of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation here on 15 December. Roundtable on enhancing Myanmar’s rural economy was held at 9 am. UN Under Secretary General and UN Executive Secretary of UNESCAP Dr Noeleen Heyzer delivered an opening speech.

Economist Professor Dr Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University discussed the elements of economic policies for rural development, followed by presentation of papers by resource persons. Afterwards, Secretary of the Myanmar Academy of Agriculture, Forestry, Livestock and Fishery Sciences U Tin Htut Oo and Visiting Research Fellow of National University of Australia Dr Ikuko Okamoto also read out the papers on the same topic. The experts and attendees held discussion. The roundtable came to an end with the closing remarks of UN Under Secretary General and UN Executive Secretary of UNESCAP Dr Noeleen Heyzer and Professor Dr Joseph Stiglitz.

Development Forum on policies for enhancing rural livelihoods - effecting change in Myanmar’s rural economy was held at 3 pm. Speaking at the forum, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo said that it is clear that stability, peace, and development are inseparable for all of us. Therefore, it is a basic policy setting for Myanmar. Thus, agricultural development means rural development that could reflect to contribute toward enhancing sustainable livelihoods. It has been the main agenda for the various governments throughout the history of Myanmar.

Myanmar in today’s globalized world with emerging issues of environmental degradation, disaster bound climate changes, and economic recession, and trade imbalances, this agenda still stands at the core of national development activities. Realizing the importance of these issues faced by its people, the Government of Myanmar has set up three National Committees. These are Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee headed by Honorable Prime Minister, Rural Development Support Committee and National Committee for Food Security chaired by myself and composed of other Ministers, Deputy Ministers of relevant ministries.

Since food security and rural livelihoods contribute to the income of the rural people, increasing agricultural productivity is the core policy for Myanmar. In order to increase agricultural productivity, promoting access to irrigation water and its sustainable uses are the main necessity. Myanmar has heavily invested and constructed 228 irrigation dams, 322 river water-pumping projects, constructing and repairing small irrigation tanks throughout the dryzone, enhancing underground water utilization through more than 7000 tube wells. In addition to promoting access to irrigation water for increasing crop production, rural electrification is also being promoted by installation of mini hydropower along canal drop structures of irrigation networks. On the other hand, regarding access to irrigation water, Myanmar is proactive rather than reactive to adapting climate change and mitigating its effects. The Government of Myanmar is adopting a holistic approach informed by human development perspective to address the needs of the most vulnerable. We cannot afford to be complacent. Thus, the tasks for agriculture and rural development must be implemented through mass movement.
Afterwards, Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Col Thurein Zaw explained facts regarding national development policies and millennium goals. UN Under Secretary General Dr Noeleen Heyzer held discussions about supplying to the region to catch effective and sustainable development in cooperation with ESCAP and Myanmar; Honorable Professor Dr Stiglitz, on international participation in fighting against poverty. The forum concluded thanks to active participation of the attendees.