President U Thein Sein delivers inaugural address to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March
President U Thein Sein addressed the first regular session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw today.
The following is the translation of his speech.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

May I extend my warmest greetings to Mr Speaker and representatives and wish you in physical and spiritual wellbeing.

After being elected the President, I am under a responsibility to present the policies of the new Union government as I shall be responsible to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Union government.

First and foremost, I would like to say that all the representatives including me are elected hluttaw members. So we are all duty-bound to honour and safeguard the constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar approved by the vast majority of the people.

So, I would like to call on you to cherish and protect at risk to life the constitution and the democratic nation to be built in line with the constitution.

As you know, national brethren remained united in the struggles to liberate the nation from the rule of the colonialists and regained independence.

But, in the postindependence period, national races involved in armed conflicts among them for about five decades due to dogmatism, sectarian strife and racism instead of rebuilding the nation. In consequence, the people were going through the hell of untold miseries.

The Tatmadaw with a strong sense of duty and loyalty saved the country several times whenever the country was close to collapse and loss of independence and sovereignty. Also in 1988, the Tatmadaw government saved the country from deteriorating conditions in various sectors and reconstructed the country.

Now, it has laid sound foundations to build a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

Now, the people have elected us and given mandate to continue building a stable, peaceful and developed nation, making good use of the foundations.

In order to accomplish the demanding duties, our new government will lay down new policies and programmes according to the objective conditions of the nation.

According to the historic events, Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity, and Perpetuation of sovereignty is the national duty not only present generations but also our posterity have to safeguard. So, our government will uphold this national duty.

Our country needs three types of might to accomplish these national causes. They are: (1) political might (2) economic might (3) military might Political might means national unity.

National solidarity is very crucial for our country, home to over 100 national races. If national unity is disintegrated, the nation will split into pieces. Therefore, we will give top priority to national unity.

Lip services and talks are not enough to achieve national unity. So, it is required to build roads, railroads and bridges to overcome the natural barriers between regions of national races; and to improve the education and health standards; to lay economic foundations to improve the socio-economic status of national races. We have to improve the living conditions for national brethren, using the roads, bridges, educational institutions, hospitals and health centres. The greater number of roads, railroads and bridges the nation sees, the smoother transport there will be between one region and another, and friendlier relations there will be among national races. In addition to material development, we will try to ensure the flourishing of Union Spirit, the fundamental requirement of national solidarity.

Regarding national reconsolidation, there are so many individuals and unlawful organizations inside and outside the nation that do not accept the State's sevenstep Road Map and the constitution. They are all citizens of our country.

Therefore, they have to accept our government as their government constituted with national races of their own.

According to Chapter (XII), the people have been vested the rights to amend the constitution in line with procedures.

Therefore, every citizen has to avoid any activities and speeches that harm the image of the country and interests of the people.

Despite different ideas and concepts, the people of us have to work closely in matters of same views in the national interests.

If an individual or organization stands for election in accordance with the democratic practice to come to power in a justice way, that will be acceptable to everyone. Therefore, I would say our government will keep peace door open to welcome such individuals and organizations.

Regarding the economic might, we have to try for economic growth.

If our country is not economically strong, it will face underestimation and unfair treatment from other countries. National economy is associated with political affairs. If the nation enjoys economic growth, the people will become affluent, and they will not be under influence of internal and external elements.

Ours is an agro based country. Successive governments paid serious attention to agriculture, so the country has enjoyed surpluses of crops. Now, the nation has got sound foundations for agricultural farming such as dams and river water pumping stations for food security of the population of new years.

However, agricultural development alone is not enough for the country to become a developed one.

So, we must turn to national industrialization to transform country into a developed, rich one with a lot of employment opportunities and high per capita income.

Our country is rich in natural resources. However, we need capitals, energy and human resources. Our country has all sound foundations. So, if we try our best, without doubt, we will achieve our goal. Therefore, our government will try our best for national industrialization while scaling up agricultural development.

Regarding military might, we have to relay the duty to strengthen the nation from one generation to another for perpetuation of independence and sovereignty. If the nation does not have strong armed forces, our country will face hegemony of others. Our country stood tall with own monarchs and sovereignty for thousands of years. But, in late Konbaung Period, our country fell under the subjugation of the colonialists without any strong resistance. That was due to lack of a strong Tatmadaw. If we do not take national defence seriously, we will fall under the rule of neo-colonialists again. I am sure you understand well that neo-colonialists are anxious to interfere in the internal affairs of our country because our country occupies strategic position geographically and economically.

Therefore, our country needs a world-class Tatmadaw. The entire people have to build collectively present Tatmadaw into a strong, efficient, modern and patriotic Tatmadaw. Every citizen is responsible for defending the country. So, the people have to do their bit in national defence duties.

The constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, which was approved by the great majority of the people in 2008, has come into force. Our government will discharge duties in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

Mr Speaker and representatives, Necessary infrastructural buildings in the economic sector were built and necessary laws, rules and procedures were promulgated in recent years for evolution of the market economy. The country has made many constitutional reforms including privatization. Therefore, we will have to work harder than ever and make amendments to financial and tax policies as necessary for evolution of the market economy and improvement of the socio-economic status of the people.

We will practise the market economy as the economic policy for achievements in the economic programmes. The theme of the economic programmes is evolution of the market economy. In the process, we will make sure that all the economic forces such as the State, regional organizations, cooperatives and private enterprises can work in harmony in the framework of the market economy. In addition, we will give all-round encouragement to small and medium enterprises that play an important role in the economy of Myanmar, a developing country.

Regarding the market economy, we will open doors, make reforms and invite investments as necessary for development of the nation and the people. We will make sure that fruitful results of the prudent plans will go down to the grassroots level. In this regard, we will promulgate all necessary policies and laws so that the fruits will go down to the grassroots level and the entire people enjoy better socio-economic status.

There are different opinions and procedures regarding the market economy in the international community.

In some countries, the market is not under the control of the governments concerned. In some countries, the governments concerned take control over the market to an extent. We will exercise the market economy in which the government takes control over the market to a certain degree. It is because any capitalists, traders and privileged persons cannot monopolize the market, not because we intend to restrict the market economy. In this case, we will put national interests in the fore, and will control and restrict the market in minimum.

In the process, we have to ensure proper market economy designed to reduce the economic gap between the rich and the poor, and development gap between urban and rural areas. We will attract foreign investments and establish special economic zones to create jobs and technical know-how, and we will provide assistance to national entrepreneurs for development of their industries and boost productivity. If we want the nation to enjoy development and economic growth, we will have to focus on industrial development. That is why the Tatmadaw government tried its best for national industrialization. Now, the nation has taken a giant step to transform itself into an industrialized one. And there are signs of sustainable development of the nation. Therefore, we plan to transform the nation into a modern, industrialized one with the use of the benefits from the agricultural sector and internal and external investments.We are also determined to improve the living conditions of peasants and workers. We will occasionally update the laws to safeguard the rights of peasants.We will step up tasks for agricultural development, ensuring reasonable prices of agricultural produce, and improving the quality of agricultural produce. In particular, we will create employment opportunities, stabilize commodity prices and encourage welfare and social security for the convenience of workers and labourers. And we will ensure that minimum pay scale meets current living costs. We guarantee that national workers inside and outside the nation enjoy all rights.

Peasants and workers are the major class of the nation.

So, our government guarantees that they can enjoy the benefits derived from their labour in proportion to their contribution, and social security.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

We need more and more human resources of intellectuals and intelligentsia in building a modern, developed democratic nation. In this regard, a fundamental requirement is development of human resources including new generations who will take over State duties. Therefore, we will promote the nation's education standard to meet the international level and encourage human resource development.

Regarding the education sector, the 24 regions for special development have been established with universities and colleges so that local youths can pursue higher education in their regions or states.

Rural areas have seen a massive number of basic education schools. In order to promote the nation's education standard to the international level, we will practise free compulsory primary education system, improve the standards of present universities, colleges, and high, middle and primary schools, provide more teaching aids, sharpen the abilities and improve the socio-economic status of educational staff, and increase the enrolment rates in middle and high schools. In that regard, we will work in cooperation with international organizations including the UN, INGOs, and NGOs.

We will promulgate necessary laws for private education schools. Moreover, we will provide stipends for higher education abroad and stipends for outstanding students at home.

Regarding the health sector, we will improve quality of the hospitals opened over past two decades and skills of medical staff. In addition, we will improve the quality of rural health centres and medical staff. In the process, we will work together with international organizations including the UN, INGOs, and NGOs.

We have a plan to promulgate necessary laws to standardize the health care services of private health centres. We also have a plan to set up a health care system covering the participation of the State, the people and altruistic organizations to beef up community health care. We will work more closely with international organizations in pursuit of the national projects on control and prevention of the three diseases: AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

To safeguard the fundamental rights of citizens in line with the provisions of the constitution in the new democratic nation is high on our government's list of priorities. We guarantee that all citizens will enjoy equal rights in terms of law, and we will reinforce the judicial pillar. We will fight corruption in cooperation with the people as it harms the image of not only the offenders but also the nation and the people. So, we will amend and revoke the existing laws and adopt new laws as necessary to implement the provisions on fundamental rights of citizens or human rights. Here, we will make reviews as soon as possible, and we will submit reports in order that Pyidaungsu Hluttaw can carry out legislative tasks based on the findings.

Another task we will have to implement is environmental conservation. In that regard, we will pay serious attention to conservation of forests and woodlands and take measures in various sectors to reduce air and water pollution, control dumping of industrial waste and conserve wildlife. We will lay down a new policy in which we will work for economic development in parallel with environmental conservation. We will mobilize participation of the people and social organizations in the tasks for environmental conservation and create renewable energy at low cost. We will review and amend laws and enact new laws on environmental conservation.

Therefore, I pledge that we will give top priorities to the policies on internal affairs to achieve sustainable development with maintenance of foundations, to build consolidated unity of the Myanmar society, and to guarantee fundamental rights of citizens.

In order to implement the policies on internal affairs that I have said, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will submit the following programmes to relevant hluttaws.

(1) To amend points of the existing laws that are against the constitution,

(2) To submit bills to safeguard fundamental rights of citizens in line with the constitution

(3) To increase the salaries of service personnel and pensions occasionally

(4) To study and compile the laws on rights of farmers and review existing laws for amendments as necessary

(5) To review the laws to create jobs and safeguard rights of workers for amendments as necessary

(6) To rewrite Public Health Care and Social Security Law to submit a bill

(7) To introduce bills to promote the education and health standards

(8) To amend some journalism laws in line with the provisions of the constitution

(9) To promulgate laws on environmental conservation and amend laws on industry and mining for environmental conservation

(10) To promulgate laws to amend the programmes for rescue and rehabilitation regarding natural disasters due to climate changes, and long-term preparedness against natural disasters.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

Now, I will present the foreign affairs policy.

From post-independence period to date, successive governments practised different political and economic policies and concepts. But, regarding the foreign affairs policy, they all exercised non-aligned, independent and active foreign affairs policy and dealt with other countries in line with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In addition, they never came under the influence of any powers. They remained neutral in international relations. They never permitted any foreign troops to deploy within the borders of the Union. They never launched aggression against and interfere in the internal affairs of any other country. And they never posed threats to international and regional peace and security.

These points are the pride of for the Myanmar's foreign affairs policy.

Our government will also adhere to this honourable foreign policy and continue the relations with all the countries. Moreover, our country will stand firm as a respected member of the global community while actively participating in the international organizations, including the UN, ASEAN, BIMSTEC and other regional organizations. This is why I invite and urge some nations wishing to see democracy flourish and the people's socioeconomy grow in Myanmar to cooperate with our new government that emerged in line with the constitution by accepting and recognizing Myanmar's objective conditions and ending their various forms of pressure, assistance and encouragement to the anti-government groups and economic manipulations.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

From now on, Myanmar has initiated democratic transition. There are many tasks ahead after the multi-party democracy general elections, the first step of the process. Not only do we have to continue to work constitutionally and democratically in the nation's legislative, executive and judicial affairs. But we have to build mutual cooperation and understanding between the Union Government and Region/State Government and between Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Region/ State Hluttaw. Moreover, it is still necessary to show our genuine goodwill towards those who have not accepted the constitution because of being skeptical about the seven-step Road Map in order that they can discard their suspicions and play a part in the nationbuilding tasks. Likewise, we need to convince some nations with negative attitude towards our democratization process that Myanmar has been committed to see the interests of the nation and the people to serve those interests only in the constitutional framework and not to try to disrupt democratization process outside the constitutional framework and harm peace, stability and the rule of law. The Union Government will welcome all actions done within the constitutional framework but prevent and take necessary action against all actions done outside the constitutional framework.

Democracy will promote only hand in hand with good governance. This is why our government responsible for Myanmar's democracy transition will try hard to shape good administrative machinery.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

Today, the onus is upon all of us to achieve democracy that must be practised in harmony with a sense of duty and freedom. The people have trustily given this duty to the Hluttaw representatives. Again, the representatives have entrusted me and the Union Government with this responsibility to take charge of the executive sector. So, we need to cooperate with all to accomplish the tremendous duty.

I would like to advise the political parties to work together in the national interests as common ground although they may have different outlooks and views. Similarly, I urge the Hluttaw representatives of various political parties to follow the wishes of the majority and respect the wishes of the minority in accordance with democratic practices. Particularly, I would like to exhort all to work together in the national interests ignoring any negative attitude such as the government and the opposition, which was conventional in Myanmar politics.

For development and peace and stability of a nation, it is necessary for government's administrative mechanism to cover all parts of that nation. It is needed to make administrative mechanism reign in the nation as well as respected in the international community.

Therefore, we have to strive our utmost to stand as a strong government while conducting changes and amendments in order to catch up with the changing world.

Mr Speaker and representatives,

The State Peace and Development Council has built political, economic and social foundations necessary for future democracy since 1988 to date. So, we sincerely thank all the people, all the Tatmadaw members and all service personnel for achieving peace, stability and the rule of law and building development infrastructures instrumental to a democratic nation. I urge the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to put such endeavours on record.

In conclusion, respecting the people's decision to elect our government, we will try our best for Myanmar to be able to stand as a democratic nation in the long run with justice, freedom and equality while steadfastly shouldering the State duties. At the same time I would like to urge and invite all the people to work together with the government in the interests of the nation.

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