Nine Hluttaw representatives and Finance and Revenue Minister assess proposal submitted by U Htay Oo from Hinthada Constituency

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—Nine representatives held discussions about the approved proposal “This Hluttaw opposes the economic sanctions imposed against Myanmar” submitted by U Htay Oo from Hinthada Constituency at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session today.

Wunna Kyaw Htin U Win Myint from Sagaing Region Constituency (3) said that the West Bloc has tightened economic sanctions against Myanmar since 1997, thus harming the nation’s economic growth and ordinary people.

Economic sanctions also harm foreign trade and Foreign Direct Investment. Myanmar receives least Official Development Assistance and no finance assistance from World Bank, I.M.F and ADB, and have adverse effects on labour intensive industries and tourism industry.

However, there was marked increase in turnover in trade with Asian countries: from 878 million in 1987-88 to over 12 billion US dollars in 2009-2010. The contribution to trade with Europe and America declined sharply from 30% in 1990 to only 5 %. Sanctions also harm Myanmar exports’ competitiveness.

Economic sanctions are against a principle of WTO, and so he seconded the proposal, he said.

U Thein Nyunt of Thingangyun Constituency said that economic sanctions imposed by the US, EU and Canada harm employees and employers, and money transfers. Rich natural resources alone are not enough for national development.

Sanctions also harm FDI. So, he is in support of the motion.

He suggested that a suitable foreign policy be laid down to address the issue as economic sanctions also have effects on the West Bloc, and ASEAN countries are demanding lifting sanctions.

U Tun Aung Kyaw from Ponngayun Constituency said that economic sanctions harmed the nation especially states. The US government has imposed economic sanctions against Myanmar exercising Customs and Trade Act since 1997, and it tightened sanctions in 2003. That dealt a blow to some states and regions including Rakhine State in export of marine product and finished wood products and hotels in MraukU archaeological site and Ngapali Beach Resort, handicrafts and travel services.

In 2003, Myanmar was the fourth largest marine exporting Asian country to the US. Trade embargo hindered prawn farms.

In 2010, Myanmar held an election and took a giant step toward democracy. So, the US and EU countries should lift economic sanctions, he said.

Dr Myat Myat Ohn Khin of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (10) said that in Myanmar, women enjoy all due rights, as evidenced by the fact that many of the hluttaw representatives are women.
Due to the market economy introduced to the nation in 1988, women got jobs in factories and garment factories. However, the economic sanctions imposed in 1997 and tightened in 2003 led to the closure of many factories including garment factories. That made about 50,000 women redundant and had adverse effect to their families.

Many job-lost women became sex workers, and many fell victim to unfair treatment and forced marriage abroad. So, public’s outrage can turn to those foreign countries imposing sanctions against Myanmar.

She said that she was opposed to all sanctions and news fabrication, and seconded the proposal.

Daw Dwe Bu from Injangyan Constituency said that every country and people shall have the right to choose the policy they like and deal with internal affairs without foreign interference for development. That is the theme of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

The people have chosen the most appropriate way to democracy. Turning a blind eye to objective conditions of the nation, the West Bloc is imposing economic sanctions and trade embargo, which effects both Myanmar and the US, Britain and EU. So, she seconded the proposal, she said.

One of the reasons of imposing sanctions is fabrication of news. So, she is opposed to retorting news stories that disrupts national development.

Now, democratization is in full swing in Myanmar.

And the people will keep trying for greater development in the process. So, the people will have to welcome mutual cooperation with other countries.

So, the people have to work closely to surmount the economic sanctions that hinder the national goal of building a peaceful, modern and developed country.

Dr Myat Nyana Soe from Yangon Region Constituency (4) said that some are claiming in their own interests that economic sanctions affect the ruling government, not the people.

Sanctions caused disruptions to national development and deny humanitarian assistance to Myanmar. Banning their citizens from investing in Myanmar, they are violating human rights.

Prohibition of import of agricultural inputs is disruptive to agriculture and life of farmers. And blocking the flow of technologies to Myanmar is violation of technological rights.

All hluttaw representatives are required to deal with economic sanctions in order to safeguard national interests. So, he seconded the proposal, he said.

Daw Nan Wah Nu from Kunhing Constituency said that parties objected to economic sanctions through announcements. In addition, ASEAN countries called for lifting sanctions.
In the economic sector, Myanmar has to rely on other countries for some kinds of goods such as fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural tools and machinery. Process cost is two to three percent, which causes burden on the people. These are evil consequences of economic sanctions.

Due to economic sanctions, Myanmar lost opportunities to get monetary and technological assistance from IMF, ADB and IFI. In comparison with neighbouring countries, Myanmar lost money and technology worth millions of US dollars in the period of economic sanctions.

Owing to lack of foreign direct investments, development tasks faced loss for development of national races and remote areas.

Economic sanction imposed against Myanmar is no beneficial to both sanction imposers and victims. The sanctions imposed with the reasons of democracy and human rights are meaningless for the new Myanmar country that starts democratization process. He on behalf of all Myanmar people said that time has come to welcome progress of Myanmar with assistance and encouragement instead of continuing sanctions, and she deeply supported the proposal.

U Hla Maung (a) U Naing Hla Maung of Chaungzon Constituency said that economic sanctions imposed by the US and the EU do not benefit the Myanmar people.

Therefore, all the people are not happy with sanctions. Five national race parties declared a joint statement for removal of sanctions. With regard to the sanction issue, the word “objection” was included in the discussions of U Htay Oo.

Source: NLM 2011-03-26
He suggested that the word “I would like to request to lift the sanction” should be used instead of the word “objection”.

Indeed, the request to lift the sanction is not to hope for easily lifting the sanction. So, it is necessary to show the capability of the nation by successfully realizing multiparty democracy system.

Only when the multi-party democracy system can be realized practically, will all democratic nations of the world support Myanmar. Therefore, the US and the European countries must lift the sanctions, and so he said that he supported the proposal.

Dr Pwint Hsan of Mayangon Constituency said that before imposing sanctions against Myanmar, over 300 garment industries were operated with the larger strength of workers. Due to economic sanctions, a half of industries were closed down and about 850,000 workers became jobless. In consequence, their families faced difficulties.

Businesses, government departments, foreign embassies, NGOs and other enterprises, running with US currency faced difficulties due to economic sanctions on transfer of money.

The US and its accomplices banned investment in Myanmar and put pressure on international monetary organizations to cut loans and assistance to Myanmar. In addition to economic sanctions, the UE and Canada restricted import of timber and gems from Myanmar and banned financial services.

Their activities made an impact on tourism industry due to misinformation for tourists.

Economic sanctions are designed for political reform, but people missed job opportunities and losses in social economic fields. Hence of U Htay Oo in accord with the wishes of the people.

He expressed his opinion that inventing fabrications, economic sanctions withheld real situations to cause the political change, as they liked. If one reviews discussions, paper compilation and articles of internal and international communities, the wrong doing activities of imposers can be seen.

Without giving priority to prosperity of Myanmar and the people, the activities in support of economic sanctions with selfishness and sending misinformation are destructive acts of the persons who do not want to serve the interest of the State and the people.

Therefore, he objected the releasing of all misinformation that turns a blind eye to endeavours of the State and the people and progress of sound foundations for building a new democratic nation.
As the government has been implementing the sevenstep Road Map of the State for democratization process and improvement of human rights, at present the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened for handing over the duties of the State to the democratically elected government as the last step.

Moreover, Myanmar is further strengthening friendly ties with neighbouring countries, regional countries and other global nations that wish to cooperate with Myanmar and the people for serving their interests. Therefore, he deeply supported the proposal of U Htay Oo.

With regard to the proposal, Minister for Finance and Revenue U Hla Tun said that the US government started imposing the sanctions against Myanmar under the pretext of human rights and democracy in 1997 applying the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1997-IEEPA.

IEEPA is a United States federal law authorizing the U.S Presidents to regulate commerce after declaring a national emergency in response to any unusual and extraordinary threat to the United States which has a foreign source.

Beginning May 1997, the successive US presidents from the time of President Bill Cliton to that of President Obama has issued the national emergency in May yearly and continued imposing sanctions that Myanmar unusually threatens the national security, foreign policy and economy of the US.

In this regard, he would like to discuss an issue that who really threaten national security, foreign policy and economy. With the common sense, everybody knows that least developed Myanmar with over 50 million population cannot threaten superpower US with 300 million population which has the strongest economic strength and the biggest military might spending a half of world total military expenditure.

Although economic sanctions cannot effectively stop the endeavours of the State and the people for development of social economy, the sanctions can impact on factories and workshop projects that create job opportunities for the people.

In 2003, many garment factories were closed down in Myanmar due to sanctions against imports of Myanmar by the US according to its Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act. Disadvantages of sanctions left about 120 garment factories in 2009 compared with about 300 factories in Myanmar before the sanctions. Due to the sanctions, hundreds of thousands of female workers of garment factories became jobless. Of them, 95 per cent were female workers from aged 18 to 35. The sanctions imposed by the US affected the fishery industry.

From 1988 to 2003, Myanmar stood fourth in Asia in importing fishery products to the US. If the sanctions were not imposed, Myanmar may stand second in the fishery importing countries.
Due to prohibiting the transfer of monetary, Myanmar suffered from difficulties in remittance service. The prohibition on financial and monetary services caused crises to businesses, government departments, foreign embassies, NGOs, and all the works relying on US monetary system for trade and remittance. As the US traveller’s cheque could not be used, the tourism industry faced difficulties.

The World Bank stopped to disburse no more loan to Myanmar beginning 1987. However, IMF and WB provided financial assistance to Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia during the South-east Asian financial crisis in 1997. In the event of cyclonic storm Nargis in 2008, they did not provide any coin to Myanmar. The US and the EU officially banned the international financial organizations not to disburse monetary to Myanmar in 2003 and 2004.


In calculation that everybody should get US 45 dollars per year, 50 million population of Myanmar lost US 2500 million dollars yearly. Such amount of money is equal to one-year proceeds of selling natural gas from Myanmar. If Myanmar gets ODA regularly beginning 1998, the amount of money can contribute a great deal to development of the State, education and health sectors of the nation.

Generally, the big country imposes economic sanction against the small country to dominate the activities and policy of the victim country for liking of the big country. In addition, the imposer country intends to remove the government of the victim country and substitute its puppet government as an act of regime change.

WTO members US and EU countries imposed sanctions against Myanmar by breaking the Article I and Article III of General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT 1947) on nondiscrimination among the WTO member countries in trade and creation of opportunity in equal term without abiding by the provisions of the WTO.

According to Section 35 of the Constitution, the State economic policy is market-oriented economic system.

Only when the entrepreneurs have capability to compete in the domestic and international markets through the market-oriented economic system, will the State’s economy develop. If the domestic market is being realized in line with the market-oriented economic system and the international market is being banned, the development of market will be far from the goal of Myanmar. In consequence, merchants, farmers, workers, and consumer people will face greater difficulties at the free market and free trade stage.
It is obvious that the US and its lackeys that imposed sanctions against Myanmar have been holding foreign policy of occuring regime change and to install puppet government rather than the issues of democracy and human rights.

Myanmar have made utmost efforts by overcoming the various obstacles and prohibitions and the government is striving for construction of important infrastructures, roads and bridges, implementing hydropower projects for energy sector, building dams and river water pumping projects in clusters, building the modern Tatmadaw for State defence and constructing the schools, universities, hospitals, dispensaries and medical institutions in all parts of the nation. As a result, the nation has established the sound foundations for economic and political sectors. Therefore, the approval should be sought at the Hluttaw for the proposal of U Htay Oo.

The Hluttaw took decision by vote with 625 for, five abstentions and four against that the Hluttaw approve the proposal.

*Source: NLM 2011-03-26*