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Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker hands over Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker's responsibilities to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker

IN yesterday's fifth-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than handed over the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat.

Attending the assembly were President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Chairperson of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Union Auditor General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairperson, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, state and regional Hluttaw speakers, Deputy Ministers, and observers.

Outgoing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than's speech

First, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivered a speech concerning his term as Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker for the first thirty

months of the Hluttaw term.

In his speech, Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than elaborated on his performance for the first half of the Hluttaw term, saying that the first-day meeting of the 1st regular session of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw was held on Monday 1 February 2016. In line with Section 76 Sub-section (A) of the Constitution, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw have served as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw from the day the term of the Pyithu Hluttaw commences up to the day of the end of 30 months, and the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw will serve as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for the remaining term, which is why today's meeting will include the handing over of the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

He said during his term as Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker, he endeavored for the strengthening of the multi-party democratic system, enhancing opportunities in the country, promoting every citizen's equality, freedom, fairness, and human rights free from corruption, and to the best of his ability, providing checks and balances to the executive and judicial branches of the government for rebuilding national peace, unity and development.

He expressed his gratitude to the Deputy Speaker for assuming the roles of Chairperson for the Joint Bill Committee, Public Accounts Joint Committee, and Joint Hluttaw Management Committee, and as the Secretary of the Myanmar Parliamentary Union and leading the duties of each respective sector and enabling better fundamentals.

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President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio arrive to attend the fifth-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: GNLM



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than hands over the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat at the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session. PHOTO: GNLM

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker hands over Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker's responsibilities to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker

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He said eight regular sessions were successfully held during the first 30 months of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw term, with the ninth regular session in progress. Relating to lawmaking, during the first half of the Hluttaw term, 44 bills were discussed and enacted into law in 2016, 29 in 2017 and 22 in 2018, as of this date, totaling 95 enacted laws, said the Speaker. To aid in the development operations of various sectors, 40 cases of foreign and domestic loans were discussed, 26 cases of MoU signing were discussed for international cooperation, in addition to discussions relating to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Special regional relations performed in the first half of the Hluttaw term include hosting the 37th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, forming the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Cooperation Committee to collaborate with international organizations and international parliaments, and attending 21 meetings related to the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and 2 meetings related to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Myanmar Parliamentary Union was formed to promote discussions between the Union-level Hluttaws and state/regional Hluttaws, and between state and regional Hluttaws, said the Speaker. He added that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission was formed to scrutinize, amend, abolish existing laws and enact new laws, scrutinizing special cases from a legal perspective, and support important Hluttaw processes.

The Speaker said the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is formed with representatives from the entire nation and represents all the people living in the country, while conducting legislative work for the country and its citizens, in addition to assuming the Hluttaw's responsibilities.

He said at the present time it is focusing on ethnic solidarity and national reconciliation for a long-lasting union peace. He instructed the Hluttaw representatives to work for the peace and rule of law starting from their constituencies up to the



U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, taking the oath of office in front of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker. **PHOTO: MNA**

national-level.

The Speaker requested the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives to use their accumulated experiences and knowledge to carry out the hopes and wishes of the people in the remaining 30 months of the Hluttaw term. He thanked the Hluttaw representatives and officials from respective sectors, departments, and organizations who have worked together with him in the first 30 months of the Hluttaw term.

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than handed over the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat.

Incoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat's speech

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then delivered a speech.

Incoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat expressed his gratitude to Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung for successfully fulfilling the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, for the first 30 months of the Hluttaw term.

He said the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will honor and put on record the endeavors of the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker based on the Constitution, Hluttaw laws and bylaws, and the national policies and agenda for the emergence of a democratic federal union togeth-

er with Hluttaw representatives, using their skills in difficult undertakings in different sectors during the 30 months of the first half of the Hluttaw term.

The Speaker said he has heard that parliaments around the world are the bedrocks of a country's democracy as well as their spirit and blood vessels. Parliaments exercise legislative power and represent the people while listening to the people's voices, wishes, opinions and needs and working to fulfill them.

He said carrying out these duties and the emergence of laws that have relevance on the actual development of the people's socio-economy, national development, and ensuring the basic socio-economy of the people is beneficial require the checks and balances and cooperation with the entities and organizations who wield executive and judicial authority.

It is evident that we are all cooperating in the Third Session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong for the emergence of a democratic federal union, said the Speaker. He said for the Hluttaw representatives to fully participate in the discussions with constructive intentions, ethnic representatives from various political parties have been included in the preliminary formation.

He said the legislative Hluttaw enacts laws that protects and enables the benefit of the nation and the people while implementing them in accordance with the existing laws, bylaws, rules and regulations of the executive and judicial branches and

other related organizations, and cooperating with them for the nation and people's benefit. Hluttaw representatives and every citizen have to respect and follow existing laws to be accountable, responsible and disciplined in cooperation.

The Speaker said the three branches of the government being the executive, legislative and judicial branches have been equally divided as per the Constitution, providing checks and balances to each other and working for the continued discussions and cooperation for national development.

People wish to see immediate results in the democratic transition but should note that the basis of democracy sometimes requires a period of time for a solution to emerge, said the Speaker. He added that a true democratic system is the only system that can handle the challenges of the 21st Century.

The Speaker said he believes the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives will have sincere compassion for the people, foresight and systematic individual accountability in the democratic transition process. As experience and maturity is accumulated with each successive meeting, Hluttaw representatives will increase their performance by continued adherence to the Constitution, Hluttaw laws, bylaws and existing laws, rules and regulations.

The Speaker requested the Hluttaw representatives to cooperate with him in the remaining half of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw term, as all work together for the benefit of the nation and the

people, without any bias regarding one's political party, ethnicity, region, language, culture or beliefs. He said he believes that by upholding responsibility and accountability with sincerity and kindness, more improvements will be made in the process for the emergence of a democratic federal union.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then announced the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has put on record the successful term of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker served by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung.

This was followed by U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, taking the oath of office in front of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

Soft loan from Italy

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained to the Hluttaw the matter sent from the Office of the President concerning the soft loan of Euro 30 million from Italy for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation's projects.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu said the Italian government offered co-financing a soft loan of Euro 30 million for the National Electrification Project. He said the soft loan is offered with no interest, a grace period of 18 years and an amortization period of 10 years.

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The soft loan will allow officials to provide electricity, in the form of solar home systems and mini-grid systems, to the hard-to-reach Chin State and its neighboring areas, with a projected outreach to 96,500 households in 1,015 villages, said the Union Minister. He said the Italian government intends to help implement the pre-electrification system for villages that are out of reach of the national power grid.

The Union Minister said that when considering areas for implementing the solar home system, the chosen criteria was for villages that will take 10-15 years to connect to the national power grid, areas more than 10 miles away from the grid, and villages that can put in 10 per cent of the payment for the solar home system. Likewise, areas for implementing the mini-grid sys-

tem were chosen on whether they will take 10-15 years to connect to the national power grid, villages that can put in 20 per cent of the payment for the mini-grid, villages willing to pay electrical bills and villages wishing to conduct small-scale businesses, among other considerations.

The Union Minister said the Italian government will support a separate fund of US\$1.05 million to the World Bank for technological and technical assistance. He requested the Hluttaw to approve the soft loan so as to realize the 2030 Myanmar National Electrification Plan (NEP).

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win explained that the Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, will lead the rural electrification project funded by the soft loan and an an-

nual payment of Ks4,996.2 million from the national budget will have to be made after the grace period was over. He said the national debt to GDP ratio of Myanmar is 15.45 per cent, as of 31 March 2018, and therefore has the capacity to withstand the debt.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced for MPs interested in discussing the soft loan of Euro 30 million from the Italian government to register their names.

Agricultural loan from Asian Development Bank

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained to the Hluttaw the matter sent from the Office of the President concerning the loan of US\$40.5 million from the Asian Development Bank for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation's project.

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu

said the loan will be used to fund the Climate Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project for 5 townships in Magway Region, 4 townships in Mandalay Region, and 5 townships in Sagaing Region, totaling 14 townships in central Myanmar.

The amortization period for the loan is 32 years, including an 8-year grace period, with 1 per cent interest during the grace period and 1.5 per cent in the remaining period. Payments after the grace period will be made twice a year (once each in March and September) over a period of 24 years, totaling 48 separate payments. The Union Minister requested the Hluttaw to approve the loan from Asian Development Bank.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will lead the projects

funded by the loan from the Asian Development Bank. He said the project will allow the production of agricultural products that meet the ISO 17025 standards, which will in turn aid in penetrating the foreign market and increasing income. He said annual payments for the loan will be calculated into the respective ministry's budget plans. He said the national debt to GDP ratio of Myanmar is 15.45 per cent, as of 31 March 2018, and therefore has the capacity to withstand the debt.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced that MPs interested in discussing the loan of US\$40.5 million from Asian Development Bank should register their names.

The sixth-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue on 7 August. —Thura Zaw, Han Lin Naing ■

MPU holds 4/2018 meeting



MPU Vice Chairman Mahn Win Khaing Than delivers a speech at the Myanmar Parliamentary Union meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR Parliamentary Union held a meeting yesterday to review the budget scrutinizing process for projects in regions and states and Hluttaw affairs.

In his opening remarks at the meeting at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw, U T Khun Myat, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Chairman of the MPU, suggested region and state Hluttaws to draft budget scrutinizing bill as there is no time frame for the scrutinizing budget for the projects in regions and states.

Regarding legislation, the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission would review and report the current situation at the meeting, said U T Khun Myat, adding that Speakers of the region and state Hluttaws are to take part in the discussion openly.

Mahn Win Khaing Than, Vice Chairman of the MPU and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw, underscored the importance of sufficient time for scrutinizing the budgets submitted by region and state governments, saying that it is found that some inconveniences happened due to time constraints for reviewing the budgets by the Hluttaw.

The Union Budget Law has been enacted to scrutinize the National Planning and Budget bills at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, he added, saying that the date when the Union Government should submit the bills to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the date when the Hluttaw's scrutinizing committee submit their report to the Hluttaw has been set.

Afterwards, U Tun Tun Hein, Secretary of MPU and Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw,

reported on the resolutions of meeting No. 3/2018.

U Aye Tha Aung, member of the MPU and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw called for cooperation in Hluttaw's undertakings and situation of work being carried out by the Hluttaw.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win discussed matters related to projects in regions and states and process for submitting the annual budget bill.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission suggested measures to be taken to prevent contradictions and differences between laws enacted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and regional and state Hluttaws.— Myanmar News Agency ■

New border pass launched at Rekhawda

A NEW travel border pass to enter Falam District, Chin State, is to be launched on 8 August at a ceremony to open the Myanmar-India international border check point in Rekhawda.

The two kinds of border pass permit would allow travelers enter Falam District.

The Border Pass-BP system would allow holders to travel in Falam District for 14 days (13 nights) and the Temporary Border Pass-TBP for sev-

en days (six nights), according to U Tezar Lin, Head of Falam Township Rekhawda Immigration and Population Department at Rekhawda.

Besides, the check point would become the same on the international route.

Previous border passes allowed visitors from India to enter Myanmar through the border bridge to visit the Reed Lake for a day.—Reekhawda IPRD ■



Myanmar-India international border check point in Rekhawda. PHOTO: MNA