

The Report to the People on the Progress of Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State

Introduction

1. The current issues in Rakhine State are not only the concern of Rakhine State alone but also the concern of the country as a whole. The stability, peace and development of Rakhine State are absolutely critical for the whole country to become stable, peaceful and developed.

2. While there is so much work to be done for rule of law and development across the country including Rakhine State, the Government is putting a great deal of determined efforts into promoting rule of law and enhancing development. In doing so, the national level development projects and plans as well as those for Rakhine State have been implemented. The implementation of those plans and projects is found to be highly relevant to and in line with the recommendations put forward by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State submitted its interim report in March, 2017. The implementation of the recommendations of the interim report started from 1 April, 2018 and in order to increase the momentum, the Government established the Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State with 19 members on 9 October, 2017. The Committee has to release its Report to the People on the progress of its implementation every four months. This report covers the period from 1 April, 2017 when the implementation of the recommendations started before the formation of the Committee up to 31 December, 2017.

The Economic and Social Development of Rakhine State

3. Since both domestic and foreign investments play an important role in the state's economy, the Rakhine State Investment Commission was established on 7 July, 2017 and the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration opened its state office on 30 October, 2017. Till now, they have verified and granted concessions to a total of 48 investment projects, including 6 livestock and fishery projects, 2 construction projects, 11 hotel and tourism projects in accordance with the Myanmar Citizen Investment Law, as well as 1 mining project, 27 energy projects and 1 service business in accordance with the Foreign Investment Law, with an aim to create job opportunities for local people.

4. Whenever expropriation of private land is unavoidable to execute investment projects, the owners are entitled to compensations for their land and losses. To date, compensations have been provided to 1,001 local people who lost their land and crops due to land expropriation for investment and development projects. The fund to compensate another 7 local people has also been requested in 2018-

2019 FY Budget.

5. As a form of Corporate Social Responsibility, the contributions made by the investors to the socioeconomic development of Kyaukpyu are as follows: 50 villages are supported MMK 30 million each to use as revolving funds for village development activities; and heavy equipment operator training was conducted in cooperation with Caterpillar Company. In education and infrastructure sectors, Shwe Gas Project and Southeast Asia Oil and Gas Pipeline Project have contributed MMK 7.62907 billion and USD 876257.65 respectively.

6. Previous experience has shown that large-scale projects, including SEZs, can have negative consequences on the environment, other economic sectors and local people; therefore, the Environmental Conservation Department and the Management Committee of Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone have been discussing and coordinating to conduct the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in a comprehensive approach.

7. Also, the coordination and cooperation with ILO are taking place to conduct labour market assessment - LMA. While preparing for LMA, trainings have been delivered to local people to enhance their vocational skills. There have been 22 types of vocational training including those for women provided to a total of 2,160 trainees. With the support of GIZ, dress-making training course was provided in Yangon for the local women from Kyaukpyu, and other vocational training on ironwork, welding, and electrician training and the training on modern agricultural techniques were also conducted. During the reporting period, 250 jobs can be created in Smart garment factory, Khine Pyi Soe garment factory and Shwe Kyar hand weaving workshop. Likewise, Shwe Project and Southeast Asia Oil and Gas Pipeline Project also offer jobs to 520 local people.

8. As transportation is an important component of socioeconomic development, high priority is given to improving transportation in Rakhine State. Starting from April up to December, 2017, roads and bridges damaged after the attacks in Maungdaw were repaired and earthen roads, gravel roads, concrete roads and concrete bridges were built. Heliports were also constructed. Currently, twenty bridges and two new mountain roads on May Yu Mountain are under construction.

9. In the land transport sector, 6 more bus lines have been expanded in addition to the 42 existing bus lines. For water transport, transportation along the Rakhine coastline and rivers is improved with Kispnadi (1) and (2) vessels running along the Sittway-Kyaukphu route and Aung Takhon vessels running along the Sittway-Buthidaung route. As a part of the Kalatan Multi Modal Transit

Transport Project supported by the Indian Government, six cargo vessels of 300 ton capacity started running on 26 June, 2017. In the air transport, approval has been obtained to build the new Mrauk U airport through public private partnership (PPP). At Munaung Airport, construction of 200 foot over-run to the south to the existing runway (4,500' x 100') and RESA earth leveling work has been started. Also in Sittway Airport, construction of the expanded terminal building (180' x 60') has been completed;

10. In the Communications sector, mobile phone penetration is now over 85% and there have been more than 1 million internet users.

11. The efforts made in the electricity sector, starting from 1 April, 2017 up to 31 December, 2017, have resulted in the increases of electricity supply in terms of the number of hours a day, which is illustrated in the following diagram.

12. For drinking water supply, building and repairing 26 earthen ponds were completed in the villages in Rakhine State. Thinechaung Earthen Dam (with capacity 249 million gallons) and Dotantaung (1) Check Dam (with capacity 20.39 million gallons) were constructed. Construction of concrete reservoirs, repair of earthen ponds, installation of pipes connecting reservoirs to water collecting tanks were also carried out. Additionally, 234 rural drinking water supply projects were implemented in 233 villages, sourcing water from hand-dug wells, ponds, springs and other sources. A variety of comprehensive rural development activities were also undertaken in 7 villages through Village Development Project, in 235 villages through CDD Project and in 97 villages through Emerald Green Project.

13. In support of agricultural production, mechanization was promoted by giving out loans of MMK 447.953 million to farmers to buy 233 machines and equipment for farming and fishery, and by selling 2 tractors and 575 hand-operated

tractors in installments. Moreover, 23,332 baskets of seeds of pure paddy variety, 30 baskets of seeds of winter peanuts, 4 baskets of seeds of green gram, 796 packets of vegetable seeds were distributed to 4,553 households. The training on agricultural techniques was provided to 90 farmers with the support of KOPIA project. The farming equipment operator training was conducted for four times and benefitted 110 trainees. Besides, 1,261 farmer trainings were delivered in all townships of Rakhine State.

14. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are important drivers of the development of the regional economy. Loans are given out to SMEs with the repayment terms from 3 to 5 years at an interest rate of 9%. Cooperating with JICA, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank provides two step loans, with 3 to 5 year repayment terms, at an interest rate of 8% to farmers all over the country including Rakhine State. As agricultural loans have been provided to farmers in Rakhine State, loans of MMK 86181.15 million were given out for monsoon crops to the farmers in 17 townships and loans of MMK 2408.55 million were given out for winter crops to the farmers in 7 townships in 2017-2018 Financial Year.

15. In the tourism sector, the new Myanmar Hotel and Tourism Law have been drafted and submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw through the President's Office. Once that law is approved and enacted, there will be more opportunities for small scale family hotel businesses.

16. Encouraging investments and development of businesses, the company registration process has been streamlined by reducing the procedures up to 4 steps from previous 13 steps, and also reducing the registration fee from MMK 1 million to MMK 500,000. Additionally, a telephone hot line (1887) has been set up to provide information needed for incorporating a company or making an investment.

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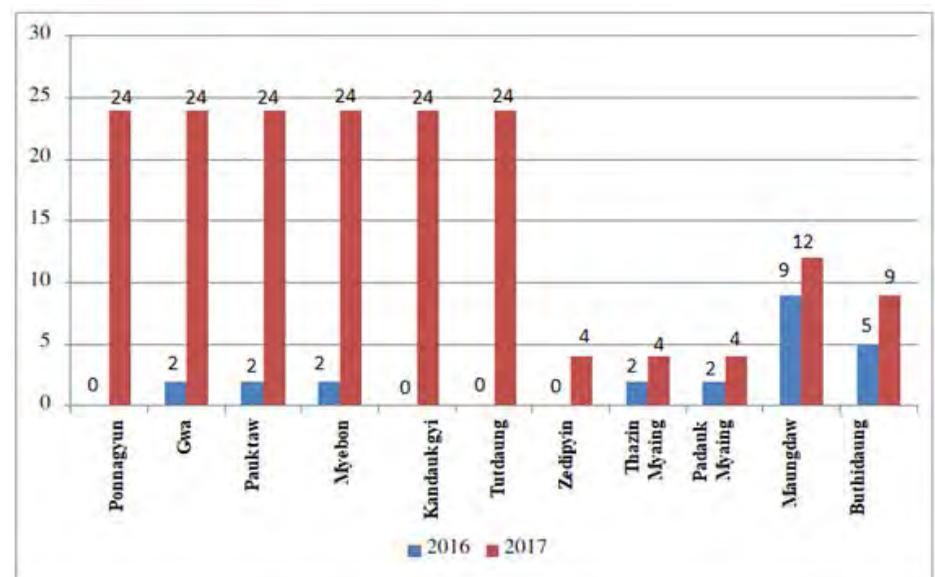


Figure: Increase in electricity supply (in hours)

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17. As efforts to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, the following activities have also been implemented: 11,764 acres of community forests have been established; 1,644 acres of Gwa Chaung mangrove forest is planned to designate as protected area; and 390,000 trees were grown through community tree planting movements in 2017-2018. Regarding production and distribution of climate resilient seeds, 441 acres of monsoon paddy seed nursery was established, 415,687 acres was planned and grown for crop diversification during 2017-2018 Financial Year. Improving irrigation systems is another important effort for agricultural development. As such, 100%

of 75 projects were completed, including construction, upgrade and repairs of irrigation systems, embankments, spillways, concrete water gate, check dams, and reservoir dams. In Rakhine State, 26 environmental education programs were organized during the period from June to November, 2017 and 5,174 people attended those programs.

Citizenship

18. Since the time the current Government took office, the Muslim people who applied for going through the national verification process were verified in accordance with the Law and the numbers of people who benefitted from those processes are listed below.

Sr.	Description	From 01/04/2010 to 31/12/2016	From 01/04/2017 to 31/12/2017
1.	Citizens	40	118
2.	Naturalized citizens	24	105
3.	Children under 18 of naturalized citizens entered into the list of eligible applicants for naturalized citizenship	22	129
4.	Children above 18 of naturalized citizens entered into the list of eligible applicants for naturalized citizenship	-	15
5.	Children of citizens and naturalized citizens to whom 10 year old citizenship scrutiny cards are issued	-	148
6.	Children of citizens and naturalized citizens to whom 18 year old citizenship scrutiny cards are issued	-	480
7.	People to whom NV cards are issued	2,457	5,162
8.	Biometric data collection	-	8,501
9.	Kaman people to whom the national ID cards are issued	-	3,336

19. If the people who want go through the verification process do not hold any forms of identification documents, they need to hold a NV Card first in accordance with the Law. As a form of advocacy for acquiring and holding NV cards, the members of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State have been briefing the rights and responsibilities, associated with holding NV cards, to Muslim village administrators, 100-household heads, local people and fishermen working on fishing boats on every visit of theirs to Rakhine State. During the NV processes, the necessary forms and documents for application of citizenship are also provided.

20. The Government seeks to actively engage the Islamic religious groups in the country to mobilize more participation and cooperation of Muslim people in the verification processes. This active engagement did result in discussions and negotiations between the Islamic religious groups and the members of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State as well as the statements issued by those Islamic religious groups, urging all the Muslim people in Rakhine State to cooperate with the authorities in the national verification process.

Freedom of Movement

21. With regards to the freedom of movement for people holding NVC Card or any forms of identification document, a road map has been developed with time-frames and milestones for removing restrictions. According to the road map, the initial steps have taken in the Maungdaw District, including intensifying security and raising awareness widely among the communities of both sides that actions will be taken against any acts by any side which harm, disturb or block the people from the other side moving around, in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations.

Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPS)

22. Work has been started for the closure of the Thetkelypin IDP Camp and Aung Mingalar Ward in Sittway Township, and the Taungpaw IDP Camp in Myepon Township in line with the international standards.

23. The repair and construction work carried out to improve the shelters in the IDP camps is as follows:

- (a) 50 shelters in the Say-tha-margyi IDP camp, Sittway were refurbished;
- (b) 12 individual houses were constructed in place of the shelters in the camp in Ramree;
- (c) At the IDP camps in Sittway Township, 176 new shelters, 281 new units of shelters, 482 tube well pumps and 508 toilets were constructed.

Humanitarian Assistance

24. Humanitarian assistance has been provided by the Union Government, the public, UEHRD Youth Volunteer Program, Red Cross Movement, ASEAN countries, partner countries and various national and international organizations as follows:

- (a) Food and non food items in a total value of MMK 479.60 million by the Union Government;
- (b) Food and non food items in a total value of Swiss Franc 17 million by Red Cross Movement;
- (c) Food and non food items in a total value of USD 730,000 by ASEAN countries;
- (d) Assistance in a total value of MMK 443.75 million by UEHRD Youth Volunteers;
- (e) Assistance in a total value of MMK 79.05 million by MA UK Myanmar.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NMSP, LDU and Nippon Foundation hold joint press conference

THE New Mon State Party (NMSP), Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) and Nippon Foundation held a joint press conference in Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw at 3:30 pm yesterday.

Attending the conference were NMSP Chairperson Nai Taw Mon, LDU Chairperson Kyar Kun Sar and Nippon Foundation Chairperson Mr Yohei Sasakawa, as well as members of the media.

Mr Yohei Sasakawa began by saying that the Union Government and non-signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) have been working hard for two years to

reach an agreement. He said he is delighted the NMSP and LDU will sign the NCA on 13 February. He acknowledged that this is an important step in Myanmar's national reconciliation efforts. He said the Nippon Foundation only helped the union government of Myanmar and the ethnic armed groups to meet and build trust among each other. The Japanese government and Nippon Foundation supported the KNU with US\$40million after they signed the NCA, and they are ready to support the local residents from NMSP and LDU after they sign the NCA as well.

Next, Nai Taw Mon spoke to the media persons present. He supported the State Counsellor's cause for national reconciliation and unity. He said his group did not sign the NCA in 2015 because it was not all-inclusive at the time; but after meetings with all of their troops they have decided to finally sign the NCA.

He said they will continue working on all-inclusiveness and they welcome the support of the Nippon Foundation. He said they will try their best to achieve lasting peace and development for the people. Kyar Kun Sar then spoke to media persons saying



(From L to R)Kyar Kun Sar, Yohei Sasakawa and Nai Taw Mon. **PHOTO: MNA**

his group has been looking forward to signing the NCA. He said Lahu is in need of much devel-

opment and the local residents have been longing for peace. —Myanmar News Agency ■