

Gov't to speed up coastal area management, to improve disaster preparedness

THE Union Government would step up its efforts for coastal area management projects through cooperation with local authorities while taking the natural disaster preparedness into consideration in its drive, said Vice President U Myint Swe yesterday.

The Vice President, in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Level Central Committee for the Administration and Management of Natural Resources in coastal areas, also called for effective collaboration from respective departments for drafting the plan for coastal area conservation at the fifth meeting of the central committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The 20-member committee led by Vice President U Myint Swe held the first meeting on 3 March, 2017 making 33 resolutions related with conservation of coastal areas in its previous three meetings, and of them, 24 have been implemented and nine are undergoing.

The central committee was formed on 30 November 2016.

To reach the goal of sustainable development in coastal areas, Vice President U Myint Swe has called for solving possible contradiction between building infrastructures and conservation of coastal areas through 'negotiation'.

"For sustainability of marine resources, only the fishery sector should not be focused. For con-



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers a speech at the meeting of National Level Central Committee for the Administration and Management of Natural Resources in coastal areas. PHOTO: MNA

servation of mangrove forests, only the forestry sector is not concerned. Therefore, all related sectors are obliged to cooperate each other," said Vice President U Myint Swe.

The country's mangrove resources are declining because of the proliferation of fish farms and because the mangrove trees are being used as firewood, according to environmentalists.

There are over 500,000 hectares of mangroves along the coast of Myanmar.

According to the 2014 census, half of the population of Myanmar are living in coastal areas and depend on the coastal ecosystems which serve them in many ways through marine products and

environmental services.

Regarding the degradation of coastal ecosystems, the Vice President put the blame on man-made errors including extra extraction of the natural resources, the lack of systematic management of coastal ecosystems, the lack of understanding on sustainability and the lack of effective cooperation from departments concerned for drafting the management plan.

"The central committee is committed to achieving progress in tackling these issues," said Vice President U Myint Swe. He also urged the people to carry out disaster preparedness, saying that natural barriers, such as coral reefs, sea grasses, beaches

and mangrove forests should be given priorities for conservation.

The mangrove forests at Myanmar's Meinmahla Island which is also a wildlife reserve was not hardly hit by the Nargis cyclonic storm on 2nd May, 2008.

Myanmar was ranked the second highest by the Global Climate Risk Index 2016.

Myanmar's efforts for promoting the coastal area management work can be considered as the Sustainable Development Goal-14 of the 17-points of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

In his concluding remarks, the Vice President called on region and state governments for stepping up cooperation and

coordination with the Union Government and departments concerned.

Following his address, Union Minister U Ohn Win, Taninthayi Region Chief Minister Dr. Daw Le Le Maw, Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung and regional and state ministers for environment and natural resources also took part in the discussion for conservation of coastal areas, research, illegal fishing and conservation of mangrove forests in coastal areas. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Minister briefs diplomats, UN on repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State

UNION MINISTER for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe briefed the Diplomatic Corps and the United Nations Specialized Agencies in Yangon on the implementation of Agreements on repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday at 10:00 hrs.

In his briefing, the Union Minister reiterated that Myanmar government is making both bilateral efforts with Bangladesh and cooperation with the UNDP and UNHCR. He stated that Myanmar and UN had successful experience of cooperation in the area of voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons



Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe (Centre) briefs on repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State. PHOTO: MNA

in early 1990s.

The Union Minister explained the stages of implemen-

tation by the Myanmar side in line with the Agreements signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Briefing on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Myanmar government and UNDP and UNHCR, he stated the roles of UNDP and UNHCR in assisting the Myanmar government in its efforts for repatriation and resettlement process in the implementation of the bilateral agreements between Myanmar and Bangladesh. He also explained the progress of implementation of the MoU including the visit of the Technical Working Group to potential project sites.

He stressed that Myanmar government is committed to the implementation of bilateral agreements. He concluded by saying that Myanmar will contin-

ue to cooperate with Bangladesh based on the desire to maintain and promote friendly and good neighborly relations existing between the two countries.

Subsequently, the Union Minister answered the questions raised by the diplomats.

Present on the occasion together with the Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu and Advisor to the Chairperson of UEHRD U Toe Oung. The briefing was attended by the Heads and representatives of Diplomatic Mission and the UN Specialized Agencies in Yangon.—Myanmar News Agency ■