

Myanmar thanks the local and international community for the outpouring of support to its efforts in combating COVID-19 Pandemic

SINCE the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by the Director-General of WHO, the confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide have now surpassed the one million mark while the global death toll has reached 64,000. As stated by WHO, even the most severe situation can be turned around and the experiences of some countries that have pushed back the virus give hope and courage to the rest of the world. One good example is the case of the People's Republic of China where the first and hardest hit regions have been brought under control and are now gradually getting back to normalcy, due to the commendable and effective control measures swiftly laid down by the Chinese Government.

In Myanmar, despite its early action with regard to surveillance and preventive measures, COVID-19 found its way into the country, and the first case was confirmed on 23 March 2020. The Government has since stepped up measures to contain importation and spread of COVID-19 by suspending the issuance of visas and all commercial flights until 13 April 2020. Special arrangements have been made to avoid disruption of trade, medical supplies and evacuation of stranded travellers.

... there is an urgent need for greater coordination and sharing of experiences and best practices among the ASEAN countries and key partners who have valuable experience in containing the spread of the pandemic, such as China, Japan and Republic of Korea.

People are the key to the success of our fight against this virus. Central to the national response is not only control and treatment but also educating people about this new virus and seeking their cooperation to strictly follow the preventive guidelines and directives. In this regard, the Government makes sure that no one is left behind. Such responsive measures cover different strata of societies, including prisoners, Internally Displaced Persons, returnees from abroad and workers coming back across the border.

As the spread of the pandemic remains on the rise across the globe, there is an urgent need for greater coordination and sharing of experiences and best practices among the ASEAN countries and key partners who have valuable experience in containing the spread of the pandemic, such as China, Japan and Republic of Korea. In this regard, Myanmar appreciates deeply the kind offer of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government to send medical teams to Myanmar to share their experiences and to donate lifesaving equipment and medical supplies which will contribute to the Government's efforts to combat the pandemic.

Myanmar would also like to express its deep appreciation to other development partners and to all those who have shown solidarity and extended their material and moral support to the government's efforts in its war against the pandemic.

We are confident that we can overcome the ongoing challenges posed by the Pandemic through four Ps, namely Political leadership, Preventive measures, Peoples' participation, and the support of our Partners from near and far.

Fourth-year performance of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is working with the power of the people: Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, and attendees pose for a group photo at the 3rd workshop on National Strategy for the Closure of IDP camps at the Horizon Lake View Resort Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 April 2019.

By Naing Lin Kyi
PHOTO BY THAW PHONE KHANT

ASPIRATION and preference of the people has been ascertained and considered by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and have been fulfilling the basic human rights in the process in shaping the genuine democratic system of the country.

With a view to fulfilling the rights of each citizen, the Ministry has laid out the policies, laws, by-laws, strategies, procedures, and work programs in systematic manner.

"For the successful implementation of the tasks ahead, it needs budget and manpower. Work programmes have been laid down and sustainable development has been carried out. The budget allocation of the Ministry was MMK 18 point 5 billion in 2016-2017. In 2019-2020 the budget allowance stands out at MMK 120 point 8 billion with the increased of (7) folds. However, the statistics is tantamount to (0 point 4) per cent of the total budget of all ministries," Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement explained.

"Manpower is necessary to implement the tasks. The number of officers and staff members has been increased from (2,900) to (4,600). In fact, the ministry needs (16,000) officers and staff members. However,

the tasks are always successful due to the active participation of the people. We could say that the ministry is working with the power of the people," the Union Minister continued.

The Ministry is formed with three departments such as the Department of Social Welfare; the Department of Disaster Management; and the Department of Relief and Resettlement. Starting from the embryo to the older age of all the citizen, the social welfare of each person has been taken care for their rights and development by the state.

Four types of rights

For the best advantage of the children, the Department of Social Welfare has enacted Child Law on 23 July 2019. The four types of advantages included such as the right to life; the right to development; the right to protection; and the right to participate.

"For the survival of the child, it is necessary to have systematic protection. The process started from pregnancy. It is termed as the 'Maternal and Child Cash Transfer' (MCCT) which included the cash assistance; the imparting of nutritional knowledge; the personal hygiene; and the family planning. It could be counted from the time of pregnancy to (1,000) days of the infant. If the infant is provided with correct nutrition, the child could have best mental condition for

the whole life," the Union Minister explained.

The scheme ought to be carried out in the whole of the country, but due to budget constraint, the plan has to be selected. Based on the underdeveloped index of the child, the campaign is selected to the areas such as Rakhine State; the Chin State, Naga Self-Administered Zone, the Kayin State, and the Kayah State for 2017-2018 fiscal year and 2018-2019 fiscal year.

"In 2019-2020 fiscal year, loan from the World Bank and the national budget would be used for Ayeyawaddy Region and Shan State. Next, the campaign could be expanded to the whole country", the Union Minister has expressed.

Child Rights

The newly enacted Child Rights Law is to protect the child from danger, and that the Early Childhood Development Law (2018) is to nurture the child in a proper way. If the development of the child is not taken up properly, then the child would have fallen into disabled group. With a view to inform the parents, the "Early Childhood Intervention" (ECI) scheme has been put up as pilot project in Yangon Region, Ayeyawaddy Region, Sagaing Region, and Mon State.

"Among the rights of the child, there is a term that spelled out 'Right

to Protection'. In Myanmar perspective, there is no 'parentless children', but there is only 'bosom less children'. The State has opened up seven child care centers in the country. In the 4th year implementation tasks, with the donation and charity from the Child Protection Association, a Child Care Center with (100) kids capacity would be opened in Nay Pyi Taw. Single mothers would be taken care in one venue," the Union Minister described.

Nurturing in line with the laws

Children are in need of pre-primary school education, and that the kids between the age of (3) and (5) numbering (1 point 4) millions are to be accommodated. However, only part of the children have been embraced in (10,000) pre-primary schools owned by the department, the self-help basis schools, and private pre-primary schools. The total number stands out (320,000) only, and that accounted only for (22) per cent. Therefore, more pre-primary school are necessary to be opened up by the government as well as the private sector.

Opening of mother's circle

With a view to establish private pre-primary schools, Early Childhood Care and Development Teacher's training courses have been conducted in Nay Pyi Taw Council Areas, and 14 states and regions for (402) occasions and nurtured (15,000) pre-primary schoolchild care teachers. When the situation is not ready to open up the pre-primary schools, a total number of (1202) mother's circle have been established. Department of Social Welfare is implementing task in connection with the youth.

"During the 4th year implementation, youth affairs policies have been laid down as strategic approach. Different programmes have been drawn in line with the states and regions, and implementation is in progress. Youth Centers are on the agenda to establish in states and regions. The first centre is established in Sagaing. With regards to juvenile offences, the youth training schools for moral education and rehabilitation have been established (4) centers such as in Thanlyin, in Nget Aw San, in Mandalay and in Mawlamyaing. When



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye.

the age of the youth has been defined as under (18) years, the number of children that needed to be protected had raised to (3) folds. The situation calls for more training schools and man power," the Union Minister explained.

Role of the women

Role of women is vital and important in the development of a nation. The task could never be carried out only by the government, and that the cooperation of the civil societies is needed. Currently, the Myanmar National Committee for Women Affairs has been formed with the participation of (11) civil societies, and functioning well.

As the protection for the women is needed "Draft Law for Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women" has been taken up for enactment. Moreover, a new legislation relating to prostitution is being drafted and that is in the pipeline. At a time, when the ageing people are on the rise on this planet, the monthly social pension has been assisted to elderly persons beginning 2017 to 2020, and that a total of (470,821) older persons have been provided with MMK (34 point 9) billion.

"Among the elderly adults, there are many able older persons remaining economically active in the community and they have been rallied round into groups. They are generally termed as "Socially Active Groups". For economic viability, each group has been provided with MMK (1) million. With the intent to form and expand such social groups, linkages have been established with international non-governmental organizations" the Union Minister explained.

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Myanmar Gazette

Head of Service Organization confirmed

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of U Min Min as Director-General of the Department of Trade, Ministry of Commerce, on expiry of the one year probationary period.

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release No 14/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 4 April.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 4 April.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 8 April issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar. — GNLM



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 6th April, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and a few cloud elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 7th April, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

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Fourth year of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

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Social Management

The Department of Social Welfare is currently establishing “Social Management Information System” with a view to implement “Electric Cash Transfer” in place of human to human cash transfer system. The system could be started in June 2020.

Department of Disaster Management has been implementing the task in creating a society with resiliency in response to natural disaster.

“The department has been officially recognized as capable in early response in the fight against natural disaster as needed by the people. The necessary response has been carried out by compiling information through the Hot Line service as well as the scrutiny of the needs by the people through the Facebook account feedbacks. It is also done through the Mobile Application on disaster management. Advanced preparations have been made for the earthquake, the severe flooding, and the devastating storms. Regarding unexpected disaster and loss due to earthquakes, advanced preparations have been laid down and approved at different levels at states and regions and down to the wards / villages. Necessary drills have been put into practise,” the Union Minister pointed out.

For rapid and quick response in case of severe flooding, rescue boats and life-saving jackets have been provided worth MMK (553 point 583) millions. Moreover, with the aid and assistance of the World Bank, US\$ 8 million have been contributed to the relief funds.

Heavy and devastating strong winds usually occurred from February to May, and that it brings disasters in regions such as Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing, Ayeyawady, Bago, and Shan States. According to past statistics, the havoc brings over (43,000) houses into destruction. In strengthening the vulnerable homes, advanced repairs have been offered, and reduced the damages.

Drinking water

During long hot summer, in fighting

against the shortage of drinking water, assistances have been provided such as distribution of potable water, sinking of tube well, installation of water purifier, building of temporary water container, and connection of water pipelines, worth of MMK (1,280 point 53) millions.

“During the 4th year plan implementation, “heat wave avoiding camps” has been opened in (44) venues in Sagaing Region and Magway Region. Under the management of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee, many multi-purpose disaster shelters have been built. During the time of incumbent government such as 2016 to 2020, (138) structures of disaster shelters have been built,” the Union Minister said.

As there was (95) structures in the past, the total of shelters stand out as (233) in number. The shelters could be used as disaster shelters in bad weather condition and that in the normal time, the shelters could be used as the ward / village beneficial tasks.

“Crops being damaged due to natural disasters have been provided with seedlings, and moreover, cultivation lands have been assisted with reclamation, in addition to road and bridge repairs,” the Union Minister explained.

With a view to rapid implementation on the tasks of the ministry, the Department of Resettlement has been reorganized since two years time. As the budget allocation has been doubled, the Persons with Disabilities have been provided with assistance for one occasion. In connection with the Persons with Disabilities, respective committees have been formed in conjunction with the creation of strategic perspective. With a view to providing the Persons with Disabilities with regular assistance, necessary registrations and classification of disabilities have been made.

National Standard Operation Procedure is in the process covering the receiving, the reintegration and the rehabilitation tasks for the victims of trafficked in persons. Standard norms have been drafted for adoption to prevent from being trafficking of the persons from the Internally Displaced People.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye provides social pension of an elderly woman in Tatkon Village in Myothit Township, Magway Region on 9 December 2018.

More victims of trafficked in persons have been repatriated back year by year, and that the 4th year saw (546) persons have been accorded. In preventing the child from negative impact of migration, necessary MOU is under consideration to sign with Thailand.

Rehabilitation

With regards to the drug addicts, the Union Minister said: “We have drug addicts’ problem in our country. The rehabilitation of the drug addicts is meant to keep them away from the cycle of drug scourge. Rehabilitation for the addicts has been carried out with focus year by year and that the 4th year performance has seen (614) persons that have been rehabilitated. A total of (1,216) narcotics supervisors have been assigned as volunteers.

The Ministry is also working on land mine elimination tasks, and assisting the victims including the child soldiers who were permitted to discharge from the army.

Rakhine issue

Rakhine issue is one among the task being involved by the Ministry to a certain extent. The Ministry has undertaken the tasks of involving in various committees such as that of Regional Resettlement and Socio-economic Development Work Committee under the Rakhine State Stability and Development Implementation Committee; the Resettlement and Social Development Committee; Implementation Committee over the suggestion on Rakhine Affairs; Acceptance of Displaced People and Resettlement Committee; and the UEHRD. [The Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) is a public-private partnership mechanism formed to respond to the various humanitarian and development needs of conflict-affected communities in Rakhine].

“The international community has accused and blamed Myanmar with regard to Rakhine State issues. In solving

the accusation, the Independent Commission of Enquiry - - ICOE has been formed. The Ministry is in top gear for the rapid implementation being suggested by the ICOE. The camps for the Internally Displaced Persons have been closed and that the people are to be resettled systematically. In this regard, national level strategy has been drawn and implemented,” the Union Minister explained.

Systematic Resettlement

In Myanmar, there are (128) IDP camps, and that (19) camps in Rakhine State; (84) camps in Kachin State; (2) camps in Kayin State, and the systematic resettlement has already started. The tasks are being carried for the resettlement with dignity, safe, and free from unnecessary reliance on others.

“Rakhine affairs needs a work programme on long term perspective, which includes socio-economic development and avoidance of long drawn conflict. Therefore, necessary projects have been laid down, and trying to create social cohesion. In finding the root cause of conflicts in area, the Rakhine State Advisory Commission headed by Dr. Kofi Annan has been formed. The implementation over the suggestion has been expressed in the Report to the People for (5) occasions, and that the 6th Report to the People is to be released soon,” the Union Minister said.

In working out the tasks on Rakhine State stability and development, all stakeholders must come together for cooperation with positive approach.

People are invited to join

As to enjoy the most effective advantages, the people must join hands with the government, and therefore, the MSWRR urges all the people to join hands in nation building. Help Line is active (24) hours a day to drop information and also to get information at 067 – 3404666; 067 – 3404777; 067 -3404222; and 067 -3404999.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye poses for a group photo at the ceremony to hand over the supplies donated by the Government of Indian at a port in Sittway on 21 January 2020.