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Union Health Minister attends celebration of World AIDS Day 2019



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe and dignitaries open the World AIDS Day 2019 celebration in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe attended the celebration of the World AIDS Day 2019, taken place at the Union Hall in Kyaik-kasan Sports Ground in Yangon yesterday morning.

At the event, the Union Minister said Myanmar has adopted the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2016-2020), and preparing for extending of the plan to 2021-2025 period for prevention and treatments

in coordination with the HIV programme and partner organizations to cover the whole country.

The lack of health knowledge, no access to preventive measures, drug injections into veins, sexual intercourse with women sex workers, male homosexuality, prisoners and migrate workers are mostly included in the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The Union Minister said

that an estimated 237,000 people have been infected with HIV in 2018, and 0.57 per cent of them has suffered AIDS.

The newly infected cases in 2000 was 29,000 at the recorded rate, and declined to 10,000 in 2018. The figures also showed that the new cases were mainly found at the people who injected drugs (also known as PWID), female sex workers, and male to male sex contacts.

The highest infection rates

were also found in Kachin State, northern Shan Sate, Sagaing Region and Yangon Region.

Medical treatments with the lifelong ART were given to 85,000 patients out of 200,000 HIV infected people in 2015, and over 175,000 patients received this medicine in September 2019, showing the figure has been double in comparing these two periods.

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Union Minister, UN agencies discuss resettlement of IDPs

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye met representatives of UN agencies, led by the UN resident coordinator in Myanmar, yesterday morning at the Yangon Region office of the Social Welfare Department, and discussed cooperation between local and foreign organizations to implement the national strategy on the resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and closure of IDP camps.

The UN resident coordinator was accompanied by resident representatives of UNDP, UN Habitat, UNICEF Myanmar, IOM, FAO, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN Women, UNOCHA, UNFPA, ICRC, MRCS, IFRC, and INGO Forum.

At the meeting, the Union Minister said that out of the four work committees of the Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State, the Work Committee for Resettlement and Socio-Economic Development has been implementing the task of resettling IDPs and closing IDP camps since 2016, while trying to draw a national strategy for the same.

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Myanmar Buddha statue donated to disaster-hit northeast Japan



A Buddha statue donated by a company in Myanmar to Minamisanriku, Miyagi Prefecture, as pictured on Nov. 25, 2019. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

SENDAI — A consecration ceremony was held on recently for a Buddha statue donated by Myanmar for victims of the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami that hit northeastern Japan.

Monks from the Southeast Asian country, which also suffered damage from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, offered prayers in front of the 5-meter-high marble statue on 25 November.

It was placed last month on a hill overlooking Shizugawa Bay in the town of Minamisanriku, Miyagi Prefecture. The hill is in a forest park created by the operator of Minami Sanriku Hotel Kanyo to commemorate the disaster that left more than 15,000 people dead.

A Myanmar trading house gave the statue to the hotel op-

erator, which had shown officials of the company around the disaster-hit area.

“While this may be minuscule for the rebuilding, I hope it will be a tourism resource to bring about exchanges between people,” said Maung Htet Myat Oo, the 52-year-old co-head of Tomosada International Trading Co.

“I’m full of emotion, seeing the Buddha statue installed in a place that looks over our community,” said Yasuhiro Abe, 56, president of the hotel operator Abecho Shoten Co.

Abe’s company is known for hosting bus tours around the disaster-stricken coastal area and keeping the remains of a tsunami-hit wedding center, where more than 300 people took refuge. — Kyodo News ■

Union Minister, UN agencies discuss resettlement of IDPs

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The drafting of the strategy began in 2018, and it was officially introduced on 19 November this year. The strategy will adopt action programs for the systematic closure of IDP camps.

The Union Minister said as the strategy has been drawn in accordance with international norms, the adoption of work programs in line with the policies, laws, and rules of the country in closing IDP camps is an important matter.

As stated in the strategy, region-wise work programs will be implemented after forming Union-, region-, and state-level committees. There are some

other tasks in connection with the resettlement of IDPs and closure of IDP camps that the ministry will carry out before and during the adoption of the strategy. Those tasks will be integrated into the strategy.

“Connections is under way with UN agencies and the Red Cross, apart from the ongoing coordination between Kachin State government and KHCC, a Kachin social organization, in closing IDP camps in Kachin State. We are collecting a list of villages where the IDP camps will be closed and which are included in the resettlement program. In addition, we are coordinating with the Tatmadaw and the ethnic armed organi-

zations for mine-clearance and raising public awareness about mines,” said the minister.

“As regards the dangers posed by mines, Myanmar representatives attended the Oslo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World in Oslo, Norway on 25 and 26 November for the first time, and discussed resettlement programs, the importance of humanitarian mine-clearing activities, and the different stages of the mine-clearing program. The discussions will be supportive of the strategy. There will be continued coordinated efforts as the task of the Work Committee on Resettlement of IDPs in Kachin State is in conformity with the national IDP

resettlement and camp closure strategy. Pilot projects will be implemented in Kachin and Rakhine states. UN agencies and international bodies are urged to render their cooperation in implementing the Union-led state-wise work programs,” said Dr. Win Myat Aye.

In their discussions, the UN resident coordinator and resident representatives said it was an honor for everyone as the UN and international organizations were able to offer advice on and disseminate the strategy, which is being carried out under the leadership of the government after it was adopted with the involvement of a UN and international expert, Prof. Walter

Kaelin. They said they were ready to partake in adopting and implementing work programs of the strategy, which are suitable for local needs in the future.

They, then, welcomed the marking of areas for pilot projects for adopting and implementing the work programs. They expressed the belief that the difficulties faced in the initial tasks can be turned into opportunities, and suggested the authorities listen to the voices of women and children IDPs while drawing work programs. Afterwards, they discussed the roles of the UN agencies, INGOs, and the Red Cross. — MNA ■

(Translated by TMT)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, officials and representatives from UN agencies pose for a group photo at the Yangon Region Branch of Social Welfare Department yesterday. PHOTO: MNA