

L&F Minister responds to query on “high tax being paid by fishermen”

NAY PYI TAW, 22 March - At today's Amyotha Hluttaw session, Amyotha Hluttaw representative Dr Banyar Aung Moe of Constituency-7 of Mon State said that collecting tax should be done fairly in accord with the law; tax should not spoil production and enterprise; if the industry was destroyed, revenue would decrease; if the tax is collected fairly under the law, the revenue will rise yearly than that collected at present; he made the question with the intention of increasing revenue of the State; local people catching fish inshore are paying high taxes which force them to stop the business, leave the native land and work in other countries. He asked whether the government knows this situation or not and whether serious measures should be taken for recovery from this situation or not.

Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Maung Maung Thein answered the query that the ministry is planning sustainable development of fisheries industry with the objectives of fisheries sufficiency in the whole nation, nutrition development of entire nation, uplifting of health and fitness of the entire nation and individual fish consumption improvement. In supervising fisheries sector, Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, four fisheries laws were issued and tasks- to ensure sustainable development of the fisheries sector, to prevent fish species extinction, to prevent water of fish breeding from degradation, to collect reasonable taxes which the State should get and to administer the fishery industry under the law - are being carried out.

In doing so, 561540 tons of salt-water fish were produced in 1988 and individual fish consumption is 17 kg in 1988 when the State Law and Order Restoration Council assumed responsibility of the State. In 2009- 2010, the production of salt-water fish reached to 2060780 tons and average individual fish consumption increased to 43 kg. The individual consumption increases yearly in parallel with increasing fish production.

In 2000-2001 fiscal year, 949670 tons of salt-water were produced and average individual fish consumption is 23 kg. In 2008-2009, 1867510 tons of salt-water were produced and average individual consumption is 43 kg.

The Fisheries Department is registering fishing boats and fishermen and taxing under Myanmar Salt-water Fishery Law. Marine products are resources owned by the State.

So, the State is taxing breeding entrepreneurs and marine workers at the rates set in Notification No (5/2003) and (7/ 2003) of the Fishery Department.

The tax rates for offshore fisherman are K 300 per year for boat, from K 600 to K 3000 for motorboat, from K 500 to K 12000 for fishing equipment, for one ton of wet fish is from K 300 to K 3000. A motorboat will cost only from K 3500 to K 11000. Marine workers are systematically registered and being charged K 500 for registration fee but the offshore marine workers are not charged.

Taxes are found to be very low for marine workers in comparison with current price of a viss of fish. No fisherman has so far made complaints about the taxes imposed by the Department of Fisheries.

According to the statistics registered in Department of Fisheries, tax from fishing industry, and progress of offshore and fishing industry and marine workers are 754 trawlers, 6,933 offshore trawlers, tax of K 2.172 million, and 28,339 marine workers in 1988-1989, 1987 trawlers, 26099 offshore trawlers, tax of K 246.950 million and 64637 marine workers in 2000 -2001, 1746 trawlers, 28670 offshore trawlers, tax of 1479.000 million and 125084 marine workers in 2008-2009. Then the number has increased year by year and 2077 trawlers, 30842 offshore trawlers, tax of K 1718.320 million and 130793 marine workers.

Like, the entire nation has seen progress in fishing industry and Taninthayi Region and Mon State have witnessed progress in fishing industry. Taninthayi Region, saw 247 trawlers, 3407 offshore trawlers, tax of K 0.903 million and 293820 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 20.99-kilogram fish per head and 5811 marine workers in 1988-1989, 402 trawlers, 10833 offshore trawlers, tax of K 13.932 million, 542390 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 37.41 kilogram fish per head and 18660 marine workers in 2001- 2002, 590 trawlers, 12052 offshore trawlers, tax of K 278.290 million, 973340 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 58.81-kilogram fish per head, and 49636 marine workers in 2008-2009, and increased to 686 trawlers, 11680 offshore trawlers, tax of K 319.30 million, 1080850 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 63.40 kilogram-fish per head, and 52257 marine workers in 2009-2010.

Mon State saw 29 trawlers, 549 offshore trawlers, tax of K 0.002 million, 32300 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 16.55-kilogram fish per head, and 1937 marine workers in 1988-1989, 227 trawlers, 1866 offshore trawlers, tax of K 5.590 million, 60950 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 21.15-kilogram fish per head, and 4108 marine workers in 2001-2002, 155 trawlers, 1568 offshore trawlers, tax of K 31.306 million, 201370 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 62.86-kilogram fish per head, and 6263 marine workers in 2008-2009, and increased to 148 trawlers, 1606 offshore trawlers, tax of K 32.078 million, 263350 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 80.83-kilogram fish per head and 6505 marine workers in 2009-2010.

Likewise, production of sea-water fish, numbers of onshore and offshore trawlers, tax, average consumption of fish of individual in Ye and Yebyu townships in those two states have increased year by year, with slight change in number of marine workers.

Yebyu Township saw 282 offshore trawlers, tax of K 1.040 million, 41132 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 49.45-kilogram fish per head, 1740 marine workers in 2007-2008, 295 offshore trawlers, tax of K 1.010 million, 42848 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 51.92 kilogram-fish per head, 1813 marine workers in 2008-2009, 296 offshore trawlers, tax of 1.129 million, 48394 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 54.52-kilogram fish per head, and 1848 marine workers in 2009-2010.

Ye Township saw 59 trawlers, 455 offshore trawlers, tax of K 12.515 million, 67900 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 33.80-kilogram per head, and 2426 marine workers in 2007-2008, 60 trawlers, 452 offshore trawlers, 74200 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 36.10-kilogram fish per head, 2470 marine workers in 2008-2009, 59 trawlers, 455 offshore trawlers, tax of K 13.046 million, 90400 tons of sea-water fish production, average consumption of 39.80-kilogram fish per head and 2503 marine workers in 2009-2010.

According to the above figures, tax collected by Fishery Department in Ye and Yebyu Townships ranges between K 3500 and K 11000 for the whole year. The rate is fair and would not be tax burden for those fishermen.

Fishery department grants tax exemption on small fishing gears. The number of fishermen is on the increase yearly.

The aims of tax collection by Fishery Department are to register systematically, to manage and to collect tax that the government should deserve. Fishery Department is making the arrangement to conserve resources in order to exploit fish resources.

According to the figures compiled by Fishery Department, fishermen from Mon State and Ye and Yebyu Townships in Taninthayi Region do not have to pay heavy tax.

Taxes collected by the government are not too much. So, the factor does not cause a halt to fishing industry. According to statistics, there were no any dramatic drop in the number of fishery entrepreneurs and fishermen.

According to the statistics of Fishery Department, there are no decrease in the number of trawlers, fishery entrepreneurs and fishermen. Fishermen working on managerial scale are doing their traditional businesses in their own regions. Fishery Department has issued announcements and restrictions for preserving fish resources. In order to boost fish resources, the Department puts fishes and prawns into the sea. To create better eco-system for plants and animals, mangrove swamps in which fishes breed are grown. The Department also educates fishermen to follow code of conduct for responsible fisheries.

After asking and answering queries, the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker discussed that according to provisions of the Hluttaw, asking and answering questions shall be allowed only at one hour of morning session; that but there is a reason to allow it till over 2 pm by the Hluttaw Speaker; that Article 11 Sub-section (a) of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar prescribed that three sovereign powers-legislative power, administrative power and judicial power are to be separately practiced with check and balance system; that Hluttaw is a sovereign organization; that so it is important to know administrative and judicial sector thoroughly.

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