

**Ministry of Labour, if granted by Pyithu Hluttaw, will take measures for
submitting new social security insurance law (draft)
as supported with possibility thinking**

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-Four representatives discussed the approved proposal “to make necessary arrangements for drawing a new international level Social Security Insurance Law (draft) and to submit it to the second regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw” submitted by U Pwint Hsan from Mayangon Constituency at the regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw today.

U Tin Win from Dedaye Constituency said that Section 24 of the constitution (2008) says, “The Union shall enact necessary laws to protect the rights of workers”, Section 26 (b) “The Union shall enact necessary laws for Civil Services personnel to have security and sufficiency of food, clothing and shelter, to get maternity benefits for married women in service, and to ease livelihood for welfare of retired service personnel”, Section 28 (a), “The Union shall earnestly strive to improve education and health of the people”, Section 31, “The Union shall, to the extent possible, assist to reduce unemployment among the people”, Section 32 (a), “The Union shall care for mothers and children, orphans and fallen Defence Service members’ children, the aged and the disabled”, and Section 351, “Mothers, children and expectant women shall enjoy equal rights as prescribed by law.”

In other countries, staff who become disabled and injured have access to benefits in accordance with the social security scheme, and other staff have the rights to withdraw their deposits with interests. When a new social security insurance law is drafted, staff members who become disabled due to normal illness and family members of late workers can benefit from the security plan. The plan can attract more attention from employers if health care is provided to fee-payer employers as well as employees.

If an employed insured worker can enjoy unemployment benefit, that will contribute towards the State’s economy and will comply with Article 31.

If the social security scheme is implemented on a wider scale, instability of employment can be reduced and production of goods can be boosted with an increase in number of skilled workers. And that will benefit employers. The plan will be implemented with combined efforts of the State, employers, and workers.

So, he is in support of the proposal, he said.

Daw Win Maw Tun from Yenangyoung Constituency said that the present social security scheme guarantees workers health security only. Workers whose homes are distant from hospitals and dispensaries still find it hard to receive medical treatment. In addition, workers in a town or village where there are no security hospitals or dispensaries have no access to social security according to the present law. Even if they have access, they cannot enjoy the rights to receive medical treatment due to lack of medical facilities.

Providing employment grants for a redundant worker ensures his life security and contributes to State’s currency circulation and economic stability.

So, the majority of countries have prescribed a provision of social security insurance laws. Unlike civil servants, workers of private-run enterprises have not had access to old age pension. If a

social security insurance law is drafted with suitable points, workers can enjoy life security and that will provide impetus to the nation's economic stability and development. So, she is in favour of the proposal.

U Kyi Myint from Latha Constituency said that a new bill should be written based on the 1954 Social Security Act. Present act benefits only private and civil servants only. Even in the US, the congress held discussions in 2010 to benefit more citizens.

Security systems include regional hospitals and dispensaries, cost-sharing system in government-owned hospitals, pension-saving system as part of the medical trust funds set up by donors, life and other insurance systems, savings bond, shares in private companies, and purchasing houses by installment. However, there is no link between security systems. Even staff do not know what for they are paying. The government makes major contribution to the systems, which is against market economy.

In the international community, social security is called security or national insurance as well as social security net.

In market economy, the whole security and insurance system is based on the contribution of parts of the grants provided for unemployed people. A rust fund is established with parts of the grants and contributions made by employers and the government concerned. The fund is raised by investing it by economic enterprises in stock market. That may be similar to establishment of a medical trust fund. In the insurance security system, either the government or private sector has to contribute more. So, he is in support of the proposal.

U Tin Maung Oo from Shwepyitha Constituency said that employers and employees do not take much interest in Myanmar Social Security Project.

When a female staff member is on a maternity leave of 12 weeks, the Social Security Board has the right to take 66.66% of her salary in the period.

However, unlike female counterparts in other countries, female staff members do not have the right to get maternity grants yet.

According to the existing law, female staff members who have paid insurance fees can enjoy maternity leave. If those systems are included in the new law, it will win more trust and reliance from workers. According to the law, those with health care are exclusive of employers.

So, they are not much interested in the system. So, it is needed to draw a new security law. He said that therefore he seconded the proposal.

Minister for Labour U Aung Kyi said that Social Security Act was issued on 22 October 1954, and put into practice since 1 January 1956. When workers who pay insurance fees can receive free treatment when they are sick, pregnant, dead and injured and they suffer diseases related to their work. In addition, they are provided with grants during the period of leave. If a worker receives treatment in other hospital or clinic in an emergency case, he is provided with the expenses.

When a female worker is pregnant, she can take a 12-week leave and enjoy maternity grants. She can receive free treatment to give birth in the Workers Hospital. And the newborn is provided with free

health care for six months. If a worker is disabled in a worksite accident, he is provided temporary or permanent disabled pensions.

However, the 1954 Social Security Act needs to grant more rights, and the granted money is low in proportion to consumers' prices. The number of workers who pay insurance fees is only over 520,000. That implies that the law is not reliable enough.

Social Security programmes in the majority of ASEAN countries cover sickness, maternity, funeral expenses, grants for worksite accidents, cash assistance for permanent disability, monthly pensions and old age pensions. Old age pension guarantees security to over 3.6 million workers from private industries in Myanmar. Similarly, many countries exercise unemployment grants as well as health care for family members of employee. So, the present law needs amendments.

The majority of ASEAN countries have amended their social security insurance laws at least once. So, the Ministry of Labour, if granted by Pyithu Hluttaw, will take measures for submitting a new social security insurance law (draft) as supported with possibility thinking.

The speaker said that the discussions are related to human rights.

The proposal should go on, and it needs approval of the hluttaw.

The hluttaw approved the proposal and confirmed it.

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