

**Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session continues for fourth day -  
Assessment report of Joint Public Accounts Committee submitted,  
proposal for investigation into farmland confiscation discussed**

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July-The fourth regular session of the First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continued for the fourth day at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Hall in Hluttaw Complex, here, today, attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and 607 MPs.

Secretary of joint Public Accounts Committee U Maung Toe submitted a proposal to discuss the assessment report No. 1/2012 of the joint Public Accounts Committee on additional budget allocation at the Hluttaw.

MPs wishing to discuss the report are to enlist by 24 July, announced the Hluttaw. Five MPs discussed the proposal of U Tin Htut of Zalun Constituency urging authorities concerned to probe into farmland confiscation cases and to reconsider before the law to guarantee no losses to farmers. The MPs argued that some companies took advantage of the letter of law and confiscated the farmlands. Some farmers were not compensated and some compensation did not match the market prices, forcing both farmers and their families into desperation. Some farmers who have been working on inherited farmland even lost the right to run own farmland. So, systematic measures are needed if the State is to confiscate the farmland for infrastructural development purpose.

It benefits neither the government nor the farmers if the projects come into vain. So, if the projects fail to progress, it should be given back to original owners or distributed among farmers.

There are ten wetland projects in Pantanaw Township, covering an area of 36665 acres inclusive of 123 lakes. Farmers anticipated companies to turn the lakes into farms but the lake in the end turned into fish farms instead. Only a few acres of farmland could be reclaimed by selling the lakes included in wetland area. The farmlands which were registered under the ownership of the private companies were rented to original farmers and the companies took out the agricultural financial assistance and inputs provided by the State. So, the wetland project is not in position for effective utilization. So, those farmlands should be given back to farmers and compensation should also be given to them. If the partner companies of the project could not actually accomplish their missions, and if they would like to return the farmlands to farmers, they should also compensate the farmers who suffer losses.

Regarding the auction for fishing permit in lake, those who won in the bidding resell the permit seeking profits. So, the price was unreasonably much higher than the original one when the permit goes into the hands of actual breeders. In addition, there is a lot of disputes between fishing lakes and farmlands over irrigation water supply.

There is law related to fresh water lake promulgated in 1991. According to the law, when there occurs flood in the lake, the lake owner owns all the places where the water reaches if it is connected with lake water, so one does not even own water and fish under his house. Violators are subject to legal actions.

So, Freshwater Fishery Law according to Appendix 2 of the Section 181 of the 1991 Constitution should be amended. Lake border, operation hours should be set and lake rules should be enforced and common fishing waters should be created. Either Pyidaungsu Hluttaw or Pyithu Hluttaw or Region Hluttaw or both Pyithu Hluttaw and Region Hluttaw or Amyotha Hluttaw or Farmers Affairs Committee of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw should investigate the case nationwide and report to the Hluttaw as early as possible.

Five MPs continued to discuss that Department for Human Settlement and Housing Development gave compensation of K 10000 per acre to farmers for over 2000 acres of Mingaladon Garden City around 1997.

The company has coordinated with farmers for several times and gave compensation of K 300,000 per acre for over 800 acres which would be established as Industrial Zone No (4).

The farmers then abandoned the farmlands and the company started building infrastructure. Only when the infrastructural construction had completed by around 80 per cent, farmers claimed back the right to run those farmlands through local and foreign journals at the instigation of someone or some groups. As the farmlands were changed for industrial purpose, it is impossible to turn them back into farmland to return to farmers. The establishment of the Industrial Zone No (4) was permitted at different administrative levels by the State Peace and Development Council, Ministry of Construction, Yangon Region Government and Human Settlement and Housing Development Department. It is the wrong accusation that companies are confiscating farmland establishing industrial zones and implementing housing projects which are spread through the media. Likewise, it is unreasonable of excessive demands for compensation.

So, the State should form a team to investigate the cases to find out the suitable amount of compensations relevant to the periods when farmlands were confiscated.

However, it should not be burden to the budget of the State.

In addition, companies are required to join hands with the government for higher social status of farmers. It is needed to continue popularizing agricultural methods contributing to livelihood of farmers. If only farmers have sustainable livelihood and achieve better standard of living, can the nation enjoy economic prosperity. As the amount of set compensations is poorly low due to the weak points of 1964 Farmland Act, some sufferers were paid more on social grounds under the law while some never compensated. So, actions must be taken to make sure that farmers suffer no losses.

Thus, the legislation needs to adopt laws and by laws to guarantee the interests of the farmers and to protect them under the law.

The session came to an end at 3.50 pm and the fifth day session continues 1 pm tomorrow.

The assessment report No. 1/2012 of the joint Public Accounts Committee on additional budget allocation was submitted to the Hluttaw and the proposal for investigation into farmland confiscation and fair resolution in the interests of farmers discussed at today's session.

***Source: NLM 2012-07-24***