

President U Thein Sein addresses 2nd Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 Jan— President U Thein Sein addresses 2nd Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum at MICC, here, this morning.

As you all are aware, the First Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum was held in Nay Pyi Taw from 19 to 20 January 2013. At that forum, “Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation” was adopted and made public. Nay Pyi Taw Accord includes both the Government of Myanmar and development partners’ commitments and obligations. It is observed that the Government’s commitments under Nay Pyi Taw Accord are also in conformity with the current reform processes being undertaken by the Government.

During the past 30 months, the Government has undertaken four phases of reform process with momentum; namely political reforms, economic reforms, public administration reforms and private sector development reforms. Due to the first phase of political reform measures, favorable conditions for national reconciliation have been created and mutual understanding with the ethnic minority groups has been built in our country.

The second phase of economic and social reforms has been implemented with the people-centered approach. Due to these reform processes, we have achieved good socio-economic development outcome for our country. We have also achieved 7.3% GDP growth rate in 2012-2013 which exceeded more than projected growth rate of 6.7%. This is one of the tangible results of economic development achieved through successful cooperation and collaborations among the State, our People and our development partners.

We have also undertaken public administrative and management reforms at the third stage of our reform processes. It is being conducted in order to reduce central control, to improve administrative capacities of local governments and to encourage participation of local populace in public administration systems, management practices and decision making processes.

As the fourth phase of reform, measures for private sector development are already under implementation now. In this respect, greater importance is attached to improving rules, regulations and laws governing economy, trade, and investment, and logistical and institutional infrastructure. All reform measures in these four areas are being pursued with an inclusive and participatory approach, with greater transparency and sense of accountability.

Currently, Myanmar has started attaining its development though much more remains to be done to keep abreast of other countries and reach international standard. In the remaining 26 months of our Government’s term, we will focus on the seven priority areas and implement projects and

programmes that will directly benefit our people, namely electricity, water supply, agriculture sector development, employment creation, tourism development, financial development, and trade and investment development.

In the past, we have relied only on the state budget for the development of our country. Now, we can also count on other sources of finance such as foreign aid, loans, and domestic and foreign investments, and by mobilizing these resources, we have been trying to implement sectoral and regional development programs and projects effectively. Therefore, we would like to welcome and invite all development partners to closely cooperate with us in accordance with the commitments made under Nay Pyi Taw Accord for the socio-economic development of Myanmar.

Year 2013 is a very encouraging year in the history of Myanmar's state building and development endeavors. All the significant outcomes are in fact achieved with our collective efforts, and through cooperation among the State, our People and our development partners.

Especially at this period of re-engaging with the international community while the country has been taking comprehensive reforms measures, Myanmar successfully hosted many international events including 1st Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum in 2013, 22nd World Economic Forum on East Asia, 1st EU-Myanmar Task Force Meeting and Myanmar Global Investment Forum.

The progress and development of cooperation in political front include building of national reconciliations, release of all political prisoners, ending conflicts with restoration of lasting peace to ensure political stability and greater unity among nationals. These results are the fruits of people-centered-development approach and collaboration with international community. In promotion of socio-cultural cooperation in the region, 27th Southeast Asian Sea Game was successfully held again in Myanmar after 40 years. We acknowledge that technical assistance and support from development partners play an important role to make this event a success.

Besides, encouraging development in the context of cooperation with international community include lifting of sanctions imposed by EU, Europe and Australia in 2013, and becoming beneficiary of the Generalized Systems of Preference (GSP) from these countries. Myanmar also became a member of the New York Convention last year which paves the way for closer cooperation with the countries of the world. To maintain and accelerate the momentum of these development processes, the theme of this year's Forum is chosen as "Accelerating Actions for Progress through Enhancing Inclusive Coordination". I firmly believe that we will accelerate our progress with actions; we will achieve tangible results and outcomes through enhancing coordination between the government and development partners, and making our development cooperation to become more inclusive process. Myanmar has projected 9.1% GDP growth rate for the fiscal year 2014-2015. In order to achieve this targeted growth rate, we will systematically manage and utilize development aids and concessional loans, technical assistance, attract local and foreign investment which will support the development of our country. The Government has formulated first fiveyear national development plan as well as Myanmar Comprehensive Development Plan. I believe that this will help our Development Partners to better align their aids, supports and assistance with the country's development priorities and

plans, to continue cooperating with the Government in our reform processes and make their development aids more effective.

We, as the government in the driver's seat, have been making efforts to effectively utilize international support and assistance and ensure them focus on our priority sectors and areas, and to fulfill international commitments such as achieving Millennium Development Goals. In addition, we will give priorities to activities that will contribute towards the progress and development of the country, and attach greater importance to effective utilization of development partners' support and assistance. Therefore, development partners also need to share the information related to their priority programs and projects on a regular basis, and to make regular consultations with the government on the country's development priorities. This will ensure the development assistance more effective and adhere to the commitments made in Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation. We would like to encourage our development partners to work hand in hand with the government, with your continued spirit of cooperation, to support our country's reform process and help to achieve development effectiveness in Myanmar.

Starting from 1st January 2014, Myanmar took the responsibility of ASEAN Chairmanship for one year term. During this year, as the Chair of ASEAN and as a responsible member of international community, Myanmar will seriously play its role with comprehensive approach in dealing with all the matters related to ASEAN, East Asia, and Asian and Global affairs.

In conclusion, I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of Myanmar and our 60 million people, my heartfelt thanks and sincere appreciations to all the development partner countries and organizations, UN agencies and local and international non-governmental organizations for their continued support and assistance to respective priorities and targeted groups in our country's state building efforts and development processes and goals. I would like to invite all stakeholders including our development partners to work hand in hand with the Government, and further cooperate and collaborate with us for the future development of our country.

Next, World Bank President Dr. Jim Yong Kim delivered a speech. He said: The World Bank Group is now and will be in the future a strong partner with the government of Myanmar as its bold steps towards achieving a democracy dividend for all. We will substantially increase the World Bank Group support for Myanmar in the coming years, through a multiyear public and private sector investment program of around US\$ 2 billion. At the same time, we will work with the government and communities as partners, and help build more effective transparent and accountable national institutions.

The funding will help us ramp up work in three areas that are closely aligned with Myanmar's priorities: energy, health and agriculture.

That's why, over the next five years, we are seeking to invest US\$ 1 billion in Myanmar's power sector as seventy percent of Myanmar's people lack access to electricity. Investing in Myanmar's electricity potential will not only improve the lives of its citizens but it will also create a better business environment and that in turn will create jobs.

My second point is that investments in infrastructure and in people need to go hand-in-hand. Investing in people's health can bring strong economic returns not just for families, but for country. One dollar invested in health could return anywhere from 9 dollars to 20 dollars. This is good news for Myanmar because of the country's ambitious target of achieving universal health coverage by 2030. We strongly endorsed this target, as do many development partners. Donors have committed to a combined US\$ 800 million for the next three to four years. The World Bank Group plans to invest US\$ 200 million to support the government's efforts to achieve universal health coverage.

My third point is about agriculture that accounts for 43 percent of GDP, generates about 54 percent of employment, and provides livelihoods to more than 70 percent of the population. Despite natural advantages of abundant land and water, productivity is low, and that is a problem, the government, with help from its partners, can fix. Rural electrification should be a great boost to the country's millions of farmers. And improvements in access to quality health care also should increase the production of farms because it will improve the health of so many.

Then, Union Minister at President Office U Soe Thane extended greetings. A video presentation featuring the ongoing political, economic and social reforms in Myanmar was presented to those present. Afterwards, the President posed for documentary photos together with those present. The Forum continues tomorrow. —MNA
