

## President's Monthly Radio Address

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Oct—*The following is the full text of the speech delivered by President U Thein Sein through radio programmes to the entire people on 1 October.*

I would like to inform all of you about the recent changes and developments that have taken place in our country during the month of September just as I have done previously on this radio program.

In this month's radio speech, I want to emphasize the peace process which is directly related to the long term plan to realize national reconciliation—a subject that I touched on in last month's radio speech. I will explain the policies and positions of our government with regard to the peace process since the prevailing political and economic developments in the country are intertwined with it.

All successive governments have tried to achieve peace in the country. History will be the judge whether these governments did the right thing or had the right intentions when making peace. One thing which we can all agree on is that we have not achieved genuine peace that will bring an end to all armed conflicts in the country. This is the political reality of our times.

Our history lessons also tell us that ceasefire alone will not lead to lasting peace; we will have to solve the root causes of the problems through political means.

Since the first time our government started making the necessary plans to end all ethnic conflicts and build lasting peace, we have considered the aforesaid political reality. The current peace building plans undertaken by our government came out of the analysis of such political reality.

As you may recall, shortly after assuming office, I invited all ethnic armed groups to come to the peace talks without setting any preconditions other than their genuine will for peace. The ethnic armed groups responded positively to my invitation.

All the stakeholders have tried to do everything they can to overcome the difficulties and challenges with dedication and resolve in order to get to where we are in the peace process. We are also aware of the fact that there still are some minor skirmishes between the government troops and some ethnic armed groups even though ceasefire agreements are in place with many of the ethnic armed groups. At the same time, there is much evidence of potential confrontations being averted because of timely communication and negotiation between officials from the Tatmadaw and the ethnic armed groups. All major confrontations and hostilities were deescalated through negotiations. These events show us that the Tatmadaw, ethnic armed groups and all other stakeholders truly yearn for peace and that they are determined to strive for peace with patience, tolerance and understanding.

Although there are some setbacks, the current state of the peace process unambiguously shows that the achievements outweigh the setbacks. We should also congratulate our dialogue partners including leaders of all ethnic groups, The Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups for the achievements we have attained thus far.

Of all of the achievements, the one that I value most is the decision by all ethnic groups to not secede from the Union. Such a position indicates that our ethnic brothers and sisters wish to be part of the Union of their own accord.

We are now planning to organize a signing ceremony for a nation-wide ceasefire agreement in order to recall and reaffirm all the achievements and agreements we have attained thus far. This will be part of an attempt to implement the agreements reached at State and Union level meetings. The nation-wide ceasefire agreement will also acknowledge that ceasefire is not the ultimate goal of the peace process. In addition, it will also initiate the political dialogue process that is designed to solve all the underlying problems associated with armed conflict in the country.

Soon after the nationwide ceasefire agreement is signed, a meeting with stakeholders will be held to discuss the drafting of the framework for political dialogue. Such commitment should serve as a guarantee of political dialogue. Once we have the framework for political dialogue, we will start the political dialogue process that will lead us to the national peace conference. We will hold meetings to discuss and decide how the political dialogues and the national peace conference are to be held, how long they will take, how the delegates will be selected, and how the agenda will be set. We will share what is discussed at the meeting with the public whenever it is appropriate to do so.

Meanwhile, as the President of this country, I would say that political dialogue process will serve as a forum to discuss any issue so long as they constructively contribute to the state-building and national unity and are in line with the principles of non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of national unity and the perpetuation of sovereignty.

In an attempt to achieve national reconciliation, I also met with the leaders of the 88 generation peace and open society in the middle of September. I will continue to do everything in my power to institute an all inclusive political process and a new democratic political culture.

A special development in the peace process is that the people of Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyine and Myitkyina celebrated the international peace day wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. I was very impressed with the peoples' longing for peace, especially the activities organized by the youths with resolve to assume the duty of peace building. I am convinced that if the entire population participate in the process it will definitely succeed.

As all of you know, our government has expended political space for the society at large by undertaking the democratic reforms. The media in our country enjoys more freedom than its counterparts in other Southeast Asian countries. Since we are beginning to enjoy more freedom, we must also take on more responsibility. Only then will we be able to create a harmonious society. I would like to urge the media profession to enforce media ethics, avoid covering unfounded rumors and stop making personal attacks at a time the country is sowing the seeds of media freedom. At a time when the entire country is engaging in historic state-building process, we all must work together to prevent such unethical personal attacks that rise to the level of abuse of recently acquired media freedoms.

I would also like to discuss the people-centered administrative reforms which our government is undertaking. Our government will also carry out people-centered development programs during the remainder of my term. In trying to establish a new democratic country, it is important for the government to integrate peoples' energy in its efforts to meet peoples' needs. In order to ensure such government society synergy, the Union ministers who are in charge of the reform committees have frank discussions in their meetings with township

development support committees and township municipal committees that are formed with community leaders. Such meetings not only allowed us to solve the ongoing problems in local areas but also helped us gather data about the daily lives of the people. We will have to draw on such data in drafting the budget estimate— one that can meet the needs of both the people and the government—and getting it approved. Since public participation can contribute to the effectiveness and success of the reform process, I would like to encourage the public to actively participate in these aforesaid committees.

I am very happy that I can explain the development of the peace process in this month's speech. I am also convinced that this speech will clear all suspicions and doubts one might have on the peace process. As noted above, the success of the peace process depends on the dedication and resolve of all stakeholders. As such, the peace process will be successful only when the government, Hluttaws, political parties and other political groups, civil society associations, business associations, social and religious groups, Tatmadaw and the rest of the public participate in the peace process actively and genuinely.

At the present moment, if people come together and form a political force that care about peace, we will be able to achieve the lasting peace which we all long for.

In conclusion, I would like to note that I will try to do everything I can during the remainder of my term to achieve lasting peace, to improve the living standard of the general public, and to create bright and prosperous future for the young people.

May you all have peace of mind and good health.

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