

**President delivered an address at the ceremony of rural development and socio-economic improvement in Ayeyawady Region**

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 Dec — President U Thein Sein delivered an address at the ceremony of rural development and socio-economic improvement in Ayeyawady Region at Koe Thein sports ground in Patheingyi this morning.

Also present were the Union ministers, the Ayeyawady Region chief minister, the chief of the general staff (Army, Navy and Air), the speaker of the region hluttaw, the commander, the deputy ministers, the region ministers, parliamentarians, departmental heads, members of district cooperative societies and local people.

In his address, the President gave an account of the ceremony that a loan of K 8191.963 million including farm equipment, fishing equipment, trucks, engines, generators, water pumps, sewing machines, trishaws and motorbikes will be provided to members of cooperatives societies in 26 townships.

He continued that capital loans and equipment will be handed over to the members under the program of the Ministry of Cooperatives, aiming at ensuring socio-economic development of rural people and facilitating the implementation of social, education and health sectors.

He added that only when agriculture sector development, will development of rural region be possible. So emphasis should be placed on agriculture sector development, transforming the conventional methods to modern ones. This can thereby contributing to food sufficiency and higher income. He called on formation of cooperative associations in dealing with supply chain to ensure more success. He stressed the importance of cooperative associations in supply chain management for the sake of farmers.

He praised respective cooperative associations and microfinance scheme that could provide capital and equipment and create the market as an effective tool for poverty reduction.

Due to the lack of capital, some of the poor including the civil servants at lower level not only in rural areas but also in urban regions have to engage in such works like driving trishaws and motorbike on hire and sewing on commission. With mere hand-to-mouth subsistence, the poor including civil servants at lower level in rural and urban areas are unable to send their offspring to school and receive medical treatment when they are sick, as they have no extra money, being obliged to share the certain proportion of the rewards of their grease labour to the owners.

Measures are being taken by the Cooperatives Ministry to help them to own trishaws, motorbikes and sewing machines within a short period of time, providing capital loans to them. He stressed the need of shaping their lives themselves and respecting the goodwill of the government and working hard with honesty and repaying their loans in full on schedule.

The government is striving for smooth transportation, potable water and electricity supply and promotion of education, health and economic sectors in rural regions with local and

foreign assistance. He stressed the importance of village administrators elected by people to be good and able ones for the development of rural villages. Only then, the rural of law and economic, education, health and social development drive will be realized in rural villages, saying that no progress can be made without peace and stability, rule of law and unity. He called for collaboration and cooperation between authorities concerned and the committees for development of rural and urban areas.

The country has now started exercising people centered administrative system. There are committees, organizations and MPs in every village and township across the country. Cooperation and unity among these organizations and officials would contribute to rapid development of the country. All people and organizations need to stand on their own feet in an effort for development of their regions.

People need to effectively use their loans in their businesses as well as to repay their loans at due date. He highlighted the accountability of individuals, organization and cooperative society. He also urged those involved in microfinance scheme to make cooperation for smooth running of it. In conclusion, he called for cooperation and unity among these organizations and people.

Afterwards, the Union Minister for Cooperatives U Kyaw Hsan touched upon rural development, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation tasks.

The Minister said a loan of more than K 10843.1948 million has been granted since October, 2012. A total of 1954 farm equipment worth K 1992.64125 million have been sold by installment. K 50 billion new loans will be disbursed to people who have not got loan in April, May and June next year. Plans are under way to increase the loan amount in 2014-2015 FY. The new interest rate is reduced to K 1.50 while the old rate amount to K 2.50.

Later, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung explained the facts about rural development and socio-economic development tasks.

At today's ceremony, a loan of K 7621.15 million has been disbursed to 879 cooperative associations in 26 townships and 314 were provided with farm equipment, motorcycles, sewing machines and fishing gears worth K 657.453 million.

After that, Union Minister U Kyaw Hsan and the Chief Minister disbursed the microfinance loans to cooperative societies in the region. Then, Chairman of Central Cooperative Society and the Co-operative Bank Ltd handed over agricultural equipment to the local farmers.

After the ceremony, the President cordially greeted those present and looked round the booths, farm equipments and finishing gears on display. The President and party looked round the development of Pathein in a motorcade.

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