

Report to the People on the Progress of the Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State (January to April 2018)

Introduction

As the Government of Myanmar works towards achieving stability, durable peace and development across the country including Rakhine State, the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State was established with an aim to help create a peaceful, fair and prosperous future for the people living in the State. This report provides an update to the people of Myanmar regarding the progress of the implementation by the Committee, for the period of January to April 2018.

Economic and Social Development

Due compensations are granted for lands acquired from local people for projects necessary for comprehensive development of Rakhine State. Compensations for 6.06 acres of land that was acquired for Kantharyar police station in Gwa Township amounting in 2.7068 million MMK, and for 3.11 acres of acquired for Ahmyintkyun police station in Sittwe Township amounting in 7.775 million MMK are now sanctioned; and authorities are currently processing the payments to the farmers. Compensation for the land acquired for the village tract administrator office of Ahmyintkyun Village Tract in Sittwe Township is included in the FY 2018-19 budget proposal.

China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) and the Government Designated Entity (GOE) as a counterpart from Myanmar are working closely for conducting Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and Geological and Topographical (G.T) Survey for Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone Project, in order to promote public participation, and to ensure local people can enjoy the benefits from investments and extraction of natural resource in Rakhine State.

Discussions and plans are in progress with ILO for a labor market assessment. Meanwhile, livelihood skills trainings targeting women such as trainings for production of value-added food, home science, tailoring, agricultural practices, and refresher courses for cooperatives were delivered, to increase job opportunities as a means to address low participation of women in labor force. A total of 42 training courses were conducted during this reporting period, benefitting a total of 568 women.

With regards to transportation sector that is crucial for socio-economic development of the state, construction of 13 bridges is now completed whereas construction of another 11 bridges is planned to be complete in FY 2018-19. With support from capital expenditure budgets of the Union and the State, 34 roads are being upgraded section by section, and two new May-U mountain passes are also being built. The construction of these two main mountain passes- Kyaukpadu-Inndin Zaydipyin Mountain Pass (9/0 mile) and Kyeinchaung-Goatpi Mountain Pass (9/7 mile)- is now 98% complete. The construction of Buthidaung-Thabaitdaung-Nyaungchaung-Aungzeyya- Angumaw Road (46 miles 5 furlongs) is also almost complete. In waterways, between 22 to 25 ferry and freight lines are operating regularly; with a total fleet of 50 river freight vessels, more than 700 freight vessels with over-20-horse power engines, and more than 600 freight vessels with under-20-horse power engines providing passenger and freight transportation services.

Electricity is also another crucial sector for socio-economic development. Efforts are being made to provide 24-hour electricity from the national grid in Maung Daw area. Construction of a 66-KV transmission line from Ponnagyun to Rathaedaung is now complete; and Rathaedaung power distribution substation was opened on March 31, 2018 to provide 24-hour electricity. Similarly, construction of a 66KV, 2 x 5MVA substation in Buthidaung and a 66KV, 5MVA substation in Maung Daw are in progress, with 38% and 12.61% of total project work completed to date respectively. These projects will be completed on time to provide 24-hour

electricity from the national grid to Budthidaung township at the end of June 2018; and to Maung Daw township at the end of December 2018. Rural electrification using solar power prior to electrification through the national grid is also simultaneously implemented in Rakhine State. Contracts for installation of 8092 solar power systems were now awarded through a public tender.

Projects for sufficient supply of drinking water and water for agriculture were also implemented across rural areas of Rakhine State. A total of 245 water supply projects were completed including 184 projects funded by FY 2017-18 Rakhine State Budget and Supplementary Budget through the Union Fund, 13 projects funded by UNICEF and 48 projects funded by the Union grants.

Myanma Agricultural Development Bank also sanctioned 12,853.41 million MMK as loans to 349 farmers for procurement of 349 tractors during this reporting period. Agricultural Mechanization Department also sold 156 hand-operated tractors in this period.

Efforts are taken to scale up the opportunities to access agricultural loans for all communities in Rakhine State. In January 2018, a total of 246.30 million MMK was sanctioned for 67 members of four cooperatives in two townships, for agricultural work in 821 acres of farmland. Additionally, Myanma Agricultural Development Bank also sanctioned 25 million MMK as pre-monsoon agricultural loans, from January to April 2018.

A total of 1,331 participants received technical support through 34 technical trainings, in order to help farmers from Rakhine townships with modern agricultural techniques.

77 new mobile radio stations and 28 new post offices were also expanded to improve access to telephone, internet and communications services that will support socio-economic development of local people in Rakhine State. Additionally, 84 kilometers in length of new fiber cables are now installed in

Sittwe – Ahngumaw – Maungdaw – Buthidaung cable route and Maungdaw Taungpyoletwe cable route.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications granted approvals to invite Expressions of Interest (EOI) through announcements in state-owned newspapers, and to hire a consultant to prepare Request for Proposal (RFP) as an initial step for construction of a new airport in Mrauk-U township. Consultants are now preparing EOI documents in accordance with the international standards and procedures for Public Private Partnership (PPP). In addition, repair and maintenance works were also carried out at the Sittwe and Kyaukpyu Airports that are important for the transportation in the state- including repair of a runway segment damaged by landslide and additional double seal-coating of the runway at Sittwe airport, and patching (2880×100 feet) and double seal-coating (1300×50 feet) of the runway at Kyauk Phyu airport. Myanma National Airway-a state-owned carrier – transported 45,197 passengers to Sittwe, Kyaukpyu, Man Aung and Ann townships from January to April 2018; and this accounts for 9% of all domestic passengers.

Procedures for application of business licenses were simplified to promote trade. Authorities have reduced paperwork requirements for international trade – with only 3 supporting documents now being required for export license instead of 9 documents previously, and only 3 supporting documents for import licenses instead of 11. Company registration fees were also reduced from 500,000 MMK to 250,000 MMK starting from April 1, 2018.

Automatic meteorological instruments were installed in 12 townships – 10 township agricultural departments and 2 townships hosting Danyawaddi naval base in Rakhine State, as a part of the Disaster Risk Management Project for improved climate resilience and early warning of natural disasters, funded by the World Bank. Additionally, 4 earthquake measuring instruments were also installed in four townships of Rakhine State.

Works such as natural cross-breeding of trees and forests on 525 acres across 7 townships, establishment of 300 acres of commercial ironwood plantation, repair of forest roads for 20 miles, preparation of forest reserve boundaries for 90 miles, preparation of plot boundaries for 80 miles, fire prevention for 1,190 acres of forest, expansion of reserve/protected forest area for 602.5 square miles, and 3 skill trainings with 168 participants for trees and forest conservation were also implemented for improved environmental conservation and climate change adaptation.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, the Rakhine State Government is constructing one 500-ton silo for long term dry-storage of paddy; and this work is now 93% completed.

Seed production plantations were also established across Rakhine State including 55 acres of summer paddy, 20 acres of winter peanuts, 50 acres of winter green grams, 2,500 acres of pure variety wet-season paddy, 1,115 acres of peanut zone and 1,060 acres of green gram zone. Additionally, 330 acres of wet-season paddy, 95 acres of green gram, 350 acres of peanut, 20 acres of rubber, 50 acres of cashew nut and 10 acres of sugar cane were also established as model farms across the townships. Research plots were also established for agricultural research including 3 green gram plots, 2 peanut plots and 5 plots for summer paddy cultivation techniques.

Construction of one auxiliary spillway, 2 check dams and 1 creek dam were completed for improved irrigation systems. Construction works for 9 floodgates, 10 check dams, 2 embankments for prevention of saline water intrusion, 4 embankments for freshwater, 1 reservoir and 5 creek dams, as well as upgrade of 9 embankments are currently in progress.

Citizenship

In this reporting period, a total of 339 people – 87 people that attained 10 years of age and 252 that attained 18 years of age – received their Citizenship

Scrutinization Cards, of all the persons who applied to the Central Governing Body for the decisions as to his/her citizenship status in accordance with the Section 65 of 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law. Those who received Citizenship Scrutinization Cards are entitled to enjoy the rights of a citizen prescribed by the laws of the land, in accordance with section 12 of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law.

Efforts were put in to speed up the national verification process in accordance with the existing laws and regulations. During this reporting period, NV cards issuance alongside with biometric data collection were done for 379 people in Shwezar Village Tract, Myoma (1 Ward and Myoma South Ward of Maungdaw Township, and 1,907 people in Aung Mingalar Ward, Thetkaepyin and Thae Chaung Village of Sittwe Township. As NV Card is the basis for the national verification process, this process was scaled up in Thetkaepyin and Gaungdoteka IDP Camps in Sittwe and Nidin IDP Camp in Kyauktaw as main pilot areas. Arrangements are currently made for NV Card applicants to simultaneously apply for the citizenship scrutinization process.

The timeframe for completing the procedures of national verification process starting from the date of filing the application till issuance of an appropriate type of certificate/card is now set as 5 months.

Applicants who are denied from citizenship can appeal to the Union Cabinet, in accordance with Section 70 (a) of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law. And the Section 70 (b) of the law prescribes the decision of the Cabinet as final. During this reporting period, three persons who were dissatisfied with the decision of the Central Body and appealed to the Cabinet were granted citizenship by the Cabinet decision after review of the cases again. Although a person is not deemed as a citizen, s/he can live in the country by holding NV cards and following the rules and regulations set out by the State if his/her residency in Myanmar can be verified. Regulations for permanent residency is also now enacted for foreigners who reside permanently in Myanmar.

Leaflets that outline the national verification process and encouraging Muslim communities to cooperate in the process were also distributed between 1 January 2018 and 31 March 2018, as part of public awareness campaigns to revitalize the verification process in Sittwe, Mrauk-U, Ponnagyun, Minbya, Kyauktaw and Maungdaw Townships.

Departmental investigations are carried out for complaints against the verification process, and actions are taken as appropriate if these complaints are verified. Additionally, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission also investigate complaints that they receive, and actions are taken in accordance with the laws and prescribed procedures.

Freedom of Movement

A road map with a timeline and important milestones is currently being implemented to ensure that all people in Rakhine State – regardless of religion, race and citizenship status – enjoy freedom of movement that will bolster socioeconomic opportunities, in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations. As a result, people holding NV Cards can now enjoy freedom of movement in Maungdaw District. Discussions and coordination among relevant departments and agencies were also held to analyze and remove restrictions on movement as required. During the reporting period, there were 58 people (31 males and 27 females) who travelled out of Rakhine State to Yangon with temporary travel authorization certificate (Form – 4). Discussions to raise awareness with on procedures and regulations governing the movements were also held in Aung Mingalar Ward and Thekaepyin IDP Camp in Sittwe on 04/03/2018 and 05/03/2018 and in Budthidaung and Maungdaw Townships on 27/03/2018 and 28/03/2018, with an aim to contribute towards peace and stability of the Rakhine state through increased interrelations and movements among the communities in State.

No (1) Border Guard Police Command Centre of the Myanmar Police Force, Ministry of Home Affairs is also implementing a security protocol to enable the locals travel freely and safely.

Additionally, a workshop with Rakhine State Government officials, MPs, officials from relevant government departments, and representatives of ethnic minorities – Mro, Khami, Daing Net or Chakkama, Chin (Asho Chin, Laizao Chin, Zhotung Chin, Lawhtu Chin), Maramargyi, Kaman etc. was held at Khaine Thazin Hall, Sittwe, Rakhine State on April 7, 2018, to review any laws and local orders that restrict the rights and freedom of ethnic minorities. It was learnt that the representatives of ethnic minorities attending the workshop were quite satisfied with the workshop proceedings.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Plans are in place to organize a workshop with relevant government officials on 2 June 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw, for developing a ‘National Strategy for Closure of IDP Camps in Myanmar’ that will outline camp closure processes and timelines. Efforts are also taken to close the IDP camps in Rakhine State the soonest possible, and to promote a peaceful and stable social environment. 50 units of low-cost housing were constructed as a first step for the closure of Taungpaw IDP Camp in Myaypon Township, to which some IDPs were resettled. Another 50 units of housing are currently under construction, as well as other necessary infrastructures like roads and bridges.

Consultations for camp closures were also held with the people living in the IDP camps; and arrangements are currently in progress for resettlement of these IDPs. These consultations took place in Nidin IDP Camp in Kyauktaw on April 4 and 5, 2018, in Thetkaepyin IDP Camp in Sittwe on March 3, 2018, and in Gaungdoteka IDP Camp (1) and (2) on April 6, 2018.

Humanitarian Assistance

Provision of humanitarian assistance continues for people who still need help to meet their daily basic needs. 10,327 people from 1,694 households in Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships of Rakhine State received food aid (rice, cooking oil, salt and beans) worth of 128.42 million MMK. Likewise, 29,140 people from 4,520 households received rice, cooking oil, salt, beans, onions, tinned fish and infant formulas worth of 277.296 million MMK, through the UEHRD Youth Volunteer Program. Female personal care supplies and hygiene kits were also provided to 156 households in Thaechaung Village in Sittwe and 84 female-headed households in Gaungdoetka Camp.

Child friendly spaces were also set up in Mingan, Thetkaepyin, Danyawaddi and Say Thamar Gyi Camps in Sittwe as part of the child development program, as well as in North Ohntawgyi, Set Yone Su, Gaungdoteka, Phwe Yar Gone and Thaechaung villages. These child friendly spaces were also supported with educational materials and toys for children.

The First 1000-Day Nutrition Initiative was launched in Rakhine State on March 1, 2018, to reduce malnutrition rate in the area. The program supports pregnant women and mothers with children under 2 years of age in all townships across Rakhine State with monthly cash transfers. To date, a total of 2538.72 million MMK has been disbursed to 56,560 beneficiaries.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the Rakhine State Government, the Red Cross Movement (RCM) also provided food and other non-food relief items, emergency health kits and hygiene products, packets of high energy food and oral rehydration salts, seeds, temporary shelters, drinking water and water purification units to 61,644 people from 12,184 households in Rakhine State, during the period of January 1 to April 11, 2018.

Media Access

During this reporting period, the Rakhine State Government- in cooperation with the Myanmar Media Council - arranged four media tours with 74 journalists from various local and international media outlets, with an aim to provide balanced

coverage of the situation in Rakhine State as well as the status of rule of law, peace and stability.

Additionally, the following media support activities were carried out for raising awareness amongst domestic and international communities about efforts being made for development, stability, peace and rule of law in Rakhine State:

- TV broadcast of 689 news, 3 interviews and 41 education and documentary programs;
- Radio broadcast of 1,797 news, 17 interviews, 5 education and documentary programs and 368 awareness raising programs;
- 264 Public Service Announcement (PSAs)
- Online coverage of 1,207 news and articles on the Ministry of Information website;
- Daily newspaper coverage of 482 news, 858 photos and 27 interviews;

Education

The government continues to endeavor for equal access to Education in Rakhine State regardless of religion, race, citizenship status and gender. 34 additional schools were reopened in January 2018; And this brings the total number of schools reopened after the terrorist events to 324, out of 424 schools that had to close down. End-term tests were also completed for all basic education levels, and the exam results have already been announced. Additionally, the FY 2018-19 budget will include funds to open two government technical high schools in Gwa and Buthidaung townships, to increase access to livelihood training opportunities.

The total expenditure for the education sector in Rakhine State for FY 2017-18 is 105,362. 963 million MMK. This is by far the largest budget among all the states;

and accounts for 8% of the total capital expenditure for the Ministry of Education in the fiscal year.

Accommodation for school teachers is provided in the premises of local offices, local police stations and police outposts under the command of the Office of No 1 Border Guard Police Force, for safety and security during the summer holidays.

About one hundred school teachers who speak Bengali dialect were also appointed as permanent staff to promote literacy in communities living in Maungdaw District.

Plans are in place to provide free text books and stipends in basic education schools in the upcoming 2018-19 Academic Year. The Department of Technical, Vocational Education and Training is also calculating required budgets for the FY 2019-20, to assist vulnerable households from all communities in Rakhine State who are finding difficult to access vocational education due to financial barriers.

Health

Equitable health care services are provided in the state, with public announcements to ensure people are aware that anyone can access health care services and that the hospitals and that clinics are “protected zones” for people seeking health care. A total of 14,196 people (2,823 ethnic nationals and 11,373 Muslims) received outpatient and inpatient care at Sittwe, Thetkaepyin, Myaungbwe, Buthidaung, Zeditaung and Muangdaw hospitals during this reporting period.

Health care professionals and staff are continuously recruited, trained and appointed to improve the health care personnel vs. population ratio. In brief –

- 430 nursing/midwifery trainees are currently being trained at the Nursing and Midwifery Training School in Sittwe;

- 78 new health care professionals and doctors including specialists were appointed to increase health care service delivery;
- 32 new auxiliary midwives from Kyauktaw, Ann and Myaybon townships received an auxiliary midwife training; while 49 auxiliary midwives from the existing workforce received two refresher trainings;
- 101 Public Health Supervisors II (PHS II) who completed their training in February 2018 have started working for the health care service delivery in Rakhine State;
- 7 training for 196 new community health workers and one refresher training for 20 existing community health workers were also delivered in 8 townships across Rakhine State.

With support from the JICA, a solar system was installed as a step to provide required electricity for setting up a mini-blood bank in Buthidaung township hospital.

Suggestion boxes are now in place at all hospitals and health care centres to prevent and address corruption, illegal collection of service fees, exploitation and discrimination in the health sector.

Five meetings and discussions with experts from Norway, the European Union and 3MDG fund were held, and a Working Group Committee was established for developing a master plan for upgrading Sittwe General Hospital. Eight repair and maintenance activities of Sittwe General Hospital are now completed, and the other three are ongoing.

Data collection from 30 Enumeration Areas (EAs) (23 EAs of only ethnic nationals, 4 EAs of only Muslims and 3 EAs of both ethnic nationals and Muslims) in Rakhine State - as part of the nation-wide Myanmar Micronutrient Food

Consumption Survey - is now completed; and the data collected are now being analyzed. At the same time, routine nutrition activities such as vitamin A supplementation and deworming continues as planned in Rakhine State.

Four training courses on management of malnutrition for a total of 204 health staff were delivered.

Commodities for nutritional development including 100 sets of training aid materials for Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition, 6 electronic devices for measurement of nutritional status of mothers and children, 6 height measuring instruments, 200 measuring tapes for mid-arm circumference of children and 6 boxes of different special infant formulas were also provided.

Drugs

A new National Drug Control Policy that is rooted in the principles of public health, human rights and development was launched on February 20, 2018, with an aim to affectively deal with drugs issues alongside health and education efforts.

There were 66 drug-related arrests during this reporting period, with a total 88 suspects (80 males and 8 females) and drugs worth of 25,324.93 million MMK (equivalent to USO 19.04 million) in custody.

Communal Participation and Representation

Efforts are being made to promote political representation and civic participation of ethnic minorities, communities and women in Rakhine State. The Union Election Commission organized four training workshops and two follow-on workshops for election tribunal office staff, chairpersons, members and staff of sub-commissions at different levels - including those from Rakhine State. The purpose was to identify needs and explore ways for promoting equal participation of all citizens in electoral process, increased youth participation in 2020 general elections, and greater involvement of women and disabled persons in different

stages of electoral cycles. In a closer look at women participation in the election commissions, the percentages of women working for sub-election commissions at Rakhine state level, district levels and township levels are found to be 16.67%, 24.14% and 17.89% respectively.

Registration of CSOs are also being supported as a measure to promote social works of all communities and religious organizations, in accordance with the rules and regulations. A total of 21 organizations were registered during this reporting period, including 10 organizations that received registration certificates from the State Registration Board (7 of those received temporary registration certificates); and 11 organizations that received registration certificates from the Township Registration Board.

Inter-communal Cohension

Promoting inter-communal cohesion is a crucial part of endeavors to bring development, peace and stability to Rakhine State. As an initial stage, a meeting to discuss this issue was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 29 April 2018 with MPs of Rakhine State parliament, representatives from all the communities in Rakhine State and government officials. The suggestions and outcomes of this meeting will be reviewed and implemented as a step-by-step approach to build inter-communal cohesion.

The drafting of an anti-hate speech bill is currently in progress, with an aim to prevent spreading hate speech, incitement of violence and shattering unity among different religions and races; as well as to promote harmony and peaceful coexistence between diverse racial and religious groups.

The Security Sector

Training and capacity building programs continue to enhance the performance and capacity of security forces as well as to strengthen the implementation of the

Community Policing System. During the reporting period, seven training and workshops were organized, with 245 police officers/other ranks trained.

All police personnel on active duty for security and law enforcement now wear visible name badges. The Office of the Chief of the Rakhine State Police Force has requested to allocate 20.53 million MMK from the State budget, for installation of 26 CCTV cameras in 26 checkpoints in Rakhine State.

All police personnel in Rakhine State are under the command of the Chief of Myanmar Police Force. Police personnel are executing their duties -including arrests and detentions of suspects - in accordance with the standard operating procedures prescribed within the legal framework. The Myanmar Police Force initiates departmental investigations that they receive for any complaints on breach of such procedures; and takes actions for those who are found guilty as accused.

Additionally, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission are also carrying out investigations upon receipt of complaints and taking actions if the accused is found guilty, in accordance with the laws and procedures.

To enhance communications and avoid unnecessary misunderstanding between the security forces and the communities, local people and police personnel who speak local dialects are now used as interpreters.

Cultural Development

The following activities were carried out in this reporting period as part of continuing efforts for promoting cultural development in Rakhine State, as well as to enlist Mrauk-U as a UNESCO world heritage zone:

- field visits and data collection on water sources in some wards and villages of Mrauk-U;

- Drone Photography of ancient buildings in Mrauk-U;
- Education programs in urban wards of Mrauk-U regarding Mrauk-U cultural heritage;
- Documentation of intangible cultural heritage; observations, studies and documentation of Rakhine traditional wedding ceremony; field study of an ancient pagoda and stone sculptures in Pyine Mountain near the boundary post between Kyauktaw and Ponnagyun townships; documentation of silver coins, glazed ware and utensils exhibited in the Mrauk-U Museum;
- Repairs and preservation work by Mrauk-U Cultural Heritage Site Conservation Working Group for Mya Wah Taung, Barbu Taung, Shin Nge Tet, Phote Taw Maw and Mingala Munaung Pagodas, as well as preservation of Buddha images in the Nivuzar Mountain Range;
- Layout documentation and unearthing work of the ancient palace site;
- 11 coordination meetings with ministerial officials, national/ international experts, ambassadors from partner countries and locals, for listing Mrauk-U as a UNESCO World Heritage Site; Documentation of the history of 43 pagodas and Buddhist religious buildings that are over 100 years old in Ponnagyun, Rathaedaung, Sittwe and Pauktaw Townships.

Border Issues and the Bilateral Relationship with Bangladesh

To enhance mutual understanding and bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, Lieutenant General Kyaw Swe, Union Minister for Home Affairs and Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement visited Bangladesh from February 15 to 17, 2018 and from April 11 to 13, 2018 respectively.

The first coordination meeting of Myanmar- Bangladesh Joint Working Group was held in Nay Pyi Taw on January 15, 2018. And this resulted in the signing of the “Physical Arrangement for Repatriation of Displaced Myanmar Residents from Bangladesh” between the two nations. Discussions and negotiations with UNDP and UNHCR have started since 23 February 2018 to sign MoUs to support the repatriation work.

A total of 1,308 housing units - including 1,126 housing units for displaced ethnic nationals and Hindus, and 182 housing units for displaced Muslims- are being constructed with support from the regional and state governments of Ayeyawaddy, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, Sagaing Regions and Kachin, Kayin and Shan States, the Ministry of Border Affairs, UEHRD, Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, CB Bank, the Tatmadaw and the Indian Government. Additionally, Magway and Taninthari regional governments, Chin State government and the Tatmadaw also supported construction of 4 schools and 2 hostels for school teachers, 4 monasteries and roads and pagodas etc. These returnees will be resettled in their villages of origin after construction of their houses are completed.

Efforts are taken to enhance bilateral cooperation for security and border area management between Myanmar and Bangladesh. During this reporting period, 4 regiment-level flag hoisting ceremonies between the two border guard forces took place on Myanmar side, and one ceremony on Bangladesh side; as well as one Myanmar- Bangladesh district administrator level meeting.

The establishment of Ka Nyin Chaung Trade Zone in Maungdaw started in FY 2015-16 for trade promotion in the area. And construction of infrastructure including 2 concrete jetties, 1 main building, and 20 buildings for trade fair/exhibition are now completed. Business is resuming as usual at Sittwe and Maungdaw Border Trade Centres. The actual trade value at Sittwe Trade Centre from January 1 to April 27, 2018 was USD 7.01 million, and this is a USD 5.747 million increase in comparison with the same period from the previous year. Similarly, the actual trade value at Maungdaw Trade Centre from January 1 to April 27, 2018 was USD 6.958 million, a net increase of USD 4.365 million in comparison with the same period of the previous year.

Regional Relations

Senior figures of the State and Myanmar government officials continue their efforts to inform and update the international community with regards to measures taken in Myanmar. Notable events include –

- President H.E U Win Myint attending the 32nd ASEAN Summit hosted by Singapore from April 25 to 28, 2018, and updating the progress made in Rakhine at ASEAN Summit Retreat;
- The State Counsellor H.E Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attending the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit and the Leaders' Retreat in Sydney, Australia from March 17 and 18 2018, and discussing the challenges of the country including Rakhine issue;
- Union Minister H.E U Kyaw Tin attending the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Singapore on 6 February 2018, explaining the efforts taken by the Government of Myanmar for Rakhine State.

Three diplomatic visits to Rakhine State were arranged for heads of diplomatic missions and UN agencies in Myanmar to see for themselves the situations on the ground. These visits took place on February 6, 9 and 15, 2018.

A delegation composed of permanent representatives to the United Nations, representatives from Myanmar's neighboring countries and Member States of United Nations Security Council visited Myanmar from 30 April to 1 May 2018. During the visit, the delegation met various key stakeholders including the State Counsellor, the Commander in Chief of Defense Services, Union Ministers, the Advisory Board for the Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State, and Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group.

Implementation of the Commission's Recommendations

A 9-member Advisory Board for the Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State was set up in December 2017. This advisory board is chaired by H.E

Prof. Surakiart Sathirathai- former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand; and comprised of 4 international members and 5 national members. The Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State met and discussed with this Advisory Board for more effective implementation of activities in Rakhine State.

H.E. Prof. Surakiart Sathirathai, the Chair of the Advisory Board, and other members made a visit to Myanmar from 22 to 25 January 2018; and met the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice President U Myint Swe, and officials from the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State. They also made site visits to Maungdaw Township and Kyaukpyu Township, observed the ground situations and gave some necessary advice. The second visit of Chair and board members took place from 31 March 2018 to 2 April 2018. The Advisory Board went to Singapore after that visit and met the Singapore Foreign Minister on 3 April 2018. A debriefing session was also provided by the board for heads of ASEAN diplomatic missions.

The first report to the people by the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State was released in state-owned newspapers in February 2018, to update the people on the progress of implementation works.

The staff members of the Secretariat of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State met and discussed with the communities regularly throughout the period; and reported back to the committee on community needs and updated information for further actions.

Conclusion

Promoting peace, stability and development in Rakhine State is a long-term work. Efforts are increased to implement recommendations that could be beneficial in practice as priority, as well as other necessary tasks. And with this report, we humbly present these substantial progresses to the people.