



**MYANMAR**

**HLA TUN, Governor**

It is an honour for me to represent Myanmar and address the 37th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). We are delighted that the Republic of Korea is again hosting this important event for the second time after a lapse of 35 years. At the outset, I would like to congratulate the chair on his election as chairman for this meeting. I am certain, Mr. Chairman, that under your guidance, this meeting would be a fruitful and productive one.

Also, on behalf of the Myanmar Delegation, I wish to join other speakers in expressing our deep and sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea as well as the ADB Management and staff for their excellent arrangements made for this very important meeting.

A year ago, most of the ADB's member countries faced risks and challenges mainly arising from the uncertainties of the war in Iraq and the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARs). In addition, in the first few months of this year, some of the countries also faced the outbreak of bird flu. However, I am very much encouraged to say that we meet here today under much favourable circumstances.

Together with the strengthening of the global economy, member countries are expected to maintain the economic momentum that has been gained thus far. Still, worldwide geopolitical tensions, possibility of heightened terrorist attacks, and the large global current account imbalances, which can threaten peace, tranquility, and economic development of the world, exist. Thus, much remains to be done, and as such we should not be complacent. We should continue with our efforts to sustain our economic potentials.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to highlight some recent economic development of Myanmar.

Since peace and stability, national unity, and economic development of the nation are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, the Government of Myanmar has given first priority to bring peace, stability, and tranquility in the country. As the nation gained peace and stability, the Government has made concerted efforts for all-round development of the country.

Short-term economic plans were formulated and implemented in accordance with the Four National Economic Objectives, which are the following:

- development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well;

- proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system;
- development of the economy, inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investment from sources inside the country and abroad; and
- the initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples.

Presently, the third Five-Year Plan covering the period 2001/02 to 2005/06 has been implemented, and for the last 3 years double-digit growth rates have been achieved consecutively. These high growth rates are mainly attributable to the development of the agricultural sector as the sector has developed significantly with 10 years' average growth of 7.5 percent. Myanmar is still an agro-based economy. Therefore, the agricultural sector not only provides staple food requirements for the population but also is the source of raw materials for agro-based industries.

To assist in infrastructure advancement as well as with the aim to achieve equitable and balanced development over the whole country, the Government has designated and implemented 24 development zones in the states and divisions. Emphasis has also been given to the social sectors, including education and health.

As rapid economic growth is seen as a central element in achieving poverty reduction, Myanmar has been making concerted efforts not only to achieve higher growth rates but also to alleviate poverty in the context of sustainable economic development of the country. I would like to stress that poverty alleviation in rural areas as well as in border areas has been our main concern in all the national development strategies of the country.

Therefore, in Myanmar, high priority is being given to the development of rural areas as Myanmar's economy is predominantly agro-based, with more than 70 percent of the population living in the rural areas. The Integrated Rural Development Plan has been formulated and implemented, with five tasks—improvement of transport, accessibility to clean water supply, improving basic health and primary education, upgrading the living standard of the people, and alleviating poverty in the rural areas.

Moreover, Myanmar has also launched the Greening Project in the dry zone area in order to protect the environment and also to keep the forests of Myanmar green and lush forever.

These achievements are made with our own resources despite sanctions being imposed by some western countries.

We have always considered ADB as a leading international financial institution of our region, which plays a pivotal role in promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and supporting social development of its member countries. However, Myanmar has been deprived of its legally entitled assistance for more than a decade. In this context, I would like to highlight that ADB should consider resuming its assistance to Myanmar regardless of the political environment.

The world is changing rapidly in the wake of the globalization process. Countries are preparing to keep up with the challenges and to reap most from the opportunities. We have noted that it is not easy for developing countries to face the challenges as a single nation alone. In view of this, Myanmar is participating in every possible cooperation area with its own strength and resources in order to meet the challenges of the globalization era.

Myanmar is a member of World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the various United Nations Agencies at the multilateral level, and also a member of a number of regional groupings, such as, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand—Economic Co-operation (BIMST-EC), ACU, GMS, and Economic Cooperation Strategy among Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Thailand.

As a member of ASEAN, Myanmar is implementing the obligations for the establishment of ASEAN Free Trade Area and also participating in the process of economic cooperation with its dialogue partners such as the People's Republic of China, Japan, India, and the Republic of Korea.

Myanmar is also participating in various information and communication technology (ICT) cooperation programmes for the development of the ICT sector in order not to lag behind in the development of the ever-changing global ICT. On the other hand, National Education Promotion Programmes are being laid down with a view to enhancing sustainable human resource development of the nation.

Myanmar is launching regional and international cooperation with goodwill, sincerity, and friendliness, for better understanding and strengthening cooperation, to all countries and organizations.

Lastly, I would like to stress that the Government of Myanmar is endeavoring in all aspects for the emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed, and democratic nation in accordance with the road map that has been declared during the last year.