

Opening Speech by Union Minister at the Ceremony of 70th Anniversary of National Health Service, United Kingdom

(Draft)

July 5th 2018

Yangon

- Mingalarbar!
- Good afternoon
- Deputy Minister for Health and Sports, Permanent Secretary, Director-General, Rectors from University of Medicine 1, 2, Mandalay ,Magwe, Taunggyi
- Professors from various clinical disciplines under Minister of Health and Sports
- Official from Ministry of Health and Sports Embassy and DFID
- President of Myanmar Medical Council
- Dr. Gail Marzetti, Head of office , DFID
- Members of Myanmar-UK Health Alliance, RGH Reinvigoration Charitable Trust
- It is my distinct privilege to be here at the Myanmar-UK Health Forum on Improving Quality Health Services towards Universal Health Coverage as well as the Ceremony of 70th Anniversary of National Health Service, UK
- I was informed that National Health Service of UK was established in 1948, just like the year of independence of Myanmar.
- The first thing which came into my mind was that in 1948, when Myanmar was not developed like many other countries.
- There may be several reasons why Myanmar lagged behind, we know these reasons, so we are trying to avert some of the untoward or unlikely reasons we should not let happen again.
- That is not only important for political but also for health.
- When the NHS was created in UK, it reflected both the experience of war as well as the peace.
- For my country, we are still trying, negotiating, discussing to have lasting peace.

- If we have peace in my country, we can do more in terms of health.
- When I looked at the UK health budget, it is 144 billion pounds whereas Myanmar health budget is less than 1 billion.
- UK has about 64 million populations, Myanmar has 52 million populations.
- UK NHS has 1.7 million staff whereas our staff is only 110,000, out of that less than 50% are doctors and nurses.
- What I would like to emphasize is that Myanmar got less than 1 billion dollars.
- With that amount of money, we have to cater our population.
- If I get 4 million dollars, I can do Health system top-notch in a few years' time.
- UK get 144 billion pounds for health, where ours is less than 1 billion.
- We have to rationally allocate whatever resources, money or budget that we got.
- Proper monitoring, effective and efficient utilization of resources which is not 100% as far as my experience goes.
- We are trying to start this, so that the money whatever we got must be well spend, properly allocated.
- The money should go to those places where it is due to go.
- For this particular year, starting 2018 October, I will give more budgets to clinical side.
- For public health side, we have given enough attention; we got a lot of funds from DFID, Gavi, 3MDG, World Bank, WHO, Unicef. Etc.
- The public health field is somewhat going on very well.
- We need to give a little bit of booster in there.
- So this year, we are concentrating a lot in clinical field.
- That is why I met the professors and heads of clinical field 10 days ago in Yangon for how to improve the clinical acumen, surgical acumen and all sets of clinical acumen to 736 station medical officers and 230 township medical officers.
- We cannot call them, time and again, to give training or reorientation courses.

- That is why I will provide 8 inches tablets to them and each discipline will put what they would like to say in that tablets.
- And there will be interactive discussion and interactive sections using these tablets.
- The clinical acumen of the station medical officers will dramatically improve.
- If the clinical acumen is improved, many of the patients will not be referred to township or State/ Regional hospitals.
- The workload of central hospitals and many big hospitals is too much.
- I am so sorry to see that the health staff of central hospitals is working all-out.
- That is why these tablets will help to reduce the workload of the central hospitals in a way.
- With these tablets we can immediately put professors' talks, so the doctors in Putao or wherever can listen to these professors' talks.
- We will also put many guidelines, standard operation procedures from different disciplines in these tablets.
- What I would like to say is that all these doctors who are working there will be attached with the professors.
- Likewise in the field of public health, Director-General can give anything to any midwives or public health supervisors, health assistants. Etc.
- So that everybody will be in the same direction, in the same boat.
- I am very much confidence that, if we can take advantage out of these tablet business, our country health situation will be very much improved.
- And I am very highly impressed by the British Minister of Health, HE Mr. Aneurin Bevan, who spoke on 5th July 1948 of three core principles for the new NHS: that it meets the needs of everyone, that it be free at the point of delivery, and that it be based on clinical need.
- The three main principles are one of the highest moral and practical value not only to UK but also to us.
- I should even say he is the visionary in the field of health.
- UK NHS is hatched from these principles.

- We are going for health for all, primary health care, Universal Health Coverage (UHC), sustainable development.
- We are going in that direction.
- In Myanmar, we are trying to get the National Health Plan, like NHS, but not equate NHS.
- Our National Health Plan has subset everybody must accessible to essential health care, basic health services, and essential drugs, must be available to everybody in my country.
- This (2017-2021) National Health Plan is different from previous National Health Plan which was very good but it was lying on the shelf.
- Nobody was taking serious attention to that.
- Current National Health Plan will not be like this.
- We have National Health Plan Implementation Unit (NIMU) to ensure that we are actually implementing the National Health Plan.
- Our own National Health Plan for Myanmar aims to strengthen the country's health system and pave the way towards Universal Health Coverage, choosing a path that explicitly favours the needs of the poorest in our country.
- This will be long journey for Myanmar, as it was for the United Kingdom. But we shall achieve this.
- In our long journey, we value and encourage the support of our friends, like-minded organizations, especially DFID, who are ready to understand the needs of Myanmar and to support our ideals with realist help and tailored approaches.
- Through our partnerships with the NHS, supported by UK Aid and the healthcare specialists in DFID here in Yangon, we are making progress.
- We welcome the continued commitment of DFID to delivering change in partnership with Ministry of Health and Sports as we work even harder towards our goals.
- This partnership with the NHS and UK healthcare specialists is something we value.
- If you look at our health system, public health system and clinical system.

- All our clinical systems are based on British system.
- We know that both Yangon General Hospital and University of Medicine 1, and many other institutions that matter so much for the future of Myanmar are historically British foundation.
- We are working to build on those foundations, to effect the transformation on healthcare across our country.
- Here, I would like to add a few points on partnership with UK.
- 111 Myanmar Physicians had passed MRCP (from 1991 to 2003).
- From 2004 to 2013, 58 passed out of 111 who sat exam at oversea centers.
- Since 2013, we have total of 16 PACES exam in Myanmar and out of 971 candidates sitting PACES examination, 459 has passed the exam and achieved MRCP.
- We also have 37 Pediatricians trained in UK and got MRCPCH and 66 have passed the exam and got MRCPCH from Myanmar Center.
- For that matter, I thank UK especially Royal Colleges who trained our doctors.
- It is not that easy to get MRCP, FRCP, FRCOG, MRCPCH, FFR, etc.
- Since 1st April 2016, Myanmar officials from MoHS sent to UK- 37 for meetings, workshops, conferences and 13 for trainings, 1 for MSc; total of 57.
- I want to send more to UK.
- If possible, please provide full scholarship for Myanmar doctors.
- Since 1st April 2016, we sent about 4,500 doctors to attend meetings, workshops, and conferences in foreign countries.
- Out of that 4,500, 1,000 attended long-term trainings.
- And I also I would like to thank is what you called volunteer programs.
- Since 2015, “The Improving Global Health through Leadership Programme” was brought by Health Education England, Thames Valley GP Faculty, Improving Global Health Team and Brighter Future Foundation to support NHS volunteers to undertake an oversea placement in Myanmar.

- Till now, we have 20 IGH (Improving Global Health through Leadership Program) fellows who were worked in different departments of General Hospitals, mostly Yangon General Hospital.
- No doubt, the present of these 20 fellows, we gained a lot from them.
- Would it be possible to send fellows of Radiology, Anesthesiology and Pathology?
- Now we have 20 fellows, if you can send 40 fellows at the same time, they are more than welcome.
- Also, we have 10 INGOs based in UK working together in Public Healthfield.
- In addition, some universities in UK have working for technical cooperation and exchange with our medical universities.
- For that matter and for better collaboration between UK and Myanmar, we have formed Myanmar Steering Committee headed by Permanent Secretary Dr. Thet Khine Win, composed of rectors and senior officials from MoHS.
- This committee must be proactive.
- There is UK Steering Committee as well in UK side.
- Recently, “Access to Health Fund”, transitioned form 3MDG Fund consultation meeting conducted in Nay Pyi Taw.
- In 5 years period, (2019-2023), out of 200 million US\$, DFID contributed 110 million which is more than 50% of overall Fund.
- I really appreciated DFID for that tremendous support for health care services in Myanmar which will be definitely to our population.
- I can assure that every dollar supported by “Access to Health Fund” will be well-spent.
- Ours can therefore be a partnership of friends who understand each other.
- We celebrate with you the 70th birthday of the NHS and its ideals in Myanmar because that partnership can and will deliver benefit to the people who look to their doctors, their hospitals, for healing and for hope.
- Thank you.