

Welcome remarks for the
National Awareness Raising Seminar for Myanmar
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H.E Dr. Aung Thu, Minister,
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Distinguished speakers,

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Myanmar for inviting UPOV to contribute to this National Awareness Raising Seminar. It is a great pleasure to return to Myanmar, to experience again your warm hospitality and also to witness the impressive, ongoing development of agriculture in this country.

Please let me also express my appreciation to the Government of Japan, for its financial support for this activity, and my sincere thanks to all the speakers for their willingness to travel far and wide to share their experiences at this event.

This is a very important moment for the development of plant variety protection in Myanmar. I would like to congratulate the Government of Myanmar on the excellent progress it has made in drafting the amendments to the Law, which is at a critical point in relation to UPOV membership. In order for Myanmar to become a UPOV member, it first needs to obtain the positive advice of the UPOV Council on the conformity of its Draft Law with the UPOV Convention. The UPOV Council will be able to consider the Draft Law of Myanmar this year if we receive the request within the next week – and I know that there is intensive work to meet that target.

One of the main aims of this event will be to highlight how Myanmar will be able to benefit from this imminent step.

Yesterday, some of us participated in the Tenth Meeting of the EAPVP Forum. I recalled that, in my discussions with EAPVP Forum countries, three themes are always of particular interest: firstly, the impact of PVP and UPOV membership on farmers and society as a whole; secondly, the inter-relation between PVP and systems regulating plant genetic resources; and, thirdly, how to enhance cooperation in the implementation of PVP. UPOV has presented a wealth of information on these issues, including at previous events in Myanmar. However, I am pleased to be able to bring new information in relation to each of these three important areas.

Impact of PVP and UPOV membership on farmers and society as a whole – the case of Viet Nam

Viet Nam took the decision to introduce a system of plant variety protection just over 10 years ago and celebrated its tenth anniversary of UPOV membership just last year. Therefore, it was very interesting to see the results of an independent study on the impact of UPOV membership in Viet Nam, which was published in April. That Study showed that:

- For Rice, Corn (maize) and Sweet Potatoes: in the 10 years before UPOV membership, increases in yield were mainly through increased level of inputs – there was no detectable increase due to plant breeding
- In the 10 years after UPOV membership, significant productivity increases due to plant breeding were seen, as a result of which current annual yields in Viet Nam are higher in
 - Rice by 16%
 - Corn by 19%
 - Sweet potatoes by 27%
- Furthermore, INCOME of Vietnamese farmers has increased by 24% since 2006
- The annual value added has been calculated for:
 - Arable farming at \$2.3 billion
 - Horticulture at \$1.0 billion

- Floriculture at \$0.2 billion
- The GDP added upstream/downstream (value chains) amounts to \$1.5 billion, meaning that the TOTAL ADDED to the Viet Nam economy amounts – annually- to \$5 billion (>2.5% GDP)

I am sure that you will agree that these are impressive outcomes.

Inter-relation between PVP and systems regulating plant genetic resources

UPOV will shortly publish a video produced by the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) of Argentina , in which it explains its program to breed varieties of ornamental species from native flora. At the international level, and within the framework of membership of UPOV, commercialization of the new varieties is through agreements with foreign companies. 50% of the profits that are generated from the commercialization is returned to the provinces that are the owners of the natural resources from which the varieties were developed. The breeding work by INTA also means that the erosion from the natural habitat is reduced, thereby contributing to the conservation of Argentina's native natural resources.

This video provides a clear demonstration of how such systems are mutually supportive.

Enhancing cooperation in the implementation of PVP

I would like to take this opportunity to report that, in UPOV, we are taking steps to help breeders to use the PVP System and therefore to make their varieties available in more UPOV members. The launch of the PBR Application Tool (EAF) at the beginning of 2017 will provide breeders with many advantages, including:

- providing an online application tool even where UPOV members do not provide such a facility
- application forms that can be displayed in range of languages – although answers must be provided in an acceptable language for the PVP Office concerned, many parts will already be translated

- variety data from one application can be automatically re-used in subsequent applications

These are the latest demonstrations of the benefits that UPOV membership can bring to a country and may be of particular interest for Myanmar at this time.

However, this seminar is bringing together speakers from a number of UPOV members from around the World and there will be a wealth of other information on the themes that I have mentioned - and some other important themes as well. I am sure that this will help to raise awareness and understanding of all stakeholders in Myanmar.

I look forward to active participation from all participants in order that we can have stimulating and enriching seminar.

Thank you.