



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY RANGOON

110 University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Rangoon, Burma

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U.S. Embassy Commemorates 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington at American Center

On August 28, the U.S. Embassy's American Center hosted a day-long celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington at which Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech – a landmark moment in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Ambassador Derek Mitchell opened the event, which was attended by hundreds of public and private high school and university students from around Yangon, as well as civil society leaders, including Ko Ko Gyi of the 88 Generation and U Tin Oo of the National League for Democracy.

Reflecting on the words of Dr. King, Ambassador Mitchell described how Dr. King, himself a Baptist minister, advocated a nonviolent, interfaith approach to press the United States to live up to its founding principles: "The civil rights movement was based on ideals of justice and equality under the law, and the inherent dignity of all human beings, regardless of race, regardless of religion, regardless of background. Dr. King believed only nonviolent approaches to change can serve as the foundation of lasting harmony in society, and through his work and the work of thousands of others 50 years ago, reminded Americans that every citizen in a democracy is responsible for determining the course of a nation."

The day's events also featured a screening of the documentary film *The March*, poetry readings, an essay contest, a poster show and book exhibition, as well as moderated discussions of the civil rights movement and its impact on U.S. citizens today. Deputy Chief of Mission Virginia Murray gave remarks and recognized winners of an English-language essay contest focused on King's famous speech. Other Embassy officers gave presentations and led question-and-answer sessions.

On Wednesday, August 28, 1963, over 200,000 people – including civil rights groups, religious organizations, labor groups, and everyday citizens – participated in the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" to peacefully advocate for meaningful civil rights legislation, the end to public school segregation, and a public works and training program to assist the unemployed. It was one of the largest public gatherings in U.S. history and a watershed moment in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Embassy website at <http://burma.usembassy.gov>

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