

**Remarks by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker
U.S. Embassy Rangoon
June 6, 2014**

Thank you, Ambassador Mitchell.

It is wonderful to be here at a time of such great opportunity for this beautiful country and its people.

As President Obama said when he was here in 2012 -- the first U.S. President ever to visit Myanmar -- the United States values the friendship between our two nations and we want to contribute to your success.

We want to support your progress and reform.

Since President Obama's visit, you have made reforms that have helped improve your business climate. Two years ago, the United States began allowing investment in Myanmar for the first time in 15 years.

Shortly thereafter, President Thein Sein signed a law to help attract more foreign economic engagement.

As a result, nearly \$250 million in American investment is now here.

As your economy continues to grow and your market continues to open, more U.S. companies want to do business in this country.

And, the U.S. government is encouraging American companies to evaluate the opportunity. Responsible investment can help facilitate broad-based economic growth and economic prosperity for your people.

The United States has a fundamental interest in the continuation of reform. We have communicated to your government the need to build on the progress that has been made by implementing measures that increase inclusive economic development, promote government transparency and accountability, and safeguard labor rights and human rights.

Today, as the first U.S. Commerce Secretary to visit this beautiful country, I am here to talk about how we can build on the progress of the last two years to further strengthen our trade relationship and encourage even stronger ties.

This leads to me to an exciting announcement about one way we hope to achieve these goals. As Secretary of Commerce, I lead a department responsible for making all of this region's great opportunities more accessible to American businesses.

One of the ways our department carries out this mission is through our Foreign Commercial Service officers, who are located in our U.S. embassies all over the world, helping American companies enter overseas markets, expand, and find new customers around the world. In doing so, our Foreign Commercial Service helps to increase opportunities globally for our businesses and yours.

As part of the Department's enduring commitment to the Asia-Pacific region – and given the promise of existing and future reform, I am pleased that we are opening a new Commercial Service office here in Yangon.

Today we are also here to highlight the tremendous contributions that U.S. firms already here are making, and to celebrate new American investments in your country.

We know that American companies and products are among the finest in the world. When our businesses make investments, they bring with them the highest standards, including a commitment to corporate and social responsibility.

For example, at a signing ceremony tomorrow with our U.S. Ambassador, Gap – a very well-known American apparel company -- will announce that it is partnering with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide job skills training to women in this country, empowering them to play a greater role in the workplace and in their communities.

In communities around the country, Gap will launch a women's empowerment program that will provide up to 80 hours of professional skills training.

We know that women will play a key role in the economic development and growth of this country, and we look forward to seeing the results of this promising new collaboration.

Examples like these prove what we already know: As your market opens and grows, U.S. firms are well-positioned to serve as your partner to improve the lives of your people.

Today, I am joined by three more outstanding American companies that are making investments in this country.

With us is Clive Turton, head of business development for the Asia-Pacific for APR Energy. This February, APR signed a contract for a large-scale project here that will assist the Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise in power generation.

The APR Energy plant will be one of the largest thermal plants in the country, and will provide power to more than 6 million people, or roughly 10 percent of the population.

APR Energy's commitment to providing power solutions in Myanmar is critical, particularly as 75 percent of this country's population lacks access to electricity.

Clive, I would like to invite you to say a few words.

CLIVE TURTON SPEAKS.

Thank you, Clive. APR Energy is a tremendous example of the work U.S. businesses are already doing to support economic development here in Myanmar.

Next, I would like to turn to Scott Morrison, CFO of Ball Corporation and Rehan Khan, of Coca-Cola.

Ball has recently announced that it plans to build an aluminum can factory located just outside Yangon. This U.S. investment will supply cans to both local and international beverage companies and create jobs here in this country.

The Ball factory opening is already encouraging further engagement by U.S. firms that are well-established in this country. Coca-Cola is one of these companies.

Coca-Cola re-opened operations here in 2012, began manufacturing locally one year ago, and has already committed to buy more than half of the cans produced at Ball's new facility.

Scott and Rehan, I turn it over to you.

SCOTT MORRISON SPEAKS. REHAN KHAN SPEAKS.

Thank you Scott and Rehan.

Clearly, companies like Ball, APR Energy and Coca-Cola are an essential part of the next chapter in our relationship.

And let me be clear: U.S. businesses are here today, they will be here tomorrow, and they want to be part of the future of this country.

Let's continue to create more ties that bring our businesses and our citizens closer together... doing so, we will create more opportunity for people in both of our countries.