



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY RANGOON

110 University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Rangoon, Burma

U.S. Business and Government Unite to Support Small Business in Myanmar

Yangon, August 26, 2014 – More than 200 entrepreneurs gathered in Yangon for an event organized by U.S. multinationals and the U.S. government to discuss how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can operate their businesses within the global supply chain.

The event was part of the US-ASEAN Business Alliance for Competitive SMEs, a collaboration between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US-ASEAN Business Council that provides training and support to SMEs throughout the ASEAN region. The business alliance conducts its activities in cooperation with ASEAN. Myanmar's economic and political reforms have led to rapid reconnection to the global and regional economies, and SMEs need training and expertise to take advantage of the opportunities that are being created. SMEs attending the Business Alliance training heard briefings on marketing, international exporting, legal aspects of cross-border trade, and how to use technology to expand their reach and build their businesses. They also had the opportunity to engage one-on-one with company representatives to ask questions and build relationships.

Sponsored by Procter & Gamble Co. (P&G), the United Parcel Service of North America, Inc. (UPS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the workshop included sessions from P&G, UPS, Hewlett-Packard Company (HP), and Baker & McKenzie, as well as support and participation from the Union of Myanmar Federated Chambers of Commerce International (UMFCCI), Myanmar Women's Entrepreneurs Association, Myanmar Computer Company, Ltd. (MCC), and Myanmar's Ministry of Industry.

"Small and medium-sized enterprise is the cornerstone of economic reform. The U.S. Government is committed to this partnership to promote job creation, regional economic integration, and to empower youth and women," said Virginia Murray, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy.

"The Myanmar government is committed to improving the business and legal environments for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including publishing the SME bill, setting up a dedicated center for SME development. The government welcomes international collaboration to help Myanmar SME better integrated into regional and international markets," said H.E. U Maung Myint, Union Minister of Industry.

P&G Vice President for ASEAN and Chair of USABC ASEAN Committee, Sam Kim, said, “P&G is very proud to have led the development of the US-ASEAN Business Alliance for Competitive SMEs and we are delighted that the program is now being launched in Myanmar through this workshop. Small and medium-sized enterprises are the growth engine of an economy and by helping to develop them we create the foundation of equitable economic development and sustained prosperity for everyone. Along with the USAID and USABC member companies, we are proud to have put together a platform providing a robust program of skills training and capability transfers for over 200 enterprises. We hope that the learning from this workshop will help Myanmar SMEs accelerate their growth in the country, as well as compete across the region.”

“Training and other corporate social responsibility programs are a key part of what U.S. companies are bringing to Myanmar,” said Alexander Feldman, President and CEO of the US-ASEAN Business Council. “Through exposure to world-class business practices, U.S. business can help build the SMEs that will be the backbones of Myanmar’s revitalized economy.”

“Myanmar’s integration into ASEAN and the world will open up new opportunities for its businesses to participate in global supply chains”, said Shiumei Lin, Vice President for Public Affairs, UPS Asia Pacific, and Vice-Chair of the US-ASEAN Business Council’s ASEAN Committee. “Through our global network, UPS is excited to be that enabler for connecting Myanmar to the world.”

The Business Alliance will conduct training activities in cities throughout the ASEAN region in 2014 and 2015. It is currently developing a cloud-based training and portal to support Southeast Asian SMEs to access and exchange valuable information to develop small business.

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