



Nay Pyi Taw, 15 November 2013  
131115/03

## R E M A R K S

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the press conference at the end of the EU-Myanmar Task Force meeting**

*"It has been a great privilege to be here for two days. We had over 600 people who participated in the Task Force including over 100 European Union business leaders, who have travelled here from all over to express their willingness and commitment to support this country on the journey that it has undertaken.*

*I have been especially privileged today to be able to co-chair with you, and co-chair with Mr Aung Myint, a number of different debates where we discussed the economic and political challenges that the country faces. And I had the privilege of taking some of our members of the European Parliament and business leaders to meet with President Thein Sein last evening.*

*In the debates during the Task Force, we have also been joined by parliamentarians and Ministers from across the government of Myanmar, and especially - I would recognize - we were joined by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. So this has been a real opportunity for us to begin the next stage of the partnership between the European Union and Myanmar.*

*Our purpose in coming is not just to be here for two days, it is not just to bring so many people from the European Union to celebrate the journey so far and to express our expectations of the journey to come - it is to really start a process of beginning to look at the issues we braced together in details and as partners, to use the knowledge and the experience that we have in the European Union and the knowledge and the experience that is here to see how together we can make the lives of the people of Myanmar better and better in every possible way for the future.*

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*Minister, I want to thank you and your team for all the incredible work that they have done to make this possible. The logistics, I know, are never easy. And it's never easy when you have so many people arriving at the same time. Yours have been magnificent.*

*And I want to pay tribute to my team, to our Ambassador Roland Kobia and his team, to the team in Brussels who worked so hard because when the President and I met – Minister, do you remember? – in March, we talked about the idea of doing this. And we made that talk a reality yesterday and today.*

*So thank you again and I look forward to continuing to strengthen the relationship between the European Union and Myanmar for the future.*

*Thank you."*

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