

Your Excellency Dr. Kan Zaw, Your Excellency U Soe Thane, I would like to begin with the words “Thank You.” You have our sincere appreciation not only for the Forum, but for the Ministry’s efforts to engage us in the planning process and listen to suggestions. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has demonstrated tremendous leadership in making this a very successful Forum and for welcoming civil society and the private sector.

We have heard how the Government delivered on the goals of the 1st Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum by developing clear strategies and priorities, and by building more effective cooperation.

Yes, the 1st Development Cooperation Forum was a success; this one proves to be an even greater success. It is larger with more participation from civil society and the private sector, and we have had even more effective development discussions. In short, it was bigger and better.

His Excellency President Thein Sein noted the need to maintain and accelerate the momentum of development processes. So perhaps, our saying for 2014 is bigger, better and faster.

In the spirit these words, we hope to work with you, civil society, the private sector and the people of Myanmar to carry forward the work of this Forum, with a focus on accelerating development achievements.

We want to take this time to acknowledge Government’s hard work and positive actions this past year. There are many examples:

Government has signed framework agreements with some development partners—and necessary step for mobilizing donor resources. The assistance from Government in moving these agreements forward was helpful and greatly appreciated.

The establishment and facilitation of the business registration processes as well as local employment requirements is also greatly appreciated by development partners.

We have seen senior Government Officials engaging with NGOs, and offering assistance if needed.

Initial progress has been made in granting visas and streamlining the overall visa process.

Government officials are very dedicated and committed to addressing obstacles to the implementation of assistance. We very much appreciate their hard work, attention to detail, and dedication.

And we appreciate your offer to establish a process with the DPWC and FERD to address practical constraints after the Forum.

To maintain and accelerate development progress, we would like to suggest the following practical areas that we can work on together in 2014.

1. There is the opportunity of reviewing the experience of establishing framework agreements to date, and considering a more streamlined process with brings greater clarity. A more streamlined and standardized process will accelerate the flow of resources and development impact on the ground.
2. Another area could involve MOUs and the registration process. Currently development partner and implementing organizations such as INGOs, face the challenge of establishing an MOU for each program with a range of government ministries. This can lead to confusion and delays in projects and implementation. We would look forward to working with you on a more simplified and consistent registration process.
3. We, Development Partners and Implementing Organizations, understand the Government's priority for working outside of Yangon and Mandalay, particularly in rural areas. We would appreciate an updating of the travel regulations that restrict our travel to most location in Myanmar. Official travel authorizations take 2 to 3 weeks, creating an administrative burden on Government, slowing implementation and restricting our ability to be responsive. Perhaps Government could consider a new system of travel notification or limit authorization only to sensitive locations.

4. We would suggest continuing the good work on streamlining the visa process, which would allow us to respond quickly to requests for assistance. And consider providing longer stays so that our experts can avoid costly travel outside Myanmar to renew visas.
5. We are committed to supporting Government with expert advice and assistance. The easing or suspension of restrictions on living and working in Nay Pyi Taw, which were enacted before the reforms, would enable us to be better development partner with Government and more responsive to Government's request for assistance.

Working together in these 5 areas would improve our coordination and accelerate progress. It would enable us to work with you to make 2014 the Year of Delivery.

I would like to reiterate our thanks. So much has been accomplished over the past year. Those of us in this room are pleased to be able to work with such committed professionals who are dedicated to improving the lives of the people of Myanmar.

You have our commitment to work together to accelerate progress in 2014.