

2ND MYANMAR DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION FORUM

27-28 JANUARY 2014

STATEMENT OF ITALY

Excellency Minister of National Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Kan Zaw,

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I would like to thank you and FERD for having organized this Forum, which gives the possibility to all, actors, in particular Myanmar Government and Development Partners to monitor the implementation of Nay Pyi Taw Accord of January 2013, and, on the basis of the results achieved, to move ahead in the most appropriate way.

In this regard Ambassador Kobia already reported on the work carried out by the European Union Delegation and EU Member States in Myanmar. I take this opportunity to reconfirm Italy's commitment to the Joint Transitional Strategy, 2014-2016, which represents the common will of EU Member States to align their development programs to the priorities identified by Myanmar Government, as well as to Nay Pyi Taw Accord's goals.

I wish also to reconfirm Italy's support to and participation in the coordination structure between Government and DPs. In this framework I share the recommendations raised by USAID Director, our colleague Chris Milligan, since we all still experience some difficulties in the field work, which need to be solved shortly, to allow DPs to be more effective in the implementation of their activities.

As regards the performance of the Italian Development Cooperation in Myanmar 2013, I am pleased to inform that, in spite of the still very serious budget constraints, we have been able to fulfill the pledges made last year at the first Forum in Nay Pyi Taw and to devote round 4.7 million Euro in grants, through bilateral and multilateral contributions. This amount is a bit higher than the one announced in January 2013. Our financial contributions were addressed to the followings sectors: livestock and rural development, governance, in particular census, statistics improvement and support to Parliament, culture, focusing on cultural heritage and tourism.

Moreover, the Debt Swap Agreement was signed on 6 March 2013, together with the Debt Cancellation Agreement, according to the Multilateral Paris

Agreement with Myanmar Government. Totally the amount of 6.3 Million Dollar was released. We are now in the process of implementing the Debt Swap program.

Lastly, a soft loan proposal in Rural Development Sector for the amount of Euro 20 million is in the last phase of approval. In this regard, we would like to emphasize the excellent collaboration with the Department of Rural Development of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, as well as with the World Bank, which is assisting the DRD in the implementation of the program called “Community Driven Development Project” (NCDDP), co-funded by the Bank and the Myanmar Government.

Italy intends to keep its commitment to Myanmar at the same level of 2013, in terms of grants. In addition, we are examining the possibility to allocate further financial resources to the soft loan, on the basis of expected results and with the aim at enhancing the DRD development activities in the rural areas.

Many Thanks