

Joint Statement by President Obama and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma

September 14, 2016

At the invitation of President Barack Obama, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, is on an official visit to Washington, D.C. in September 2016. During the visit, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President Obama held a meeting on September 14 in the White House and adopted this joint statement.

Both leaders remarked on the tremendous change in Myanmar over the past five years, during which time Myanmar moved from a military government through a period of opening, held free and fair elections in November 2015, and inaugurated a new, democratically elected government in March 2016. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her appreciation for the role played by the United States and other members of the international community in encouraging and supporting this transformation, and President Obama affirmed continued U.S. support for Myanmar's democratic transition. Both leaders noted that Myanmar's transition has allowed for a dramatic change in the bilateral relationship, creating opportunities to build a robust, multi-faceted partnership for the mutual benefit of both countries.

The State Counsellor reiterated to the President her commitment to furthering Myanmar's democratic transition by pursuing peace, national reconciliation, and inclusive growth. She expressed her belief that the 21st Century Panglong process, inaugurated on August, 31, 2016, would lead to a lasting peace with armed ethnic groups and help the people of Myanmar build an inclusive Union that embraced the country's rich diversity. She stressed her government's commitment to the resolution of the complex political, economic, and humanitarian challenges in Rakhine State and the development of the state's economic potential. Noting that peace, national reconciliation, and inclusive economic growth were mutually reinforcing, the State Counsellor described the range of economic policies the Government of Myanmar was pursuing to develop its economy. She stressed that Myanmar welcomes international investment to help promote strong, inclusive, and long-term economic growth and asked that the United States lift remaining sanctions on Myanmar to encourage this investment and in recognition of the steps Myanmar has taken toward democratization.

The President told the State Counsellor that the primary focus of U.S. policy toward Myanmar was to help Myanmar succeed. He reiterated that the United States would continue its strong support, both diplomatically and through assistance programs, for the priorities expressed by the State Counsellor. He welcomed the Myanmar government's initiatives to address the longstanding concerns of all communities in Rakhine State, including the establishment of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State chaired by Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations. The President expressed his hope that all parties to civil conflict in Myanmar would seize the opportunity offered by the 21st Century Panglong process to seek peace and build the foundations for a democratic, federal Union through dialogue. The President affirmed the importance of the role of civil society in the pursuit of Myanmar's national development goals and the promotion and protection of human rights and democratic governance. The President expressed his commitment to helping Myanmar achieve inclusive economic growth, both through continued assistance and by

changes to U.S. policy designed to encourage responsible investment in Myanmar. Concurring with the State Counsellor on the importance of the rule of law, the President said the United States would continue to support Myanmar's efforts to develop domestic institutions to promote the rule of law and would work closely with Myanmar and other partners in ASEAN to address regional and transnational challenges including nonproliferation and countering the scourge of drugs, terrorism, and extremism.

The President and the State Counsellor committed to mark this new era in the bilateral relationship by announcing a U.S.-Myanmar Partnership. This partnership, anchored by annual dialogues led by the U.S. Department of State and Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will allow the two countries to broaden and deepen their cooperation across a range of sectors. To further this effort, the President and the State Counsellor committed to collaborate on the following steps:

- Recognizing the progress toward democratic transition that Myanmar has achieved, including through the election of a civilian-led government, and in an effort to support inclusive economic growth, the United States will terminate the National Emergency with respect to Myanmar and will revoke the Executive Order-based framework of the Burma sanctions program.
- The United States will restore Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) trade benefits to Myanmar in light of progress on a number of fronts, including strengthening protections for internationally recognized worker rights.
- The United States and Myanmar commit to continued cooperation in addressing remaining challenges, such as strengthening the rule of law, promoting respect for human rights, countering trafficking in persons, combatting corruption, and advancing anti-money laundering efforts and counter-narcotics activities.
- The United States and Myanmar recognize their shared interest in enhancing bilateral economic engagement and exchanging views on laws and practices that affect bilateral investment flows and foreign investment, including the elements of a high-standard Bilateral Investment Treaty.
- The United States and Myanmar recognized the important role of small and growing businesses in supporting inclusive economic growth. The United States intends to sign a loan guarantee with five local microfinance institutions to support over \$10 million in loans to small businesses in Myanmar, which will increase access to food and support employment opportunities for communities in Myanmar.
- The United States and Myanmar commit to continued cooperation in addressing remaining challenges, such as strengthening the rule of law, promoting respect for human rights, countering trafficking in persons, combatting corruption, and advancing counter-narcotics activities.
- The United States and Myanmar are committed to advancing global health security. In 2017, Myanmar will complete and publish a Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of national capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. The United States completed and published a JEE in 2016.
- The United States and Myanmar will expand people-to-people ties including by augmenting English-language instruction with additional training for 1500 English teachers, by expanding U.S. educational advising across Myanmar by 50 percent for

students interested in studying in the United States, and by launching a new exchange program for Myanmar leaders that will provide expertise in democratic governance.

- The United States and Myanmar look forward to the arrival of the first group of Peace Corps volunteers, who will train English teachers as well as teach students in middle and high schools.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Burma, State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi.

Names: Annan, Kofi A.; Aung San Suu Kyi.

Subjects: Asia : Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Burma : Democracy efforts; Burma : Economic growth and development; Burma : Human rights issues; Burma : Political unrest and violence; Burma : Relations with U.S.; Burma : State Counselor; Burma : U.S. assistance; Burma : U.S. sanctions; Commerce, international : Generalized System of Preferences (GSP); Commerce, international : Labor protection standards; Developing countries : Health and medical care, promotion efforts; Peace Corps, U.S.

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