



Yangon, 13 November 2013  
131113/02

## R E M A R K S

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the launch of the EU-Myanmar Task Force activities**

*"Good evening everyone and can I say first of all thank you so much to everyone who has gathered here this wonderful evening in Yangon to begin the EU-Myanmar. As I said to you, Minister, just before, this is a combination of celebration and expectation. The people who have come here have come to celebrate the progress of this wonderful country and in recognition of the journey that Myanmar has decided to undertake. We also come with a sense of expectation; expectation that is matched by the people, by the government, by civil society in Myanmar too. Expectation of what can be and what will be.*

*Minister, this is the first time that we've brought the idea of a task force outside of our own neighbourhood and I could think of nowhere better than coming here. When I met with President Thein Sein, he and I discussed the idea of having a task force this month here in Myanmar and we did so because we talked about the concept of economics meet politics. The Importance of this opportunity is to see economic growth -and development and investment potential - linked to the political journey of this nation that should enable economic opportunity to be realised.*

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*So for me when I first thought about this idea of a task force it was about bringing those two concepts together, and I'm absolutely thrilled to have fellow Commissioners with me who are going to join us for these discussions: Vice-President Tajani who is here with business leaders and entrepreneurs from all over the European Union who've come to work with their colleagues here and in these next two days to look at the potential of partnership and the collaboration. We have Commissioner Piebalgs who all this time in office has been astounding in his support for development but especially in these last years for development here - and to provide the resources to ensure the opportunity that development can give.*

*We have many other people here. I will be joined by Dacian Cioloș, the Commissioner for Agriculture, we have the Special Representative for Human Rights, we have so many people who will be here to demonstrate their collective support for this country. But I want to single out the members of the European Parliament, led by Isabelle Durant, Vice-President, who have also come to show their support for the political process that is being undertaken here. And I do thank them for making this journey.*

*Have undoubtedly forgotten many people I could mention but I do want to say again: we are here to celebrate, we are here to anticipate, we are here with great expectations for the future of this country. And it is with great humility, Minister, and with a real sense of privilege that I say thank you to you and your colleagues for allowing us to come and to have the chance to work so closely with you. "*

*Thank you, Minister Soe Thane.*

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