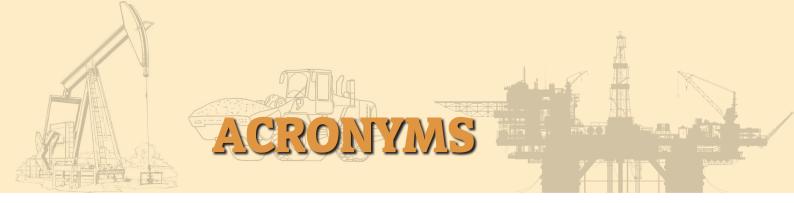




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Cover Photo credit: Hkun Lat for NRGI



AEC ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)

DICA Directorate of Investment and Company Administration

FESR Framework of Economic and Social Reform

GMS Greater Mekong Sub-region

GoM Government of Myanmar

IRD Internal Revenue Department

MEITI Myanmar Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

MoEE Ministry of Electricity and Energy

MoNREC Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental

Conservation

MOGE Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise

MoPF Ministry of Planning and Finance

MSDP Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan

MSG Multi-stakeholder Group

MYCO Myanmar Companies Online

NCS National Coordination Secretariat

OA Other Account

PFM Public Financial Management

SOE / SEE State owned Enterprise / State Economic Enterprise

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

UFA Union Fund Account

We would like to self-nominate Republic of the Union of Myanmar as a country which has made the most impressive progress in overcoming challenges and capacity constraints.

"The extractive industries are depleting a natural asset that rightly belongs to all citizens, both current and future. Inevitably, resource extraction therefore raises issues about the balance between the use of revenues for current consumption and their use for the accumulation of assets. Since the revenues from resource extraction are intrinsically unsustainable, to be fair to the future a substantial proportion of the revenues need to be devoted to investment."



Myanmar is a country rich in natural resources include oil and gas, various minerals, precious stones and gems, timber and forest products and hydropower potentials. However, it remains to be a Low-Income Country (LIC) with a GDP of only 69.32 billion USD. This is fairly low in comparison to a neighboring country such as Vietnam that has a GDP of 223.9 billion USD.

The extractive industries are Myanmar's most lucrative sector and the main source of revenue for the government. On the other hand, the citizens often do not reap the benefits. The extraction of resources in Myanmar causes severe environmental, social and political challenges including contribution towards some of the country's long-standing ethnic conflicts. Due to decades of military rule in Myanmar, institutions and rule of law are often limited and continues to be a priority of the Government to reform administratively, politically, economically, and socially in recent years. Despite challenges, many opportunities remain. For instance, Myanmar is one of the fastest growing economies in Asia in terms of GDP growth, growing at 6.8% per annum in 2017 and 2018.

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

During the fifty years of military rule, widespread secrecy and rampant corruption deprived the Myanmar people of their benefits from the country's natural resources riches. Furthermore, civil war and political oppression, coupled with economic mismanagement and international sanctions, have left Myanmar lagging significantly behind compared to many of its neighboring countries.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) won landslide elections and assumed government offices in April 2016. This provides a window of opportunity to address structural challenges that will create lasting positive change for the people of Myanmar. The Government's slogan has been "time for change," which have proven to be challenging but not without progress. This is further compounded by the fact that after many years of military rule, the expectations for the people are very high.



One of the most pressing challenges for the current Government is the ongoing peace process to ensure a lasting peace between the central government and numerous ethnic armed groups in the country. The peace agenda is inextricably linked to progress in the economy, specifically on sustainable economic development.

In the midst of this context, Myanmar's new government will need to address deep-rooted structural problems through economic, political and public administrative reforms. The ability to implement such reforms will depend on the cooperation of the military, which retains considerable executive powers granted by the 2008 Constitution. The decentralization agenda across the 14 States and Regions of the country are ongoing.

Among the key and most contentious issues for the peace talks are related to natural resources and revenue sharing. Finding a sustainable solution to how natural resources should be managed and revenues shared is key to achieving a political settlement that will put an end to the armed conflict. The depreciation of the kyat, the decline in oil and gas revenues have resulted in growing fiscal stress. Volatility in oil and gas revenues may have significant impact on total government revenues, and thereby on the government spending plans and/or the overall public debt burden. Future government revenues from the oil and gas sector are uncertain but may increase over time if new discoveries are made and recently declared discoveries are developed and commercialized. However, oil and gas projects take time to develop and initial costs have to be recovered before the government receives the major part of the revenues. Thus, it is expected to take years before the government receives a significant surge in oil and gas revenues.

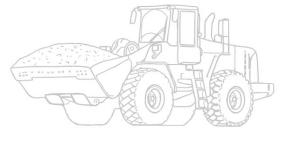


In order to address those challenges, the government of Myanmar committed to implementing the EITI in December 2012 by enacting Presidential Decree No. 99/2012. Myanmar was awarded EITI Candidate country status in July 2014 at the EITI Board's meeting in Mexico. On 25 October 2016, the EITI Board agreed that Myanmar's Validation under the 2016 EITI standard commenced on 1st July 2018.

MEITI Reports could be considered milestones in terms of the level of disclosures of extractive revenues including in-kind payments, state participations in the extractives, and disaggregated production and export data, all of which were made publicly accessible for the first time.

The implementing EITI in Myanmar has made the following benefits to the Union of Myanmar and governance of the extractive industries as follows:

- Government benefit from following an internationally recognized transparency standard that demonstrates commitment to reform and combating corruption, which then leads to improvements in the tax collection process.
- Companies benefit from a level playing field in which all companies are required to disclose the same information. They also benefit from an improved and more stable investment climate.
- Citizens and civil society benefit from receiving reliable information about the sector and a multi-stakeholder platform where they can better hold to account the government and companies.
- ◆ The goal of the Myanmar EITI is to build efficient and trustful communication channels among the MEITI participating civil society groups, government and private sector; to ensure timely and convenient public access to information and to create opportunities for dialogue or debate among stakeholders and the public; to improve public understanding of social and economic impacts of natural resource extraction.



HIGHLIGHT: MINERAL, OIL AND GAS SECTOR



Jade Area in Pharkhant, Kachin State

Photo by: Zaw Moe Htet for NRGI

The majority of mineral deposits found in Myanmar consists of base metals (gold, copper, silver, lead, zinc, tin, manganese and antimony), industrial minerals (cement, clays, gypsum, fertilizer bases, dolomite, limestone, salt and barite), energy sources (coal and uranium) and gems (jade, rubies, spinel, peridot, sapphire, kyanite). These extensive mineral resources attract significant interests from international mining companies.

Due to its diverse and untapped geological resources, mining sector is widely considered as one of the strengths of the country's economic development in the years to come. Copper makes up the largest export metal in the mining sector. Commodities such as gold, iron, and steel, limestone and other industrial minerals are being produced for domestic consumption. The mining and gems sector are however beset by governance challenges, thus limiting the potential of these sectors to contribute to the national economy. Lack of updated geographical information limits the country's attractiveness to investments despite the wide recognition of its significant untapped gems and mineral resources. On the other hand, the Amended Mines Law was enacted in 2015, it encourages profit sharing rather than production sharing while 1994 Mines Law and 1996 Mines Rules prescribed for production sharing. The 2015 Amended Mines Law requires joint venture operators to commit in environment impact assessments and required feasibility studies to include information on social and environmental impact in the project



proposed that showed an additional oversight on the feasibility studies. Operators are required to establish environmental / social fund and fund for mines closure and rehabilitation while there is not enough prescription on site rehabilitation. To assist and develop the mining cadaster system, database, licensing reform in mining and gemstone sector, MEITI is closely worked with the Department of Mine, under the management of MONREC and hired the mining cadaster consultant to undertake the conceptual design and it is in progress of creating the pre-cadastre database and pre-cadastre archive, adoption of new codification system and recodification of cadastre documents and files, etc.

With regard to Myanmar's oil and gas sector, Myanmar's first oil exports started in 1853, making the country one of the world's oldest oil producers. It is the second-largest producer of natural gas in South-East Asia, with consistent increases in production over the last decade.

MEITI's progress in Myanmar to make development and governance all-inclusive and participatory

(1) MEITI IMPLEMENTATION LINKAGE WITH THE MYANMAR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MSDP)

The MSDP is the expression of our national development vision – a vision that finds resonance in the global sustainable development agenda. The MSDP delivers this strategy, providing an overall framework for coordination and cooperation across all ministries, and all States and Regions to forge a common path towards the emergence of a prosperous, peaceful and democratic Myanmar. Founded upon the objective of giving coherence to the policies and institutions necessary to achieve genuine, inclusive and transformational economic growth, this MSDP has been developed to reinvigorate reform and promote bold action.

This MSDP is structured around 3 Pillars, 5 Goals, 28 Strategies and 251 Action Plans. All are firmly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),



the 12 Point Economic Policy of the Union of Myanmar, and various regional commitments which Myanmar has made as part of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Strategic Framework, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and many others. The implementation of MEITI is closely aligned with the MSDP's Pillar 3: People and Planet and Goal 5: Natural Resources and the Environment for Posterity of the Nation, Strategy 5.5: Improve land governance and sustainable management of resource-based industries ensuring our natural resources dividend benefits all our people, Action Plans 5.5.4: Greatly accelerate all necessary measures to meet requirements for EITI implementation and the relevant SDG target is 12.2. The strategic outcome for implementing MEITI is prudent and transparent management of natural resources revenue.

The Government of Myanmar (GoM) has actively taken the lead in implementing the EITI through the Ministry of Planning and Finance (MoPF). Two committees, namely the MEITI Leading Committee and MEITI Working Committee, were established by the GoM to support EITI implementation. Notification No. 115/2016, created the MEITI Leading Committee, which is the highest EITI governing body composed of three Union Ministers from MoPF, MoEE (Ministry of Electricity and Energy) and MoNREC (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation) and Deputy Minister of MOPF. In addition, the MEITI Working Committee was created composed of 17 government officials, mostly at Director General and Director levels, representing various departments and agencies that are engaged in the EITI reporting process. This committee instructs reporting entities to provide the information needed for EITI reporting and are closely involved in the reform process.

Myanmar as one of the EITI implementing countries, has swiftly acted on recommendations that have emerged from EITI reporting, which made important contributions to policy reform and change. We strongly believe that there are considerable complementary objectives between the EITI and the SDGs, and EITI implementation will significantly contribute toward several of the SDG goals and targets.



(2) EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION AMONGST KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE AND PRODUCE QUALITY MEITI REPORTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Myanmar EITI has published four EITI Reports to date. The first report was published in February 2016 covering fiscal year 2013-2014. The second and third reports were simultaneously published on 30 March 2018 covering fiscal periods 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. MEITI Reports could be considered milestones in terms of the level of disclosures of extractive revenues including in-kind payments, state participations in the extractives, and disaggregated production and export data, all of which were made publicly accessible for the first time. Each report contains recommendations aimed at improving the reporting process and strengthening natural resource governance in the country. MEITI Reports have also been useful in explaining revenue flows from extractive companies to other government agencies or state-owned enterprises and how these are recorded in the national budget. The reporting procedures have also been strengthened, requiring the Independent Administrator and the MSG to assess prevailing auditing practices and agree procedures for assuring the data to be disclosed in the EITI Report. The reports include a comprehensive discussion on the regulatory framework of the extractive sector and reforms that are in progress.

According to the EITI data, over 79% of extractive revenues, are collected by SOEs through "Other Accounts".

After the financial year 2012-2013, UFA (OA) has been allowed to open with the notification No. 547/2012 of Ministry of Planning and Finance. Since then, State Economic Enterprises have been allowed to open SEE Accounts and Other Accounts – OA.

According to the MoPF, SOEs other account are part of the Union Fund and therefore are part of the Union Budget. Thus, SOEs other accounts are consolidated with the budget accounts and are used for the budget deficit financing which means that Other accounts surplus are in fact spent for SOEs as well as the expenditures of non-revenue making ministries such as Education, Health and Sport, Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

The most significant progress in terms of the all transfers from government to SOEs, the written directive issued by the Ministry of Planning and Finance

dated 28-February-2019 that the financial management plans of state-owned economic enterprises only with the Union Fund Account (UFA-SEE Account) shall transfer all allocations to the Union Fund Account (UFA-SEE Account) and shall also incur all expenses from the UFA-SEE Account within the permitted bound of the Union Budget; starting from the 2019-2020 Financial Year.

- ▶ Debt, deposit and temporary accounts (for recordkeeping only) (Non-Budget) associated with the Union Fund included in the balance of the Union Fund Account (UFA-OA) as of 30-9-2019 must be transferred to the UFA-SEE Account by way of account transfer after being inspected and approved by the office of the Union's Auditor General. All remaining balance of UFA-OA that has been inspected and approved by the office of the Union's Auditor General is to be adjusted and transferred, and UFA-OA Accounts must be closed;
- The relevant departments and bodies need to earmark expenditures in such a way that supports Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP).

These changes seek to ensure that the EITI Report provides a complete picture of the revenues received, and that the EITI Report more clearly addressed the reliability of the data.

(3) GOVERNANCE REFORM: PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The political and economic reform process in Myanmar accelerated after the elected government came into power in 2011. Improving PFM, including fiscal decentralization, is central to this and accordingly shapes the foundation of Myanmar's endeavors to invigorate a market economy, promote open administration, empower government institutions, and secure peace. Reforming PFM is in progress and is largely dependent on the institutional and political context. There is also exist a number of obstacles that to be overcome.

The PFM reform began in 2011 in accord with the Framework of Economic and Social Reform (FESR), there have been positive steps toward greater transparency. The most notable initiatives and their challenges are as follows:

First, the passing of the Union Budget Law in 2012 and the creation of a Public Accounts Committee and National Planning and Finance Committee





Workshop on Reformation of State-Owned Enterprise in Extractive Industries in Myanmar Photo by: MEITI (NCS)

has increased public debate and parliamentary oversight of public spending. Second, the treasury department has been established in June 2014 and their main policy is to develop a modernized public financial management system to prioritize short-term cash calculation for union level ministries, organizations for continuous development of financial management system and improve Treasury bill auction and modernized consolidation and reporting. Their main objective is to strengthen the Union budget and adopt an efficient public finance management system. The government has sought to improve the collection of tax through the establishment of a Large Taxpayer Office, which became operational in April 2014. This body has introduced basic tax measures such as taxpayer self-assessment and unique taxpayer identification numbers (TIN). These changes should help the government to enhance revenue collection and reduce corruption. Third, attempts have also been made to create an independent central bank. A new Central Bank Law was introduced in July 2013, granting far greater autonomy to this institution and separating powers from the government. Positively, furthermore, more than half of Myanmar's international debt has been written off and relations with major international financial institutions have begun to normalize. Fourth, the Public Debt Management Law is enacted in January 2016 and the Myanmar Government is granted the authority to issue Treasury Bonds by the Union Budget Law. Finally, Myanmar committed to implement the EITI standard which help to boost fiscal transparency in not only the extractive sector but also exposed the need for better PFM more generally.

3.1. The importance of carrying out public financial management reform linking up with Myanmar economic and social reform process:

Public financial management is all about fiscal and tax reform, national budget transparency, fiscal policy, investment budget and effective public expenditure management, state-owned enterprises reform, strategic resource allocation and resource mobilization, which are stated in the Government's Economic Policy priorities regulated by the government.

- 3.2. The need for Pension System Reform: According to Civil Service Law, the government takes its responsibilities to provide salaries and also pension benefits for civil service personnel. Currently, pension expenditures are directly born by the Union Budget yearly. Founding a pension fund system is necessary for reducing the burden of pension benefits on the Union budget and gaining an adequate, equitable and sustainable pension fund in the long run like international pension schemes. We aim to study and establish such a pension scheme with appropriate governance arrangements. (Should encourage to use Extractive Industries "contribution of State shares obligation to set up provident Fund).
- 3.3. Internal Revenue Department will complete the implementation of the key goals for the second phase (2017-22) by building on the achievements, which progressively resulted in that of the first phase (2012-17). This Reform Plan aims IRD to become a transparent and accountable modern tax institution that every citizen including taxpayers can absolutely rely on. This plan covers improvements in integrity and public awareness of taxation, the development of tax policy, introduction of new technology, development of staff, introduction of new assessment processes, improvements in service and enforcement, improvement in Revenue forecasting and restructuring of the department.
- 3.4. Core Banking System and computerized banking system will be in developed. Pension system reform from the system which pension benefits directly born by the government budget to an adequate, equitable and sustainable pension fund system would be adopted as international practice.
- 3.5. Myanma Economic Bank, which maintains State Fund Account practically to control public financial data in a timely manner, is trying to apply Core Banking System of international banking. In first stage, commencing from 26 April 2016, Deloitte Consultant, an international consultant firm was hired, and it provided technical requirements for core banking system, and provided relevant training to Core Banking Design and capacity building training for staff.

https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/interview/maximising-capacities-u-soe-win-minister-planning-and-finance-implementing-development-strategy-long

https://rimyanmar.org/en/publication/state-owned-economic-enterprises-reform-myanmar-case-natural-resource-enterprises

3.6. Transparency of financial situation of state-owned enterprises, reviewing the role of State-owned enterprises in budget as it is appropriate.

https://myanmar.gov.mm/documents/20143/9099620/Strategy+ Eng%28PDF%29.pdf/6e278da4-3b5e-fb45-b37f-12434de58d79

3.7. Establishment of Public Finance Management Academy; Strengthen fiscal sustainability of the Pension System and support pensioners as best as we can.

(4) TRANSPARENCY IN STATE PARTICIPATION

State-owned enterprises belong to all the people and are an important force in any country's economy. In Myanmar, state-owned economic enterprises (SEEs) are particularly important, generating approximately 50 percent of Union fiscal revenues, largely from the natural resource sector. Partly on account of the 1989 SEE law, SEEs enjoy extensive autonomy and monopoly powers over different sectors of the economy. Since 2012, the Union government has initiated reform efforts that were intended to enable SEEs to operate commercially, so as to eventually to stand on their own feet. However, the reforms implemented thus far have not addressed long-standing challenges of lack of accountability and oversight.

To address in efficiencies in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in line with the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP), the Ministry of Planning and Finance is collaborating with the World Bank, the US Treasury and the Myanmar Development Institute to enhance the oversight of SOEs. Their underlying profitability and financial sustainability is the main focus, as well as their socio-economic impact. The end result of these efforts will be to create the right policies and procedures for reforming and strengthening SOEs, as well as corporatizing or privatizing them where appropriate. Reducing the burden of SOEs on the government budget is a clear objective in the coming years, coupled with our determination to generate greater social and economic returns to the Myanmar people. In addition, Myanmar EITI is pushing the extractive industries related SOEs reform program, which is directly correlated with government ongoing reform plan. In near future, the government is drafting the reform plan of MOGE (Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise) to become NOC (National Oil Company)



(5) BENEFICIARY OWNERSHIP

Beneficial ownership disclosure becomes essential in the reform process with regard to administration and economics in Myanmar. It takes consideration to empower good governance in the ways of transparency, accountability, revenue sharing, fair playground for local and foreign investors, monitoring and evaluation. In Myanmar, BO was introduced in 2016 along with Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (EITI) standards. With the adoption of the 2016 EITI Standard (Requirement 2.5), the EITI Board has agreed that by 1 January 2020, all implementing countries must ensure that the necessary preparatory steps and reforms are undertaken, implementing countries were also required to agree and publish roadmaps for their beneficial ownership disclosures by 1 January 2020 only 7 months ahead from the deadline.

Beneficial ownership is quite new in Myanmar and number of challenges are more visible than opportunities. In the long term, BO disclosure will lead to avoid anti-corruption, create fair play ground for entrepreneurs, invite foreign investors and proceed to good governance. In the short term, it cannot create quick win for the participants. Anyway, Myanmar has been implementing its BO process since 2016 with the method of "Learning by doing".

On the 31 March 2017, the Myanmar EITI Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) approved a draft BO Roadmap that outlines key stakeholders' legislation and challenges to implementing the EITI beneficial ownership requirement. Besides, MSG also could identify a number of activities to be undertaken including a legal review, consultations, seminars and workshops that led to the establishment of BO Task Force.

To implement the BO disclosure process successfully, Beneficial Ownership Task Force (BOTF) was formed by the Ministry of Planning and Finance in June 2018. As a progress, definition of "Beneficial Owner" and "Politically Exposed Person" had been agreed by the Multi-stakeholder Group (MSG) and Beneficial Ownership Task Force that would be used in implementation of BO Workplan. Both MSG and BOTF comprise of representatives from respective ministries in the extractive sectors, Anti-corruption commission, Union Attorney General Office, Auditor General Office, Central Bank of Myanmar, Financial Investigation Unit, Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), private sector and civil society organizations. Then, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) became a BOTF Focal Agency to take responsibility for BO information collection process including registry and disclosure. In a later stage, it aims that BO data will be incorporated with the Myanmar Companies Online (MYCO).



BO Task Force Meeting

Photo by : MEITI (NCS)

Another milestone: BO pilot project was developed during the first half of 2018 with the voluntarily participation of 21 companies from the oil and gas, mining, jade and gems and forestry sector. Among them, 80 percent of participants provided their legal and beneficial owners information that led satisfactory result.

Before EITI law is enacted in Myanmar, the Myanmar Company Law 2017, the Anti-Money Laundering Law 2014, the Anti-Corruption Law-2013 introduced BO concept with code of business ethics, ownership interest and definition of PEP. Presidential Decree will be the first legal instrument to implement the BO process in Myanmar.

It is expected that beneficial ownership disclosure to become a national level priority program pursued by the faster moving and closer coordination by the national level policy maker. To ensure BO disclosure fruitfully, Myanmar would like to invite international cooperation in terms of technology, finance, legal advice in order to achieve sustainable economic development.





The Myanmar's MEITI team is effectively engaging all key stakeholder groups and this has resulted in the preparation of cross-stakeholder group engagement as well as the production of quality reports. We are currently preparing for the fifth country EITI report in a timely manner. Furthermore, the existing team is coordinating all key stakeholders through a series of meetings and workshops, coordinating with the BO taskforce to issue a new presidential decree, and developing and disseminating a template to Beneficial Ownership disclosure. As a result of the Government of Myanmar's effort towards actualizing decentralization, further support is being provided to subnational EITI implementation units (SNUs), which are already established in six strategic States and Regions across Myanmar. In addition, capacity building activities continues to be provided to State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) as well as State and Regional Governments. In addition, the MEITI-NCS and MSG is working closely across all key stakeholder groups and the MEITI Leading Committee and Working Committee to undertake corrective actions of validation to ensure timely implementation.

In order to effectively implement MEITI National Multi-Stakeholder Group's activities, it is critical to further strengthen the institutions and key stakeholders responsible for policy-making and monitoring. Further efforts will be done to ensure the governance structure and mandate of MEITI, and the implementation of broader sector reforms are explicitly linked. For instance, a Terms of Reference and Workplan of the National Secretariat will be updated to reflect this linkage.

The issue of convening power cannot be extended to NCS core team as a blanket statement. There are a range of stakeholder groups, from government to civil society organizations. MEITI-NCS has worked tirelessly to coordinate across all stakeholders to strive towards a shared vision. But there are some individuals who still have different opinions on the process and will need to further manage. This does not mean that there is no progress - it simply means that certain individuals' viewpoints will need to be identified and managed.



Myanmar will also follow accordingly to the EITI Board's recommendation to "develop a costed work plan for 2019 and onwards that includes steps to mainstream EITI implementation in company and government systems." We

acknowledge the need for this, and to shift the focus from financing EITI reports to supporting reforms across the system, processes and structures, with the overarching aim of promoting systemic disclosure. This 'culture' will need to be cultivated and encouraged. Efforts towards this will further promote the Government's Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP), which is a strategic document that prioritizes national development projects to be implemented. This would require effective coordination between Government Ministries and agencies, propelled by strong Government national ownership and stewardship.

Last but not least, we are humbled by the EITI International Board's acknowledgement of Myanmar EITI's efforts to reposition MEITI implementation work plan with a strong focus on good governance and transparency principles. We have coordinated across a wide array of stakeholders and are initiating reforms in oil and gas, mining, gems, jade and forestry sectors to be inline with global EITI communities.

We welcome the global community and appreciate the support from all.



MEITI - National Coordination Secretariat