Myanmar Summit 2015: Taking Stock
May 15th 2015 • Yangon, Myanmar

Working programme

9.00 am   Chairman’s opening remarks

Richard Cockett, South-East Asia correspondent 2010–14, The Economist

9.15 am   Opening keynote: In conversation with the reformers

Reform in Myanmar has been swift, with a plethora of new policies and laws now in force. To what extent has this translated into tangible progress for the country? What have been some of the key challenges, and what barriers lie ahead as the country continues with its historic transition?

The Economist sits down with key participants in the transition to reflect on process to date.

Remarks
U Ye Htut, Union minister of information and spokesperson for the President

Panellists
Dr Aung Tun Thet, economic adviser to the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Robert San Pe, senior adviser on legal affairs to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
Dr Sein Maung, chairman, First Private Bank

Moderator
Richard Cockett, South-East Asia correspondent 2010–14, The Economist

10.05 am   On the sofa: Myanmar’s transition in numbers

In 2014, Myanmar completed a national census for the first time since 1983. Before this latest census, the poor quality and availability of statistics precluded a robust assessment of the country’s socio-economic dynamics. New research paints a clearer picture of Myanmar’s makeup and of its real market opportunity.

Panellists will make use of the latest data to present their take on the current situation in Myanmar and provide new insights on its economic prospects and investment potential.

Each panellist will be asked to speak to the key data points that best reflect Myanmar’s changing trajectory as they see it. Moderated discussion and Q&A will follow.

Panellists
U Moe Kyaw, senior adviser, Nielsen MMRD Research Services
U Zaw Oo, executive director, Centre for Economic and Social Development, Myanmar
Development Research Institute
U Win Myo Thu, director, Ecodev
Hiro Taylor, country manager, Myanmar, Visa

Moderator
Ross O’Brien, director, Hong Kong, The Economist Corporate Network

10.50 am Networking refreshment break

11.15 am Panel discussion: The human capital conundrum

Myanmar has taken decisive steps to reform its underdeveloped education sector, but still comes up short where industry looks for human capital with the skills and calibre to drive business growth. Participants will look at how the country can develop its human capital to promote economic development.

- What existing models for higher education and vocational training can be applied in Myanmar?
- Who is responsible for developing Myanmar’s human capital: industry, government, civil society or the international community?
- While they wait for Myanmar’s supply of high-quality, skilled workers to catch up with demand, how will businesses deal with the shortfall?

Panellists
Andrew McLeod, research fellow and programme director, Oxford–Myanmar Law Programme, Oxford University
Vicky Bowman, director, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business
Dr Yin Yin Nwè, chief education adviser to the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and special adviser to the Myanmar Peace Center
Nyantha Maw Lin, managing director, Vriens & Partners

Moderator
Simon Long, Banyan columnist, The Economist

12.00 pm Panel discussion: Infrastructure or bust?

Infrastructure roll-out is critical to Myanmar’s development trajectory, particularly in rural areas. Most of the country has insufficient access to roads, electricity and water, which hinders development of the agricultural economy. This also creates a challenging context for telecommunications and oil and gas companies with ambitious plans for expansion. Panellists will explore investors’ key questions about the pace and extent of infrastructure development.

- What critical infrastructure gaps does Myanmar face at this stage of its development?
- Exactly how “connected” is Myanmar? What is the current state of play for transport, electricity and water infrastructure across the country?
- What regions and states are ready for new investment in fixed assets, and which areas
remain underdeveloped?

Panellists
Stephen P. Groff, vice-president, East Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific, Asian Development Bank
Ken Tun, chief executive officer, Parami Energy
Edwin Vanderbruggen, partner, VDB Loi

Moderator
Ross O’Brien, director, Hong Kong, The Economist Corporate Network

12.50 pm Networking luncheon

2.00 pm Panel discussion: Building Myanmar’s financial architecture

Myanmar is South-East Asia’s last “greenfield” financial market: its barely developed banking sector and millions of unbanked people present a compelling opportunity. Yet the blueprint for constructing the country’s financial system is not complete, and consumers’ inclination and ability to participate in formal banking is little understood. This session will focus on how the financial sector is likely to develop in the short and medium terms.

- What is the vision for Myanmar’s financial system?
- What scope and opportunity is there for foreign players to take part?
- What is the real opportunity for rural financing and microcredit?

On the sofa
Dr Maung Maung Thein, deputy minister, Ministry of Finance

Panellists
U Thura Ko Ko, managing director, YGA Capital
Christopher Hughes, managing partner, Baker & McKenzie
Brad Jones, managing director, mobile financial services, Telenor Myanmar

Moderator
Ross O’Brien, director, Hong Kong, The Economist Corporate Network

2.50 pm In conversation: Myanmar’s next generation

A new cohort of entrepreneurs and political thinkers is helping to build Myanmar from the ground up. The Economist speaks with the country’s next generation of leaders.

Panellists include
Cheery Zahau, independent researcher, Pyidaungsu Institute for Peace and Dialogue
Nay Chi Win, head of the Togetherness Education and Policy Research Unit, National League of Democracy
Nay Phone Latt, executive director, Myanmar ICT for Development Organization
Nay Aung, chief executive officer, Oway Group

Moderator
Richard Cockett, South-East Asia correspondent 2010–14, The Economist

3.40pm On the sofa: Fostering peace

A lasting political solution to Myanmar’s internal conflict now appears within reach, in the form of a nationwide peace agreement, which remains the best prospect for the country’s long-term stability. In this session, those involved in the peace process meet for an intimate discussion of the issues.

Panellists include
Harn Yawngwe, executive director, Euro-Burma Office
Ashley South, independent analyst and consultant
Daw Naw Rebecca Htin, associate director for peace and political dialogue, Myanmar Peace Center
U Aung Naing Oo, associate director, peace dialogue programme, Myanmar Peace Center

Moderator
Richard Cockett, South-East Asia correspondent 2010–14, The Economist

4.30pm Networking refreshment break

4.50pm Panel discussion: Future scenarios beyond 2015

The path to reform was forged upon a historic understanding between the ruling government and its opposition. The elections will inevitably shift this dynamic.

We ask experts to share their vision of post-2015 Myanmar. What will the elections mean for Myanmar’s economic prospects? How will its political landscape eventually look, and what are the implications for investors and the people of Myanmar?

Each panellist will have ten minutes to present their vision for Myanmar beyond 2015. A moderated discussion and Q&A session will follow.

Remarks
Dr Thant Myint-U, founder and chairman, Yangon Heritage Trust

Panellists
Mary Callahan, professor, Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington
Richard Horsey, consulting Myanmar adviser, International Crisis Group

Moderator
Simon Long, Banyan columnist, The Economist

5.40pm Chairman’s closing remarks

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Richard Cockett, South-East Asia correspondent 2010–14, The Economist

6.00 pm  Networking cocktail reception