

ASEAN 2014



Myanmar takes the chair

A Myanmar Times Special Report

Myanmar takes a turn in the hot seat

After hosting the World Economic Forum on East Asia and the Southeast Asian Games last year, Myanmar is confident that it can meet the challenge of chairing the Association of Southeast Nations at a time of great transition for the country and the region

HLA HLA HTAY

THE biggest danger to Myanmar in being ASEAN chair might be over-inflated expectations," according to Sean Turnell, associate professor at Australia's Macquarie University.

"The international community didn't expect much from [previous chairs] Laos, Cambodia etc," Mr Turnell said, "so these countries quite easily exceeded expectations.

“The complex, multi-faceted and transnational challenges facing the world are best dealt with via an integrated regional approach. ASEAN has withstood the test of time, and has contributed immensely to regional peace, stability and prosperity. As such, ASEAN is well positioned to present itself as part of the solution to global challenges.

ASEAN Secretary General
HE Le Luong Minh

This might not be the case for Myanmar."

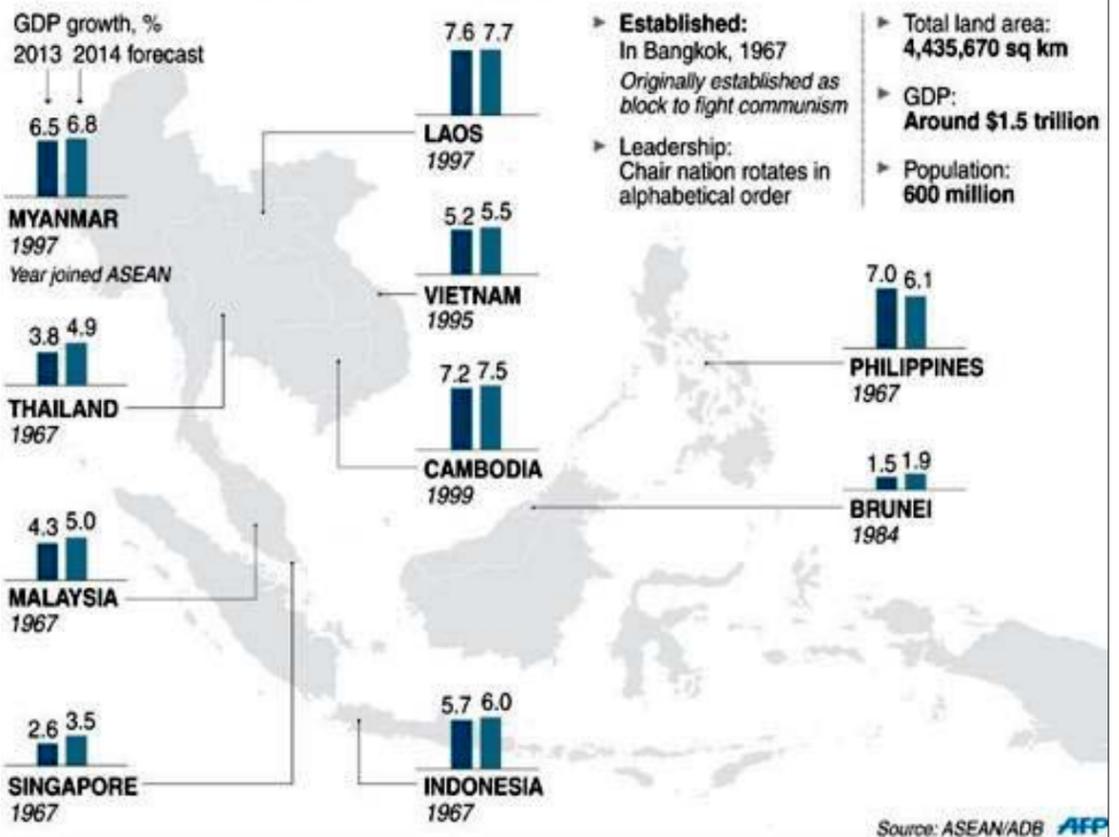
It's not the worst problem to have. While Myanmar has previously been seen as a drain on the bloc, it now "promises to make a positive contribution," Mr Turnell said. But he also warned the country's successful management of the Southeast Asian Games could raise unrealistic hopes of its ability to tackle more substantive challenges.

Like many of the changes now underway in Myanmar, holding the ASEAN chairship is unprecedented. Myanmar was forced to renounce its previous turn in 2006, in the face of criticism of its rights record and the then-ruling junta's failure to shift to democracy.

Myanmar's eagerness to take the chair this year – jumping in ahead of Laos – is a signal the government wants to "step up the process of opening up to the region and outside world," said Southeast Asia expert Carl Thayer. He said Myanmar would largely follow a preset agenda and would not be "out of its depth" at the helm.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Myanmar chairs ASEAN for the first time in 2014



Size of ASEAN economy

8th

when ranked as a single country

December 31

2015

Integration of ASEAN economies

"Myanmar is ready for the ASEAN chairmanship," said U Than Htut, a senior official at the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development.

"ASEAN is a rising star in the world's politics and economy. We hope that our chairmanship will support that," he said, adding that businesses had donated a fleet of BMW cars and limousines to ferry delegates to meetings.

Myanmar will also host the East Asia Summit in 2014, which brings ASEAN members together with the United States, China and Russia.

The regional grouping has a number of complex issues on the table this year, including territorial spats between Beijing and several ASEAN members – particularly the Philippines and Vietnam – over the South China Sea.

ASEAN also has ambitious plans for economic integration: The region of 600 million people is

set to establish a common market and manufacturing base by 2015, to better compete with China and India, but there are growing doubts

about whether it will be able to meet the target.

"Down the track, Myanmar will greatly benefit from integration," said Mr Turnell.

The chairship should also be an "opportunity for the government to improve its human rights situation," said Human Rights Watch researcher David Mathieson, "and show it is serious about making the transition from military to genuinely civilian rule." But he added the country still has "some hard convincing to do". - AFP



ASEAN 2014 – MYANMAR TAKES THE CHAIR

A Myanmar Times Special Feature

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The so-called "ASEAN handshake" – in which leaders stand in a row and clasp hands by crossing their arms – has become something of a family tradition at ASEAN get-togethers. And like all family traditions, it can prove a little awkward for newcomers, as US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel (middle) demonstrates in 2012.

While the practice's origin appears lost in time, it dates to at least 1981, as evidenced by a somewhat weary photo caption that ran in the *Straits Times* that year: "In what has now become the traditional ending to Asean Foreign Ministers' meetings, the clasp of hands again signaled the end of their two-day meeting in Pattaya in Thailand on Thursday."

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Charting ASEAN's future

The progressive language of the ASEAN Charter sometimes contradicts its hands-off "ASEAN way" philosophy, creating a push-pull paradox for Myanmar as it considers revising the bloc's cornerstone document for the first time ever

MYA KAY KHINE

FOLLOWING the 11th ASEAN Summit Declaration in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in December 2005, one representative from each ASEAN nation came together to begin drafting an ASEAN Charter – something to enshrine the bloc's values in writing and give them legal force.

This gathering – of “highly distinguished and well respected citizens from ASEAN Member Countries” – was referred to as the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). Its conclusions brought about the signing of the Cebu Declaration on the Blueprint for the ASEAN Charter in January 2007, as well as the foundation of a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) to craft the language of the document itself.

In November 2007 – the 40th anniversary of ASEAN's formation – member nations signed the completed ASEAN Charter. When it came into force in December 2008, ASEAN, in its own words, officially became “a rules-based and people-oriented organisation with its own legal personality”.

As well as clarifying a number of administrative details, such as the date of ASEAN Day (August 8) and the number of annual Ministers' Summits (increased to two), the charter outlined the path to an EU-style common market, set for 2015.

The heart of the document, however, deals with ASEAN's core values – including “respect for fundamental freedoms, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the promotion of social justice”.

In article 2, subsection 2e, however, the charter also asserts the right to “non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member States”. And subsection 2f asserts “the right of every Member State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion and coercion”.

Such language is the core of the so-called “ASEAN Way”, which emphasises that all nations must respect the wishes of others. But critics say it nullifies the more progressive articles, turning them into no more than empty promises.

“There are so many words that are people-oriented in the ASEAN Charter,” said Daw Thinzar Shunlei Yi, an organiser of the ASEAN Youth Forum, one of several major events Myanmar will host this year. “But nothing is evidently being implemented. And non-interference is not practical in the integration and implementation of strategy plans.

No country, she said, can pretend it exists in isolation.

“If there is no involvement in other country's local issues, problems can spread to another country.”

While she mentioned visa

“The review of the ASEAN Charter, if and when it is undertaken, will have significant implications on the future direction of ASEAN.”

ASEAN Secretary General
HE Le Luong Minh

disputes as one obvious problem requiring cooperation between multiple nations, some would add the conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State last year, which also inflamed religious tensions in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, leading to violence and deaths.

The ASEAN Charter can be reviewed every five years – a mark the 2008 document passed last year. While it's highly doubtful that the non-interference language will be revised, Myanmar has indicated it is open

to leading discussion on charter review in general should member nations desire it.

Some countries have indicated a wish to do so: Myanmar is looking to reduce some institutions, while the Philippines is requesting the Ministers' Summit convenes once rather than twice a year.

“There must be a review on how successful [the charter has been] in the past five years and where the defects are in this,” said U Wunna Maung Lwin, Myanmar's foreign minister, after the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Bagan January 15-17. “If there are defects, we will initiate discussions on sorting out what to do.”

If changes are called for, deputy director general of the Department of ASEAN Affairs U Aung Htoo said, Myanmar will not shy from taking on the leading role,



Then-ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan holds a copy of the ASEAN Charter while talking to reporters in Manila, Philippines, on July 8, 2008. Photo: AFP

adding that Myanmar has already participated in “consultations” on the subject at the headquarters of the secretary general.

U Kyaw Tint Swe, former ambassador to the UN and Myanmar's representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, as well as its president for 2014, said it's unlikely that the commission would be called on to participate directly in any future revisions should they occur.

“I think a group will be founded like the EPG and the HLTF, as when the ASEAN Charter was

first drawn up. But so far there has not been any agreement that the ASEAN Charter needs to be reviewed,” U Kyaw Tint Swe said.

Danny Chin Saung Lee, director of ASEAN community development at the ASEAN Secretariat, told *The Myanmar Times* it has yet to make any definite decisions on charter amendments.

But if changes do come about under Myanmar's watch, he said, it may be its lasting legacy as chair.

“It will be a significant result for the ASEAN community if we can really make amendments.”

– Additional reporting by Nyan Lynn Aung



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Photo: AFP

As ASEAN chair Myanmar will defend the traditional hands-off approach to member nations' internal affairs – including its own

BRIDGET DI CERTO
AND SANDAR LWIN

MYANMAR'S inaugural chairship of ASEAN is a good opportunity for the country to advance its own reform agenda and transition to democracy. At least, that's what UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon declared at the ASEAN-UN Summit on October 10, as Myanmar was presented the gavel ahead of its January 1 tenure.

But not even a month in and Myanmar had already made it very clear it will not be straying into turbulent waters in its leadership of the regional bloc.

"The ASEAN chair cannot interfere in every domestic issue that arises in member states," presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut told *The Myanmar Times* on January 14.

Myanmar takes over the leadership of ASEAN at a time when Southeast Asia, a region not exactly known for its stability, is awash with the very "domestic issues" which U Ye Htut says won't make it onto the bloc's agenda in 2014.

In Cambodia the political

stalemate continues between self-titled "strongman" Prime Minister Hun Sen and the formerly exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy, whose Cambodia National Rescue Party is protesting the results of last year's elections, which they call invalid.

The protests – coupled with a nationwide call from garment workers to have their minimum wage increased – turned violent in capital Phnom Penh, with at least four demonstrators shot dead by

“ASEAN subscribes to the vision of building an ASEAN Community as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, living in peace, stability and prosperity for a better future of the ASEAN peoples ... It is this dynamic partnership that has helped maintain and strengthen ASEAN's unity in the diversity of the Member States with different political systems.

ASEAN Member States, while pursuing their respective national interests, bear in mind the shared community interests.

ASEAN Secretary General
HE Le Luong Minh

security forces dispatched by Hun Sen, and scores more imprisoned.

But Cambodia politics – as well as the political impasse in Thailand over the future of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra – is unlikely to find itself on the program during high-level

meetings in Nay Pyi Taw.

Nor will an issue that hits closer to home for the host nation – the violence in Rakhine State between Buddhist and Rohingya communities.

The Myanmar Times has reported that U Ye Htut – who also serves as deputy minister for information – called the ongoing tension in Rakhine an "internal affair", and said it would not be discussed at ASEAN meetings even if raised by other countries.

He did, however, leave the option open for Myanmar to accept "advice that suits our country".

Such statements are in line with the "ASEAN Way" approach – a stream of multilateralism boasting of non-interference, informality, consensus-building through

consultation and, above all, the absence of confrontation.

Often criticised by outsiders, the approach is cherished by member nations.

The right of every ASEAN country to "lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion" is a key pillar of the 1976 peace treaty, signed by all member countries as well as several non-ASEAN nations including Australia, China and the United States.

In theory this aids conciliation between the diverse members, helping bring political and economic integration, said Daw Khin Ohn Thant, ASEAN expert and adviser to the Ministry of National Planning and Development.

"ASEAN uses the ASEAN Way, as they describe it, for decision-making processes," she said. "That means consultation and consensus. The member countries consult and only those decisions that all members agree on are made."

The chair country just has to initiate ideas, she said, and also has the right to lobby the rest of the countries to carry them out according to the charter.

But with a veto on discussing topics available to every member of the bloc, contentious issues tend to remain unresolved until agreements can be reached – or postponed once again until next year.

Whether the approach keeps the waters smooth or simmering, of course, depends on whether you're for or against a particular issue coming up. Just what the ASEAN status quo will mean under Myanmar – and what steps will or won't be taken to break out of it – remains to be seen.

Getting in on the ACT

In just one of the ideas floated to unify the economies of ASEAN nations, a proposal was made in 1995 to create ASEAN Common Time, or ACT, a single time zone for all ASEAN nations. The time zone – UTC+08:00, matching up with China and part of Australia – would ease trade in the region, but some experts warn Myanmar – the member furthest west – would struggle to bring its clocks forward 1.5 hours, and suggest UTC+07:00 – Bangkok's zone – be used instead. No agreement has yet been reached, however, so don't go changing your watches just yet.

The long road to the gavel

Until this year, Myanmar was the oldest member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations not to have chaired the bloc

BRIDGET DI CERTO
AND SANDAR LWIN

IN 2006, ASEAN shunned Myanmar. After being selected as the all-important chair of the regional political bloc, Myanmar was subsequently replaced – by the Philippines – amid fears that negative international perceptions and tight sanctions would make world leaders wary of attending ASEAN events.

At the time, the military regime accepted the decision with stoicism – at least outwardly. According to an ASEAN statement which quoted then-Foreign Minister U Nyan Win, the government turned down the chairship to give “full attention” to the “ongoing national reconciliation and democratization process”.

Few would have believed that at the time. But only five years later, Myanmar swore in its first civilian government in 50 years, with reformist president U Thein Sein committing to steering the country out of isolation and into active participation in the modern world.

Taking up the 2014 chairship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – this time for keeps – is a landmark step in Myanmar’s international integration.

ASEAN itself rose out of another group, the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), a small alliance formed between the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand in 1961. In 1967 Indonesia and Singapore joined these ASA nations to create a regional bloc meant to prevent the “domino effect” of communism spreading from nearby Vietnam throughout the region. Decades later, Brunei Darussalam (1984), Vietnam itself (1995), Laos (1997), Myanmar (1997), and Cambodia (1999) signed on as well, with most first taking on observer status before becoming full members.

While Papua New Guinea has held observer status since 1976, it remains outside the bloc due to a 1983 decision limiting full membership to countries located within Southeast Asia itself, regardless of other shared interests or challenges. Timor-Leste also holds observer status, and Bangladesh and Fiji have expressed interest in joining ASEAN in the future.

In total, the 10 current member countries comprise approximately 600 million people – around 11pc of the world’s estimated population in 2012.

Myanmar sent its first representative to an ASEAN event in 1994 and took on observer status in 1996. Joining the bloc in 1997 was a significant move for the fiercely introverted country. At the time, Western governments expressed discontent at inviting the pariah nation into the darling ASEAN fold. But Myanmar was better prepared fiscally, economically and politically than

Cambodia, which was supposed to be inaugurated in place of Myanmar but had to delay its initiation for two years due to civil unrest.

In *Myanmar in ASEAN: Regional Cooperation Experience* (2005), political observer Mya Than writes that Myanmar worked hard to earn its membership. In 1996 a steering committee was created to pave the way, and after admission the country jumped in with both feet.

“Soon after Myanmar joined ASEAN, it participated in almost all activities at various institutional levels as required by ASEAN from the summits to the ministerial meetings to officials’ meetings,” Mya Than writes.

Myanmar had already acceded to most regional treaties, and it quickly signed on to any remaining ASEAN alliance agreements shortly after being officially inaugurated into the group in 1997.

The country quickly became instrumental in expanding the network of ASEAN in East Asia. Six months after joining the bloc, it organised and hosted the

“The Chairmanship year also comes amidst Myanmar’s on-going democratisation and reform process which has been enjoying strong support from ASEAN Member States. ASEAN is committed to extending all necessary assistance and cooperation to ensure the accomplishment of Myanmar’s chairmanship. Myanmar’s success is ASEAN’s success.”

ASEAN Secretary General
HE Le Luong Minh

inaugural ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meeting with China, Japan and South Korea, with meetings held at Traders Hotel in Yangon in January 1998 – a task that had previously proven too much for others to handle.

“Malaysia was chair when we joined ASEAN,” said Daw Khin Ohn Thant, ASEAN expert and adviser to the Ministry of National Planning and Development, during a panel discussion on the ASEAN chairship last November. “Malaysia tried to hold that meeting but it was a failure because of Japan’s refusal to attend. We are proud that we could organise cooperation that the rest couldn’t.”

Still, Myanmar’s political situation at the time proved a great challenge to ASEAN’s staunch policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of member nations.

In 2003 then-Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed spoke out strongly against the ongoing imprisonment of Myanmar opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, saying that her continued detention could force ASEAN to expel Myanmar from the group.

“I fought hard for Myanmar to



ASEAN’s “Founding Fathers” – the foreign secretaries of the five original member nations – sign agreements bringing the bloc to life in Bangkok on August 8, 1967. Photo: AFP

be admitted into ASEAN,” he said at the time. “I think the leaders of Myanmar should consider public opinion [in support of her release] and there is nothing they have to lose.”

Mr Mahathir’s relinquishment of his previously enthusiastic support for Myanmar’s membership was a sharp blow to relations between the two countries. The Malaysian foreign minister at the time quickly sought to temper his comments, reminding fellow ASEAN nations and the media that no decision would be made without consensus – the so-called “ASEAN way” of doing things.

But ASEAN did issue a rare statement that year expressing concern over the military’s detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and calling for her immediate release. And in 2009 several countries, including the US, again called for Myanmar’s expulsion after the imprisoned politician was put on trial again, when an American swam across the lake to her home and entered her property without authorisation. But the idea of ejecting Myanmar entirely was quickly quashed by the bloc’s secretary general at the time, Surin Pitsuwan of Thailand.

However, after Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s release in 2010; the introduction of a quasi-civilian government following elections that same year; and a heady reform agenda leading up to further elections in 2015, no statements of dissent from ASEAN heads were made public when Myanmar’s turn came around again.

It had been next scheduled to take the chair in 2016, but requested the right to skip ahead in line, swapping with Laos.

Making the announcement in Bali in 2011, Indonesia’s Foreign

Minister Marty Natalegawa said, “All leaders are in agreement that significant changes, significant developments, have taken place in Burma and those changes have made it more conducive for Burma to carry out this responsibility.”

“With this decision there is more chance to give more encouragement to Burma to keep up the momentum for change,” he said.

“It’s not about the past,” he later added. “It’s about the future, what leaders are doing now.”

At the 2013 ceremony at which

President U Thein Sein accepted the gavel from Brunei’s Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, a short film proclaimed, “Now is Myanmar’s place in the sun.”

But while the “democratization” Myanmar said it would focus on in lieu of the 2006 chairship is indeed well underway, “national reconciliation” remains a stumbling block – both at home and in several neighbouring countries, where domestic crises are on the boil. The world will be watching what direction Myanmar takes ASEAN in next.

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Sailing stormy

Myanmar isn't among the countries bordering – and laying claim to – parts of the South China Sea. But other than Laos, it's the only one of the 10 ASEAN nations which hasn't. As it mediates among ASEAN members and other powerful neighbours, it may find the issue becomes its central challenge in 2014

NYAN LYNN AUNG

WHAT'S the second-busiest shipping route in the world? Is it the China Sea? The West Philippine Sea? The East Sea?

All of them, actually, but what you call the body of water may depend on which coast you're standing on. Likewise, your opinion on who owns it.

Referred to in English as the South China Sea – in the sense that it borders China rather than belongs to it – the global shipping highway and rich fishery ground is believed to contain lucrative offshore oil and gas deposits.

That makes it – along with the adjoining East China Sea – one of

the most hotly contested areas of the planet, with claims having been laid over the years to some or all of the waters by Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

With eight out of 10 ASEAN nations having dipped their oars in the waters at some point; with Japan and South Korea also embroiled in the dispute; and with China flexing its naval might by claiming the whole area for itself, experts warn the risk of an open conflict is ever-present.

MC Lall, a Myanmar observer from the University of London, said safely navigating these diplomatic shoals will prove a major test for Myanmar as ASEAN

chair country in 2014.

"I think this is one of the main challenges for Myanmar due to the close relationship with China and a more recent revival of a close relationship with Japan," Ms Lall said.

"Myanmar will not want to antagonise its long-term ally, and neither does it want to be seen as taking an anti-Japanese position, especially since Japan has been so supportive of the reform process.

"The best Myanmar can hope for is to try to get a consensus position across ASEAN and then present this as the chair of that organisation, rather than it being seen as a Myanmar-driven position," she said.

The stakes are high. With each country drawing up the maps differently, no one – from governments to fishing boats to warships – can agree on who has the right to be where.

Established by China last November, the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) now requires all aircraft in the zone to obey Chinese instruction or face a military response. And China's Hainan Fisheries Law, effective last month, requires all fishing vessels to obtain permission before passing through Hainan's administrative zone. ASEAN considers both measures in conflict with 2002's ASEAN-CHINA Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

For its part, Japan announced on January 28 it would rewrite its history books, literally, in order to emphasise that two island chains it disputes with China and South Korea are solely its own. Other countries have made similar shows of aggression in the past, only to be immediately and roundly condemned in turn by their equally assertive neighbours.

Experts see potential for the war of words escalating into a war of

arms – most likely between China and other countries in the region, but also possibly between China and the US. The two nations had a near-miss in December when a US guided-missile cruiser observing a Chinese aircraft carrier almost collided with a Chinese military vessel.

"This diplomatic 'test' will show really how mature the Myanmar diplomatic machinery is, and many will judge Myanmar by how well they manage this issue," Ms Lall said.

Myanmar is well aware of the need not to rock the boat: In January 2013 it set up a group as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs specifically to keep tabs on South China Sea developments.

And Myanmar's spokesperson for ASEAN affairs, U Ye Htut – who also serves as spokesperson for the President's Office and as deputy minister for information – has stated that the issue will be paramount for the country during its term.

"Myanmar must show its worth by taking fair action without any favours to China," U Ye Htut said on January 16. "The leading priority is to create a document of conduct on the South China Sea dispute during its chairship."

“I am optimistic that as long as ASEAN stays strong and united, we will be a significant stabilizing factor in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Geography has put ASEAN in a unique bridging position between the great Asian powers. If we keep our focus and stay on track with our development, ASEAN centrality will be a strong denominator for peace and stability.

ASEAN Secretary General
HE Le Luong Minh



seas



Chinese naval frigate Mianyang belches smoke during a visit to Sydney Harbour on September 20, 2010. Photo: AFP

But while Myanmar “has vowed that its decisions are not influenced by any countries”, U Ye Htut also admitted other factors still need to be considered.

“We need to solve this territorial dispute without damaging the relationship between Myanmar and China, because we can’t change our geographical situation.”

In the past China has insisted on negotiating disputes with other claimants on a one-to-one basis, while ASEAN members, looking for strength in numbers, in turn demand to negotiate collectively. Joint talks toward a code of conduct began in September, and at the October 10 East Asia Summit – featuring all 10 ASEAN nations plus eight others, including the US, China and Japan – participants cheered the

discussions as “positive progress”.

At the first ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ retreat in Myanmar, held January 16-18 in Bagan, only the South China Sea dispute was highlighted in the follow-up statement. Other regional issues – religious tensions, ethnic armed conflicts, efforts to deter chemical weapons, the Korean peninsula, and deterring nuclear proliferation – were put on the general agenda only.

In the statement, the foreign ministers jointly expressed their concerns about recent escalation of tensions, further reaffirming ASEAN’s six-point principles on the body of water and the importance of the maintenance of peace and stability, maritime security, and freedom of navigation in the waters and while flying above the disputed territory.

Beforehand, some had worried Myanmar might, like Cambodia before it, be cowed by its dependence on Chinese foreign investment, and choose to shy away from the topic.

“The issue wasn’t included in the agenda when Cambodia chaired [in 2012],” political commentator U Kyaw Win said. “It did not include it due to China’s pressure. For Myanmar, just including the issue in the agenda will work well for the country’s reputation.”

“Most countries including the ASEAN bloc had been worrying about whether Myanmar can solve the South China Sea dispute fairly,” U Ye Htut said. “So Myanmar must show it can.”

While Myanmar has said it will resist discussing “internal matters” which may anger or embarrass ASEAN members – including itself – it seems eager to wade into the South China Sea dispute.

That may be because it is not itself directly involved: Choosing to focus on a regional dispute, rather than other domestic disputes which may show it in a bad light and can’t be solved immediately, may prove useful during its term.

And if Myanmar can shrug off the influence of China, it will be cheered as a flex of diplomatic muscle and a vote of confidence for the integrated economy of the ASEAN Community to come in 2015.

Should things go wrong, however, Myanmar as chair country has the responsibility to intervene. That means Myanmar’s first priority is to make sure the situation doesn’t get worse under its watch, U Kyaw Win said.

“To decide right and wrong accurately [in matters of sovereignty] is difficult as the arguments are based on history. But Myanmar needs to control the situation so it doesn’t develop into physical war,” said U Kyaw Win.

“The Myanmar government is not in the position to stop a war. But the government will try as much as it can to be able to reduce the tension. That’s all it can do.”

– Additional reporting by Sandar Lwin and Bridget Di Certo; Translation by Thiri Min Htun

‘Almost all in business society will benefit’

Vice president of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Maung Maung Lay shares his views with editor Myo Lwin on how the business community will benefit from Myanmar taking on the ASEAN chairship this year

What impact will Myanmar’s ASEAN chairship have on the local business community?

Almost all will benefit. As there will be hundreds of meetings, all sectors – even the retail businesses – will gain. Experience gained from holding meetings and networking will certainly boost every sector of business.

What role will the ASEAN Business Advisory Council play?

We will be very active. We do look forward to the fact that Myanmar will be in the limelight, and more business opportunities are expected.



U Maung Maung Lay. Photo: Kaung Htet

60%

Average income growth per capita across ASEAN, from US\$2267 to \$3759, in 2012, five years after 2007’s ASEAN Economic Blueprint

and choose our partners. We must be aware of damages to our society and environment. Responsible partners should be welcomed, but we must be aware of the resource curse that might happen if we are not prudent.

What will the biggest challenge be for businesses dealing with ASEAN partners?

One of the serious issues we are currently facing is human resources. Due to our “fate”, we have lost our creativity. Apart from the weaknesses in our fundamentals, our capacities should be to strengthen and upgrade education. These changes are acutely necessary.

What precautions do you advise?

Of course, that good tsunami [of opportunities] will be a blessing for us. But we have to be vigilant of hit-and-run, grab-and-go companies who may wish to take swift advantage. We must identify



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Myanmar's chairship can bring hope for ASEAN

The best way to learn is to teach – but only time will tell whether that will apply to Myanmar in 2014

KYAW LIN OO

MYANMAR'S inaugural stint as ASEAN chair comes at an exciting time for the country. The country's political and economic reform process has started to take off during the past three years, and its semi-civilian government is set to hold another general election the year after serving as ASEAN's chair. And the final years of President U Thein Sein's term in government have seen two ambitious and unprecedented undertakings: the hosting of the SEA Games in December 2013 and the ASEAN chairship in 2014.

Apart from Vietnam and Laos, Myanmar is the last country in ASEAN to undergo democratic transition. But Myanmar's reform process has impressed the international community. Many European delegates have

visited Nay Pyi Taw – including the UK's prime minister, France's president and other high-profile EU personnel – as well as officials from Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Even the US government, a long-time foe of the military regime dating back to the 1988 uprising, has reinstated a regular diplomatic relationship, after two decades without an ambassador-level position.

These diplomatic success stories and gestures of acceptance from the international community are milestones that will energise Myanmar's stint in the chair. However, the country still has to face many obstacles, the first and the most important of which is regional integration.

Back in 1997 when it was first proposed, the ASEAN Community wasn't set to be achieved for

five years after the current target date – hence the then-apt name ASEAN Vision 2020. But ASEAN leaders later sped up the transition process, ambitiously aiming to be ready by January 1, 2015. When that timeframe became unrealistic, the date was shifted again, to December 31, 2015.

As ASEAN chair for 2014, Myanmar won't oversee the moment of transition itself – that will involve Malaysia passing to Laos – but it will still shoulder heavy responsibility for the community-building process, a difficult task for a newly opened country itself only just emerging from decades of military rule.

To be part of the ASEAN Community, every member country needs to build up its own country to be politically stable, peaceful and coherent;

economically strong and developed; and ready to share a single market and single production base for the whole region – not to mention integrate socially and culturally with nine other nations.

These are all challenges Myanmar itself is still only starting to address. But in a change from the past, local protests in Myanmar on various issues are now being organised by different groups such as workers, farmers, students and activists – and being met with government acceptance rather than crackdowns.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have also grown in number. The new authorities understand very well that strong civil society can make the transition and reform programs smooth. Yangon especially has

seen a boom in CSOs, though there remains unnecessary pressure and prohibition from local authorities in more remote parts of Myanmar. Freedom of movement for NGOs is also limited in some areas, and needs to be improved during 2014.

If Myanmar can show more courage and political will for change, it will serve as an example for other less-fortunate countries in achieving freedom and democracy as well as political stability, economic development and social harmony – all action plans for the ASEAN Community in 2015.

– Kyaw Lin Oo is a political commentator and coordinator of the Myanmar People Forum Working Group, a civil society organisation which promotes awareness and knowledge about ASEAN in Myanmar.

Rights and wrongs

Myanmar has become a heart-throb among the global community – but its human rights situation remains a secret sore

NYAN LYNN AUNG

THREE years after the military government handed over power to the civilian government, Myanmar has seen dramatic changes – not least of which is its 2014 chairing of ASEAN, which few would have predicted only a few years ago.

But many major domestic hurdles are still to be overcome. Conflicts involving Rohingya (or Bengalis, as they're officially known in Myanmar); ongoing fighting and unfinished peace negotiations with armed ethnic groups; calls for amendments to the 2008 Constitution; farmland disputes; investment projects bringing environmental damage; and an upcoming census – these are at the forefront of the nation's internal affairs. And all, directly or indirectly, involve human rights.

Despite recent improvement, human rights are a subject that continues to worry observers of the democratic transition. While widespread releases of political prisoners in 2013 boosted Myanmar's rights record, several watchdog organisations remain underwhelmed.

Human Rights Watch's *World Report 2013*, reflecting on the previous year's events, noted that the country's rights situation "remained poor in 2012 despite noteworthy actions by the government toward political reform".

Freedom House says Myanmar's democratic affairs, human rights and citizenship rights have all taken steps forward, but genuine freedom remains elusive, earning

it an overall verdict of "not free".

A report by the Network for Human Rights Documentation Burma – released December 10, 2013, on the 65th anniversary of Human Rights Day, and covering the period of January-June 2013 – says abuses in Myanmar are ongoing, including in prisons and ethnic areas, with 147 separate incidences of human rights abuses documented, most of which involved multiple victims.

Reports by the Thailand-based Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) – which received the Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award for 2013 – indicate human rights in the southeast of Myanmar haven't improved, with forced labour, forced relocation, torture and sexual violence still occurring.

Not that Myanmar is the only country in ASEAN with a spotty human rights record. Laos, Cambodia, Brunei and Vietnam each struggle with human rights issues. And while Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines have better records, problems still persist.

"The main problem in the ASEAN region is the human rights situation," said U Kyaw Linn Oo, coordinator of the ASEAN People Forum Working Group and an activist for human rights in the

ASEAN region. "Most ASEAN countries are countries that never focus on human rights, and they don't prioritise human rights cases.

"But Myanmar has a chance to lead, to reform that case, while it chairs the group in the region – if they want to reform."

Some initial government responses appear positive. In June 2013 the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission released a Myanmar translation of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

And in July 2013 U Aung Lin, director general for Myanmar's ASEAN Affairs Department, said that Myanmar would consider using the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration to settle human rights problems while it chairs the ASEAN group.

The commission also released a statement marking the 65th anniversary of Human Rights Day. It said the commission has drawn up a strategy on improving human rights, to be implemented at the national, regional level and international level.

"We need to analyse problems of human rights violation from top to bottom in the region, including Myanmar, which as it assumes the ASEAN chair this year needs to pay close attention to these issues," said



A protester shouts slogans at police blocking a road in front of the venue for the 2012 ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Photo: AFP

U Myint Aye, founder of the Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters.

"We have to make the right analysis and have to work without partiality. Therefore we need to boost the role of society groups."

However, Indonesia-based human rights activist Yu Yan said most ASEAN countries, some with dictatorial ties still remaining, have been hesitant to listen to critics on human rights issues. The result, she said, is strong rhetoric but weak action.

"In my view, ASEAN countries have set several targets and ambitions for human rights, democratic reforms, strengthening of rule of law and good governance, but they are still weak in implementing practical works," she said.

Myanmar has already established a human rights commission which so far has received over 1000 complaints about human rights abuses country-wide.

Ms Yan suggested Myanmar

should analyse the terms of reference of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) if it wants to respond effectively to such responses.

"There are three 'C's' needed in ASEAN that will determine whether they make changes to its charter or cope with its human rights problems," said U Kyaw Lin Oo.

"The first 'C' means the Human Rights Commission and the next 'C' is a convention that needs to be carried out in accordance with international criteria. ASEAN's human rights initiatives remain at the stage of declaration and still need to proceed to the stage of enactment.

"The last 'C' is court. Having these three 'C's', they can ensure both protection and promotion of human rights," U Kaw Lin Oo said. "Otherwise, they won't succeed even if they make changes to the charter."

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe and Thiri Min Htun

“ Given the still-wide development gap in ASEAN, well-targeted capacity building and technical assistance programs are needed to assist particularly the newer Member States in augmenting limited domestic resources and capacity to implement their AEC commitments.

When we bridge the development divide in the region, we become truly one ASEAN Community. All of us – the Member States and of course the ASEAN Secretariat – are intensifying our efforts toward that goal.

*– ASEAN Secretary General
HE Le Luong Minh*

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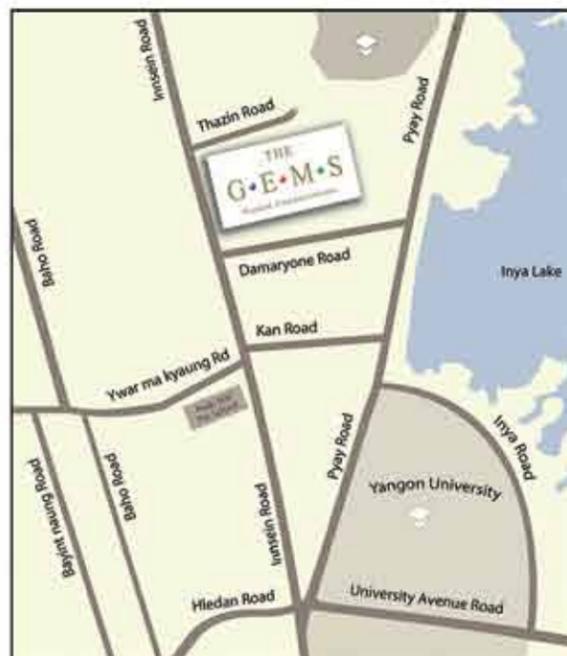
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‘Moving forward in Unity to a Peaceful and Prosperous Community’ – Myanmar’s ASEAN 2014 slogan

TENTATIVE DATE	MEETING	VENUE
JANUARY		
10-11	62 nd Coordinating Committee on Investment (CCI)	Nay Pyi Taw
13-15	SEOM 1/45 and Related Meetings (SEOM, CLMV-SEOM, COW)	Nay Pyi Taw
15	Committee of the Whole Meetings	Nay Pyi Taw
15-16	Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials (Prep-SOM)	TBC
16	1/2014 Meeting of Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)	Bagan
15-18	ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat	Bagan
FEBRUARY		
TBC (1 st week)	In-Country Workshop on Increasing Foreign Investment Flow: capacity-building to facilitate the Implementation and business utilization of (AANZFTA)	Yangon
8-10	ASEAN-China FTA Joint Cooperation Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
8-11	14 th Meeting of AICHR	Yangon
10-14	77 th CCS and Related Meetings - Business Services Sectoral Working Group - ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineering Coordinating Committee - ASEAN Architect Council Meeting - MRA on Surveying Qualifications - MRA on Accountancy	Yangon
10 (TBC)	10 th ASEAN Korea FTA and Implementing Committee and related meetings	TBC
17-18	25 th HLTF-EI Meeting	Yangon
17-20	26 th ASEAN Single Window Technical Working Group Meeting	Yangon
22	ASEAN Defence Industry Collaboration (ADIC)	Nay Pyi Taw
24-26	ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Working Group Meeting	Yangon
27-28	ASEAN Plus Three Finance and Central Bank Working Group Meetings	Yangon
24-27	ASEAN Defence Senior Official Meeting Working Group (ADSOMWG) & Plus WG	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN-India (WGI) or ASEAN-Japan (WGI) or ASEAN-Korea (WGI) or ASEAN-China (WGI) or ASEAN-ANZ COI Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Consultation Meeting Responsible for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	16 th Rubber Based Product Working Group (RBPWG)	Yangon
TBC (Feb/March)	19 th Traditional Medicines and Health Supplement Product Working Group (TMHSPWG)	TBC
TBC	Seminar on Green Productivity Improvement (ASEAN+3)	Pyin Oo Lwin
TBC	24 th ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Coordinating Committee (ACPECC)	Yangon
TBC	20 th ASEAN Architect Council (AAC)	Yangon
TBC	- 7 th ASEAN Senior Level Committee on Financial Integration (ASLC) Meeting - 6 th Steering Committee on Capacity Building (SCCB) Meeting	TBC
TBC	Pre-meeting of the 5 th ASEAN Task Force on Traditional Medicine Meeting and 5 th Traditional Medicine Conference	Yangon
MARCH		
3	Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials Committee for ASCC Council (Prep-SOCA)	Nay Pyi Taw
4	Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI)	Nay Pyi Taw
5	Senior Officials' Meeting of ASEAN Plus Three Responsible for Information (SOMRI+3)	Nay Pyi Taw
6	12 th Conference of AMRI	Nay Pyi Taw
6	SEOM & Related Meetings	Yangon
6	3 rd ASEAN Plus Three Ministers Meeting Responsible for Information (AMRI+3)	Nay Pyi Taw
15-17	9 th Meeting of the ASEAN Expert Group on Communicable Diseases (AEGCD)	Yangon
17-21	ASEAN-Japan CEP Joint Committee Meeting and related Meetings	Yangon
17-21	Seminar on Green Productivity Improvement	Central Service Institute, Upper Myanmar
TBC	- ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies Working Group Meeting (AFDM-WG) - Working Committee on Capital Market Development (WC-CMD) - Working Committee on Capital Account Liberalization (WC-CAL) - Working Committee on Financial Services Liberalization (WC-FSL) - Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) - ASEAN Plus Three Macroeconomic Research Office's Meeting (AMRO) - Asian Bond Market Initiative Task Force (ABMI) - Research Group (RG) - Future Programme (FP)	TBC (Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan/Ngapani)
21-23	ASEAN People Forum	Yangon
24-26	7 th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	63 rd Coordinating Committee on Investment (CCI)	TBC

TENTATIVE DATE	MEETING	VENUE
TBC	In-Country Workshop and Consultations in CLMV and developing the implementation plans for investment facilitation and streamlining of business licensing (AANZFTA-EC)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Special Head of Delegation (HoD) Pharmaceutical Product Working Group (PPWG)	TBC
TBC	20 th ACMF Meeting	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Forum on Taxation (AFT) Meeting	TBC
TBC	Working Group on Dispute Resolution and Enforcement Mechanism (WG-DREM) Meeting	TBC
APRIL		
TBC	Joint Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN SOM for 24 th ASEAN Summit (JPM)	Nay Pyi Taw
1	- ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting (AFDM) - 22 nd ASEAN Conference of Deputy Governors of Central Bank Meeting (ACDM)	Nay Pyi Taw
2-3	Formal and Informal ASEAN Plus Three Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting (AFDCM+3)	Nay Pyi Taw
4	10 th ASEAN Central Bank Governors' Meeting (ACGM)	Nay Pyi Taw
5	18 th ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting (AFMM)	Nay Pyi Taw
1	16 th ASEAN Senior Officials Committee for ASCC Council Meeting (SOCA)	Nay Pyi Taw
2	11 th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Tourism Working Group and related Meetings - 7 th ASEAN Tourism Product Development Working Group Meeting - 7 th ASEAN Tourism Marketing and Communication Working Group Meeting - 7 th ASEAN Quality Tourism Working Group Meeting - 11 th ASEAN Tourism Professionals Monitoring Committee Meeting - 7 th ASEAN Tourism Integration and Budget Committee Meeting	Bagan
7-9	Network of ASEAN Defense and Security Institutes (NADI)	Nay Pyi Taw
28-30	ASEAN Defence Senior Official Meeting (ADSOM) & ADSOM Plus	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group (ACC-WG)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Chiefs of Military Medical Conference (ACMMC)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Chiefs of Military Medical Conference (ACMMC)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	34 th AITNC and related meetings	TBC
TBC	21 st ASEAN Cosmetic Committee	TBC
TBC	Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asian Development Area	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC (1 st half of 2014)	Intersessional Meeting on Traditional Medicines and Health Supplement Product Working Group (TMHSPWG)	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Conference on Sport for All	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Conference on Elite Sport	TBC
TBC (April/May)	17 th Joint Sectoral Committee for Electrical and Electronic Equipments (JSC EEE) Meeting and its related Meetings - 13 th JISC/IEC/APSG Human Resource Development Seminar Standard for Green Society Workshop - 17 th JSC EEE Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC (April/May)	19 th Automotive Products Working Group (APWG) meeting and its related meetings - Task Force for MRA on Automotive Meeting - 19 th of the ACCSQ Automotive Products Working Group (APWG) Meeting	Yangon
MAY		
TBC (first week)	29 th Air Transport Working Group Meeting	Yangon
TBC	11 th AEC Council Meeting (Back to Back with 24 th ASEAN Summit)	TBC
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN SOM Working Group on the Regional Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials (Prep-SOM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Economic Officials (Prep-SEOM) Prep- AEM Meeting for the 24 th ASEAN Summit	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials Committee for ASCC Council (Prep-SOCA)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Drafting Committee of the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw

TENTATIVE DATE	MEETING	VENUE
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) Council	TBC
TBC	Meeting of the SEANWFZ Commission	TBC
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Coordinating Council	TBC
TBC	Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)	Nay Pyi Taw
10-11 (TBC)	24 th ASEAN SUMMIT	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	8 th CLMV SEOM	TBC
TBC	37 th ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	5 th Multisectoral Road Safety Special Working Group (MRSSWG) Meeting and 25 th ASEAN Land Transport Working Group (LTWG) Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
12-16	4 th Human Resource Conference	Nay Pyi Taw
12-16	Planning and Evaluation Working Group for ASEAN-Japan HRD Collaboration Programme 2014	Nay Pyi Taw
19-21	ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting (ADMM)	Nay Pyi Taw
19-23	- 23 rd ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting and Related Meetings (ALMM) - 8 th ASEAN Plus Three Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM+3) - 4 th Human Resource Conference - 10 th ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) - 12 th ASEAN Plus Three Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM+3) - ASEAN-IL0/Japan Unemployment Insurance Project Cooperation Committee (PCC) Meeting - ASEAN-IL0/Japan Industrial Relation Project (AIJPIR) 7 th Project Cooperation Committee (PCC) Meeting - Planning and Evaluation Working Group for ASEAN - Japan HRD Collaboration Programme 2014	Nay Pyi Taw
26-29	ASEAN-Australia, New Zealand FTA Joint Committee Meetings and Related Meetings	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	AANZFTA CTG meetings	TBC
TBC	Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asian Development Area	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Disaster Response Table-Top Exercise	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management	
TBC	Sub-committee for Planning and Coordination to Support the ACCS-Committee (ACSS-SCPC)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	20 th Meeting of the ACCSQ-Automotive Product Working Group (APWG) and its related Meetings	Yangon
TBC	41 st WC-FSL, 28 th WC-CAL	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Sport Ministers Meeting (SMM) on Development of Sport in the Southeast Asian Region	TBC
JUNE		
TBC	ASEAN-US Dialogue	Yangon
TBC	ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN+3 Senior Officials' Meeting (ASEAN+3 SOM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials' Meeting (ASEAN ARF SOM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Senior Officials' Meeting of East Asia Summit (EAS SOM)	Nay Pyi Taw
2-6	37 th ASEAN Transport Senior Official Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
4-6	ASEAN-Korea FTA Implementing Committee Meeting and Related Meetings	Mandalay
14-16	ASEAN High Level Seminar for ISSA member in South East Asia	Nay Pyi Taw
26-27	Workshop on best practices of Protection of Migrant Workers	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY), SOMY+3, AMMY	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting on Recovery Sector of AADMER Work Program (2010-2015)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting on Recovery Working Group	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	19 th Meeting of the ACCSQ-Automotive Product Working Group (APWG) and its related Meetings	TBC
TBC	Coordination and Improvement of Distributive Trade Statistics (DTS)	Mandalay
TBC	13 th Meeting of Pan ASEAN Timber Certification Initiative (PATCI)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ACMF-WG	TBC
TBC (June/July)	21 st Meeting of ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standard and Quality of Traditional Medicine and Health Supplement Scientific Product Work Group Meeting and its related Meetings	TBC

Myanmar takes the chair

11



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Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong



CAMBODIA
Prime Minister Hun Sen



INDONESIA
President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

TENTATIVE DATE	MEETING	VENUE
JULY		
1-6	SEOM 3/45 and Related Meetings (SEOM, China, Japan, RoK, India, Australia and New Zealand, US, Russia, EAS, EU and Canada)	Nay Pyi Taw
24-25	ASEAN Project Seminar on Establishment of Skill Framework	Nay Pyi Taw
25-26	Myanmar-Indonesia-Thailand Project on Building Technical Framework	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	19 th Prepared Foodstuff Product Working Group (PFPWG)	Myanmar
TBC	13 th Meeting of the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC)	TBC
TBC	42 nd WC-FSL, 29 th WC-CAL, WC-CMD	TBC
TBC	Coordinating Committee on Investment (CCI)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Workshop on Manufacturing Statistics database and Report	Bagan/Nyaung Oo
TBC	Peas and Beans (NFP-WG) Back to Back with Joint Committee Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	AMMW, ACW Meeting and ACW+3 ASEAN Youth Day Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	9 th ASEAN Education Ministers' Meeting (9 th ASED)	TBC
TBC	3 rd ASEAN+3 Education Ministers' Meeting (3 rd EASEMM)	TBC
TBC	3 rd EAS Minister's Meeting on Education	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Senior Officials Preparatory Meeting and Related Meetings	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	64 th Coordinating Committee on Investment (CCI)	TBC
TBC	26 th HLTF-EI Meeting	TBC
TBC	Workshop on manufacturing statistics database and report	Bagan/Nyaung Oo
TBC	Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	13 th Meeting of the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC)	TBC
AUGUST		
1-3	AICHR Special Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
1-6	5 th ASEAN Task Force on Traditional Medicine Meeting and 5 th Traditional Medicine Conference	Mandalay
3 - 8 Aug (TBC)	47 th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting/Post Ministerial Conference/21 st ASEAN Regional Forum/ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers Meeting/4 th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers Meeting (47 th AMM/PMC/21 st ARF/APTFM/4 th EASFM)	Nay Pyi Taw
18-19	Technical Seminar for ISSA members in South East Asia	Nay Pyi Taw
20-21	ASEAN Forum related to Workshop on Best Practices of Protection of Migrant Workers	Nay Pyi Taw
21-28	9 th ASEAN Science and Technology Week (ASTW)	TBC
23-30	46 th AEM Meeting and Related Meetings - 46 th AEM Meeting - 6 th CLMV-AEM Meeting - 12 th AEC Council Meeting - AEM-17 th AIA Council Meeting - AEM-28 th AFTA Council Meeting - 2 nd RCEP Minister Meeting - ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Rice Cooperation - Consultations with Dialogue Partners	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	28 th Meeting of the Working Group on Technical Matters for the ASEAN Single Window (TWG)	TBC
TBC	16 th Coordinating Committee on the Implementation of ATIGA (CCA)	TBC
TBC	16 th Sub Coordinating Committee on ATIGA Rules of Origin (SCAROO)	TBC
TBC	24 th Meeting of the Working Group on Legal and Regulatory Matters for the ASEAN Single Window (LWG)	TBC
TBC	3 rd ASEAN Hong Kong FTA TNC and related meetings	TBC
TBC	6 th CLMV EMM	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	16 th ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC) Ministerial Meeting	TBC
TBC	22 nd Traditional Medicines and Health Supplement Product Working Group (TMHSPWG)	TBC
TBC	21 st ACMF Meeting	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Investment Forum	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	IMTS - 2 nd Meeting of the WGIMTS - Sub-regional Workshop for CLMV on Eurotrace, 2014 - Bilateral Training and TA in selected countries 2014	Yangon
TBC (Aug/Sept)	30 th Air Transport Working Group Meeting	Yangon
SEPTEMBER		
8-11	- 1 st National Coordinators Meeting - 3/2014 ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) Meeting - 3 rd ACCC and National Coordinators Meeting - 5 th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium	Nay Pyi Taw
15-17	RCEP Trade in Goods, Services, Investment Meetings	Nay Pyi Taw
15-17	NADI Retreat Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
18-19	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Governing Board Meeting	TBC
20-22	6 th Meeting of ASEAN Working Group on Pandemic Preparedness and Response (AWGPPR)	Yangon

TENTATIVE DATE	MEETING	VENUE
20-22	- The Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting of the 36 th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (Prep SOM 36 th AMAF) - The Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting of the 14 th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three (Prep SOM 14 th AMAF+3)	Nay Pyi Taw
23	36 th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (36 th AMAF)	Nay Pyi Taw
24	14 th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three (14 th AMAF+3)	Nay Pyi Taw
29	17 th ASEAN Senior Officials Committee for ASCC Council Meeting (SOCA)	Nay Pyi Taw
30	12 th Meeting of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Community Statistical System 4 th Session and the Related Meetings	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	13 th ASEAN Committee on Women-ACW and 9 th ASEAN Commission on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children -ACWC	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) Working Group	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting	Yangon
TBC	30 th ASEAN Air Transport WG Meeting	Yangon/Mandalay
TBC	ASEAN Express Group on Competition (AEGC) Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	35 th AITNC and related meetings	TBC
TBC	ACMF-WG	TBC
OCTOBER		
9-10	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Rights of PWD	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	- Meetings of Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office and Future Programme - Meeting of ABMI - Research Group (RG)	TBC (Nay Pyi Taw/ Yangon/Mandalay/ Bagan/Ngapatli)
TBC	ASEAN Film Commission	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Forum on Good Governance, 2 nd ACCSM+3 Joint Technical Working Group Meeting, ASEAN Heads of Civil Service Meeting and 2 nd ASEAN+3 Heads of Civil Service Meeting	Yangon
TBC	ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee, Fourth Session	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	- 8 th ASEAN Senior Level Committee on Financial Integration (ASLC) Meeting - 7 th SCCB Meeting	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Forum on Taxation (AFT) Meeting	TBC
TBC	Working Group on Dispute Resolution and Enforcement Mechanism (WG-DREM) Meeting	TBC
NOVEMBER		
TBC	29 th Meeting of the Working Group on Technical Matters for the ASEAN Single Window (TWG)	TBC
TBC	25 th Meeting of the Working Group on Legal and Regulatory Matters for the ASEAN Single Window (LWG)	TBC
TBC	17 th Coordinating Committee on the Implementation of ATIGA (CCA)	TBC
TBC	17 th Sub Coordinating Committee on ATIGA Rules of Origin (SCAROO)	TBC
3-4	7 th Meeting of the SLOM Working Group on Progressive Labour Practices to Enhance the Competitiveness of ASEAN (SLOMWG)	TBC
TBC	Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Joint Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN SOM for 25 th ASEAN Summit (JPM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Drafting Committee of the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) Council	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials (SOM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN+3 Senior Officials Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	East Asia Summit Senior Officials' Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Prep-AEM Meeting for the 25 th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits Prep-SEOM Meeting for the 25 th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the ASEAN Coordinating Council	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC (9-11 or 10-12)	25 th ASEAN SUMMIT/ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMIT/9 th EAS SUMMIT/ASEAN-CHINA SUMMIT/ASEAN-JAPAN SUMMIT/ASEAN-KOREA SUMMIT/ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT/ASEAN-US SUMMIT/ASEAN-UN SUMMIT/ASEAN-AUSTRALIA COMMEMORATIVE SUMMIT	Nay Pyi Taw
10-11	ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting Retreat (ADMM Retreat)	Mandalay
20-21	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour	Nay Pyi Taw
24-26	ARF Head of Defence Universities, Colleges and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM)	Nay Pyi Taw
29	54 th ASEAN-BAC Meeting	UMFCCI Office Tower, Yangon

TENTATIVE DATE	MEETING	VENUE
29	Presentation of ASEAN Productivity and Competitiveness Survey	Park Royal Hotel, Yangon
29	2014 ASEAN-BAC Chairmanship Handover Ceremony Gala Dinner	Park Royal Hotel, Yangon
TBC	ASEAN Civil Society Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	National Focal Point working Group Meeting on Peas and Beans (Back to Back with Joint Committee on ASEAN Cooperation and Joint Approaches in Agriculture and Forestry Products Promotion Scheme)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	38 th Transport ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	20 th ASEAN Transport Ministerial Meeting (ATM) and 38 th ASEAN Transport Senior Official Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	42 nd ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standard and Quality-ACCSQ Meeting	Yangon
TBC	ASEAN+3 FETN Steering Committee Meeting	Yangon
TBC	ASEAN High-Level Consultation: Developing a Regional Framework for Multi-sectoral Pandemic Preparedness and response	Yangon
TBC	Medical Device Product Working Group (MDPWG) & related Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	33 rd ASEAN SMEWG Meeting and Joint Consultation between the ASEAN SMEWG and Plus Three Countries	TBC
TBC	4 th Senior Officials Meeting on Sports (SOMS-4)	TBC
TBC	42 nd ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality Meeting	Yangon
TBC	ASEAN-ROK Fly Project	TBC
TBC	Intersessional Meeting on Traditional Medicines and Health Supplement Product Working Group (TMHSPWG)	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Finance Ministers' Investors Seminar (AFMIS)	TBC
TBC	17 th ASEAN Insurance Regulators Meeting	TBC
TBC	42 nd ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality Meeting	Yangon
TBC	ASEAN-ROK Fly Project	TBC
DECEMBER		
9-11	16 th Meeting of AICHR	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	One tentative Meeting on Other Topic	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	HLTF	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	- Second Meeting of the WGIMTS - Sub regional Workshop for CLMV on Eurotrace, 2014 - Bilateral training and TA in selected countries, 2014	Yangon
TBC	Workshop on manufacturing statistics database and report	Bagan
TBC	Coordination and improvement of Distributive Trade Statistics (DTS)	Mandalay
TBC	Coordinating Committee on Investment (CCI)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	14 th Meeting of the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC)	TBC
TBC	AANZFTA CTG meetings	TBC
TBC	18 th Joint Sectoral Committee for Electrical and Electronic Equipment (JSC-EEE) Meeting	TBC
TBC	43 th WC-FSL, 31 th WC-CAL	TBC

TBC MEETINGS		
TBC	ASEAN Technical Working Group on Agricultural Research and Development ATWGARD	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Workshop on Supply Chain Management and Market Information System	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Development of Sport in the Southeast Asian Region (September, 2014)	TBC
TBC (July)	3 rd National Focal Point Working Group Meeting on Peas and Beans (Back to Back with Joint Committee on ASEAN Cooperation and Joint Approaches in Agriculture and Forestry Products Promotion Scheme)	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC (November)	Workshop on Supply Chain Management and Market Information System	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC (September)	ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Sanitary and Market Information System	Nay Pyi Taw
TBC	Task Force on ASEAN Standards for Horticultural Produce and Other Food Crops	TBC
TBC	Expert Working Group on Harmonization of Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticide Residues	TBC
TBC	ASEAN Power Grid Consultative Committee (APGCC) Meeting	TBC
TBC	Heads of ASEAN Power Utilities/Authorities (HAPUA) Working Committee Meeting	TBC
TBC	Working Group HAPUA Meeting	TBC
TBC (1 st half of the year)	67 th ASEAN Science and Technology Meeting and related Meetings	TBC
TBC (2 nd half of the year)	68 th ASEAN Science and Technology Meeting and related Meetings	TBC
TBC	13 th Meeting of the Working Group on A Pan ASEAN Timber Certificate Initiative	TBC

Source: Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Updated on January 8, 2014.

The above list includes only the meetings held in Myanmar. There are other ASEAN related meetings to be held in other countries.



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- 🐾 အသုံးပြုရာတွင် ဘေးဥပဒ်မဖြစ်စေပါ။
- 🐾 တာရှည်အသုံးခံသည့် ခြင်္နင်ဆေးဖြစ်ပါသည်။
- 🐾 ရင်သွေးငယ်များဆော့ကစားစဉ်ဖြစ်စေ၊ မိဘနှင့် အလှမ်းဝေးနေစဉ်ဖြစ်စေ ကိုယ်ပေါ်တွင် ကပ်ထားပေးခြင်းဖြင့် ခြင်္နင်အန္တရာယ်မှ စိတ်ချစွာနေနိုင်ပါသည်။



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