



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SMART Myanmar launches 2nd phase

The European Union funded project SMART Myanmar held a kick-off launch event on January 19th at the UMFCCI with approximately 200 guests from factories, embassies and other stakeholders

More than 200 guests gathered at the UMFCCI on Tuesday to listen to speeches by the Ambassador of the European Union, Mr. Roland Kobia and Director General U Win Shein from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security's Factory Inspections Department, as well as several of the partners of the SMART Myanmar project.

SMART Myanmar is an EU-funded SWITCH Asia project focused on making social and environmental improvements in Myanmar's garment industry. From 2013-2015 the project engaged with dozens of local garment factories on social & environmental compliance issues, providing technical support and capacity building. As well, the project assisted in boosting the capacity of business associations, helping the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) develop its staff capacity and draft a first-ever Code of Conduct for its members, as well as providing professional support for both the MGMA and the UMFCCI.

Following on the successful implementation of activities during the first 3 years, SMART Myanmar has launched a new 4-year project phase which will expand and accelerate some of the previous activities – such as assistance to factories on social compliance and human resources management – as well as introducing entirely new activities related to promoting sustainable production and transparency in procurement practices in Myanmar.

(Quotes from project partners are on the following page.)

Questions, please contact:

Jacob Clere, SMART Myanmar, Team Leader - jclere@gmail.com

Su Tayar Lin, SMART Myanmar, Project Manager - sutayarlin@googlemail.com

www.smartmyanmar.org

“The Garment sector has quickly become Myanmar's main export sector after oil and gas. The value of exports has more than doubled in less than 2 years and is projected to continue to grow almost exponentially for the next several years. The growth of the garment sector will contribute to the growth of the industrial sector and create many new jobs.

Continuing to work closely with Myanmar factories and the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, the aim of the SMART project is to actively promote and support the sustainable production of garments “Made in Myanmar” striving to increase the international competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in this sector. It aims at scaling-up and institutionalizing successful practices in Myanmar which were developed and implemented during SMART's first phase from 2013 – 2015. By sharing international experience SMART supports local companies meeting the consumer requirements in Europe for products that are good for the environment and for the people”.

Simone Lehmann, Project Director, SMART Myanmar

"SMART Myanmar has a large team of specialists and experts. They have really helped factories understand social and environmental compliance issues and make important corrective actions. The MGMA is pleased to continue this partnership as we all continue to improve and grow our garment industry in Myanmar."

U Myint Soe, MGMA Chairman