



British Embassy  
Rangoon

**PRESS RELEASE – Wednesday 16 July 2014**

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## **Launch of British Chamber of Commerce**

**The first ever British Chamber of Commerce in Burma is launched today with an event at The Strand Hotel, Rangoon.**

**On 16<sup>th</sup> July the first ever British Chamber of Commerce will be launched in Burma. The UK is the first country to launch a completely new, locally registered Chamber of Commerce since the lifting of EU sanctions. This is aligned with the British Government's position to support responsible, sustainable and transparent investment in Burma.**

The British Chamber is being seed funded by the British Government through a global initiative to strengthen Chambers of Commerce globally. It is also being supported by four high profile British businesses in the shape of Founding Patrons – BG Group, Jardines, Prudential and Standard Chartered Bank- and five Gold Sponsors – Aggreko, British American Tobacco, Herbert Smith Freehills, Shell and Stephenson Harwood. At the time of launch the Chamber has already secured 86 founding members.

The role of the Chamber is to promote, foster, support, and represent business interests in Burma. It will provide; regular networking opportunities for the business community, up to date and relevant information on doing business in Burma and a platform for members to engage with Government on issues affecting businesses.

The Chamber will support both the existing business community in Burma but also help new market entrants identify the opportunities in Burma and navigate the challenges of establishing a business here.

It will work alongside the other National Chambers and in close collaboration with UMFCCI.

The Chamber has received official recognition by the Burmese Government and a Board and full time Executive Director have been appointed. Mr. Antony Picon, Colliers International, is the President of the Chamber and Ms Stephanie Ashmore is the Executive Director.

**Lord Livingston, British Minister for Trade & Investment said:**

“I’m delighted to see the establishment of the first ever British Chamber of Commerce in Burma. The British Government recognises that Chambers of Commerce are an important way of supporting our businesses overseas which is why we are seed funding this Chamber through our Overseas Business Networks Initiative.

Burma offers many exciting opportunities for British companies and the Chamber of Commerce alongside our UKTI team will support them in accessing those opportunities. I wish the Chamber every success.”

**H.E. Mr. Andrew Patrick, British Ambassador to Burma said:**

“I believe British business can play a central role in supporting economic growth in this country, creating jobs and raising skill levels. I’m pleased by the partnerships that have already been formed, and I’m confident that the British Chamber will ensure many more are formed in the future. It will provide a top quality service to its members and the local business community and it has the full support of the British Embassy.”

**Mr. Antony Picon, President of the British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar said:**

“It is an exceptional time for our Chamber to set up in Myanmar as the country begins its journey towards sustained economic and social development. We aim to ensure that the Chamber is a dynamic, inclusive business group that reflects the membership’s needs and adds value for companies operating in Myanmar.

We encourage Myanmar companies to get involved in the Chamber to make connections with international businesses and to help keep informed of business trends worldwide.”

Membership benefits include access to a diverse network of businesses across a broad range of industry sectors, relevant and informative events and communications, access to quarterly political and economic briefings and direct linkage to the British Embassy and UK Trade and Investment.

## Notes to Editors

- Whilst the UK will be the first completely new Chamber of Commerce in Burma since EU sanctions were lifted it is important to note that other countries have established National chambers registered outside Burma (e.g. America & Australia) and that the French Business Group has been in existence since the early 1990s and recently transitioned to a Chamber of Commerce.
- The British Government funding for the Chamber of Commerce is part of the broader 'Overseas Business Networks Initiative' (OBNI) which is providing support to strengthen business to business networks in 41 countries. The project was launched by the former British Trade Minister Lord Green and Burma was added to the programme after his visit here in June 2013.
- Lord Livingston is the current British Minister of State for Trade & Investment. Further details can be found [here](#).
- Interest from British business in the opportunities in Burma remains high and there have been some notable recent successes;
  - The awarding of 8 out of the 20 recent offshore licenses to British companies (BG Group, Shell & Ophir) more than any other country
  - The launch Jaguar Land Rover in Burma, the UK's most successful premium automotive manufacturer and
  - The announcement that 3 high profile British International Schools will begin operations in Burma; Dulwich College, Harrow International and the British International School
  - The recent signing of two landmark deals in power generation during the visit of the H.E. Khin Maung Soe (Minister of Electric Power), more details can be found [here](#)
  - UK goods exports to Burma increased from £12.8m in 2012 to £44m in 2013 an enormous increase of 244%. UK goods imports from Burma increased from £44m in 2012 to £65m in 2013, an increase of 48%.

## **Membership**

Membership is open to all UK Companies and non-UK companies who have trade links in the UK, or are interested in developing them. Further details on membership can be found on the website [www.britishchambermyanmar.com](http://www.britishchambermyanmar.com)

### **British Embassy**

80 Strand Road  
Box No 638  
Rangoon  
Burma

### **British Chamber of Commerce**

Hintha Business Centre  
Floor 3, 608 Merchant Street  
(corner of Merchant & 31st)  
Pabedan Township  
Yangon Myanmar

For further information please contact: [stephanie@britishchambermyanmar.com](mailto:stephanie@britishchambermyanmar.com)