

Speech for the AGM of the British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar

Introduction

Members of the British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar, Distinguished Guests, and Colleagues, thank you for joining us today at the 10th Anniversary AGM. Our Chair has reflected on our progress, you've seen the financial statements, and my statement this evening aims to set the scene and to consider the opportunities of the year to come. I would also like to say congratulations to the new Board Directors.

I'm going to speak about 3 things:

- First - Our Purpose and Vision for the year ahead
- Second - The 4 strategies to deliver that vision
- And Third - Next Steps

First: Our Purpose and Vision for the Year Ahead

At the heart of our Chamber's mission is a simple but powerful purpose:

to provide a credible, connected business platform that facilitates opportunities for our members, and creates exceptional events to help you run your businesses more effectively.

Our commitment to this purpose remains steadfast, as we look to enhance our role as a connector and enabler for the British, International and Myanmar business communities.

Our vision is clear.

We aim to maintain and grow our strong membership base, deliver more insightful and informative events, ensure financial stability, and expand our programmes to drive increased member engagement.

This vision sets a target for us to work towards with focus and determination.

Second - Strategies to Deliver the Vision

1. Collaboration

Collaboration and engagement are the keys to our success.

We will tap further into our relationships with key local associations in Yangon, such as Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association, Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Network and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. And we will continue to build links with the International Chambers of Commerce.

We are considering a trade mission to regional markets in 2025 for Chamber members to better understand and address the regional opportunities available.

And, the Britain in Southeast Asia (BiSEA) network of British Chambers of Commerce is invited to attend the British Chamber of Commerce's '*Driving International Trade*' Conference in London in March, and the Department for Business and Trade's planned Roadshow around the UK from 3-13 March. This will help build better communications and global partnerships.

2. Opportunities

One of the core benefits of membership is the wealth of opportunities we can provide.

Our team is looking into increasing our market insights knowledge for specific sectors such as Hospitality, Education & Training, Financial Services, the Legal sector, Logistics, Energy, including renewable energy, and the burgeoning Professional Women's Network. This all supports our members with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions.

And it is to the great credit of our Board and members such as Catherine Smith, Patrick Charm, Ram Nurani, and Martin Appel who have led from the front to bring their energy and commitment to these initiatives. Please join me in thanking them for their work.

3. Targeting New Members and Growing the Network

Our engagement strategies will focus on the value of your membership and the wide-ranging opportunities that our Chamber offers. We will also leverage the British Club for more member-based activities that can draw in new members and foster stronger relationships.

We will be refining our marketing efforts to target members and non-members, with a special emphasis on creating events that appeal to both categories. We would like to expand our reach through social media, using established platforms to communicate our offer clearly, crisply, concisely and coherently.

We will continue to roll out our Security and Head of Mission Political & Economic briefings following a successful year delivering these events to you.

We will also carefully evaluate the price sensitivity of events to ensure they are accessible to a wide audience, while also maintaining value to you, our members.

4. Operational Excellence, Team Changes and Role Development

We will strive for operational excellence in every aspect of our work, ensuring that our services meet the highest standards. Our team of

six (reduced from 8) has been stretched, but we have also learned to be agile and resourceful in meeting the demands of a dynamic environment. We have created a budget for continual professional development; all staff now have medical insurance paid for by the Chamber; two pay rises were implemented in 2024; and all staff qualify for 'uncertified sick leave'. This is on top of the flexible home-working and time off in lieu arrangements already in place.

And here, I would like you to join me, to thank our brilliant Chamber team who work diligently and effectively in pursuit of the Chamber's objectives. Thank you Thin Thin, Anna, Joey and Thinzar (and Su in her absence today).

Next Steps

As we head towards the end of the year, the immediate next steps are:

- Embed the re-organized team roles, flatter-reporting structure and recruit an Events Manager.
- Hold membership prices at the current dollar rates, but move to the online-trading rate rather than using the CBM 2,100 rate
- Organise an 'away-day' with the newly elected Board in January 2025 to reflect on the progress we've made and plan for the year

ahead, ensuring that we are positioned to tackle the challenges with energy, creativity, and collaboration.

Closing Remarks

In closing, I want to thank every one of you for your continued support and commitment to the British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar.

Together, we will build on our successes, strengthen our community, and drive greater opportunities for all our members.

The year ahead is filled with challenge and potential promise, and with your collaboration, we will ensure that the Chamber remains the largest, most active, and most influential platform for British business in Myanmar.

Thank you.

Ian Fox

CEO

BCCM

29 November 2024