



Joint Statement by India and Myanmar on First Meeting of the India-Myanmar Joint Consultative Commission

July 16, 2015

1.The first meeting of the India-Myanmar Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), as envisaged in Article 1 of the Protocol on Consultations between India and Myanmar, was held on July 16, 2015. The Indian delegation was led by Smt. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India. The Myanmar delegation was led by U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2.The Ministers reviewed a wide range of matters of bilateral importance. They agreed that greater bilateral cooperation between India and Myanmar will promote inclusive growth and development, and contribute to peace, prosperity and stability in their countries and the region.

BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS

3.The Ministers expressed satisfaction at the current state of India-Myanmar relations which are marked by warmth, cordiality and mutual respect. They noted that India and Myanmar had entered a new phase in their bilateral relations where, as a result of Myanmar's political and economic reforms and the rising growth and rapid economic and technological transformation, they had achieved commendable progress in

their efforts to further strengthen the friendly ties. Both sides welcomed regular high level exchanges, which had helped promote deeper understanding and friendship and the broadening of the areas of cooperation between the two countries and hoped to continue this momentum in future.

4.Both Ministers recalled visits of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Myanmar from November 11-13, 2014 and that of Myanmar Vice President U Sai Mauk Kham to India from January 19-23, 2015.

5.Both Ministers appreciated the ongoing interaction between the neighbouring regions/states of the two countries and noted that it would promote greater cooperation and understanding and benefit both peoples. The Chief Ministers of Sagaing Region and Kachin State had visited Kohima for the 'Hornbill' Festival in December 2014. They also visited Shillong, Guwahati and Delhi during the visit. Chief Minister of Chin State attended the 'Sangai' festival in Manipur in November 2014. Chief Ministers of Sagaing and Mandalay Regions of Myanmar had earlier visited Imphal to attend the Manipur 'Sangai' festival in November 2013.

6.In view of historical links and ethnic similarities between two sides, possibilities of twinning arrangements between states/regions in India and Myanmar were discussed.

7.Both sides noted with satisfaction holding of meetings of several institutionalized mechanisms Like National Level Meeting, Sectoral Level Meeting, Joint Trade Committee etc. It was noted that meetings of established Joint Working Groups/ Joint Committees should also be held regularly to enhance cooperation in various areas namely Science and Technology, Dairy Cooperation, Border Haats and Rail Connectivity.

8.External Affairs Minister of India extended an offer for capacity building of Myanmar election officials through the Election Commission of India ahead of the Myanmar general elections in November 2015.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

9. Both Ministers reaffirmed their shared commitment to fight the scourge of terrorism and insurgent activity in all its forms and manifestations. They emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation between security forces and border guarding agencies for securing peace, security and stability in the border areas which is crucial for overall development. In this context, the two leaders welcomed regular meetings of the bilateral Regional Border Committee which promotes such cooperation and understanding for better border management. Both leaders reiterated the assurance that territories of either country would not be allowed to be used for activities inimical to the other.

10. Both Ministers alluded to the importance of sound border management as an intrinsic part of maintaining border security. In this context, they agreed that negotiations should be conducted to enable early conclusion of the bilateral MoU on Movement of People across the Land Border.

11. Both Ministers reiterated their determination to work together to resolve issue of unsettled boundary pillars in all sectors. It was agreed that first meeting of the India -Myanmar Joint Boundary Working Group, with a mandate to address all outstanding boundary issues, would be held in New Delhi at the earliest.

12. External Affairs Minister of India conveyed that a joint survey by officers of the two Foreign Ministries could be undertaken to inspect the earth blockage site on Ti-Ho (Tizu) river on India-Myanmar border to inspect the efforts made by local authorities of Mizoram to remove the debris and restore the normal course of river.

13. The two Ministers agreed that a joint visit at a senior official level would be arranged to the India-Myanmar border in Nagaland sector to understand situation in this sector.

14. External Affairs Minister of India reaffirmed that India is committed to support the modernization of Myanmar Armed Forces and would be happy to share its experience in functioning in a democratic environment, in creating a national army, cooperation in the field of IT, in dealing with emerging security challenges, and military to military cooperation including in terms of training. She also expressed India's commitment to cooperate with Myanmar in building a professional and capable Myanmar Navy to safeguard and ensure its maritime security.

15. Referring to the ongoing discussions between the two sides on maritime security, both Ministers agreed that Maritime Security Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal is vital for both countries.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

16. Alluding to the mutually agreed target of doubling the bilateral trade by 2015, both Ministers emphasized that there is considerable untapped potential for greater trade and urged the business community to capitalize on this potential. Investments by Indian companies in areas like ports,

power, agro-industries, forest products, mining, construction industry, consumer goods, highways, oil & gas, plantation, manufacturing, hospitality and ICT would be specifically encouraged.

17. They agreed that both Governments would work to identify and remove various impediments to bilateral trade. In this context, both Ministers appreciated the outcome of the 5th meeting of the India-Myanmar Joint Trade Committee held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 16-17 February 2015, which was co-chaired by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry of India and Union Minister of Commerce of Myanmar. The Ministers welcomed the forthcoming meeting of Joint Trade Investment Forum (JTIF) scheduled to be held later this year in Chennai and noted that this forum, chaired by senior business leaders of each side, would facilitate expansion of bilateral trade and investment between the two countries.

18. Both sides agreed that the concerned Ministries would work towards expeditious signing of the MoU on capacity building between the Reserve Bank of India and the Central Bank of Myanmar.

19. Myanmar side took note of the proposal made by Indian side to consider granting license to an Indian Bank to open a branch in Myanmar so as to facilitate greater trade and Investment of India in Myanmar.

20. Both Ministers urged the Indian and Myanmar business communities to enthusiastically participate in each other's trade fairs and also to share information on the prevailing trade and investment policies through organization of seminars and business related events in specific sectors of mutual interest.

21. Taking into account the needs of communities residing near the border, the two leaders welcomed the decision taken in 2012 to set up border haats. They directed concerned authorities to finalize the modalities of operation so that trade can take place through border haats immediately.

22. Both Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate direct shipping services, which has been launched since October 2014 with support and subsidy given by Government of India. Myanmar side would consider the possibility of reducing port dues and stevedoring charges so as to render this service viable.

CONNECTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

23. The two Ministers emphasized the importance of enhancing connectivity between the two countries as a means of promoting commercial, cultural, touristic and other exchanges. Noting Myanmar's request for early completion, they expressed satisfaction at the steady progress being made on the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (connecting Mizoram to Sittwe port in Myanmar); Upgradation of the Kalewa-Yargi Road section of the Trilateral Highway (connecting Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand through Myanmar); Construction of 69 bridges & approach roads on the Tamu - Kalewa section of the Trilateral Highway; Rih-Tedim Road in Myanmar (across Mizoram). It was noted that the project would enhance bilateral trade and people to people contacts and would also contribute to the development and prosperity of the people living in the land locked North Eastern Region of India.

24. The Ministers welcomed the launch of direct Air India weekly flight on the Delhi-Gaya-Yangon route since November 2014 and Golden Myanmar charter flights to India. In this context, two sides agreed to take steps to further enhance the existing air connectivity by encouraging regular commercial flights between India, Myanmar and the rest of South East Asia.

25. Both Ministers also agreed that signing of the MOU to establish a direct Imphal-Mandalay Bus Service would be in mutual interest. They also discussed that in preparation for a formal start of bus service on this route, both sides may conduct trial runs of the bus service from Imphal to Mandalay and Mandalay to Imphal by the preferred operators of the service in the coming months.

26. The two Ministers expressed satisfaction at the robust development cooperation between the two countries being financed under Indian Government grants and concessional loans. Taking stock of ongoing projects the two Ministers agreed to identify more projects of benefit to the people of Myanmar in future.

27. Both Ministers expressed satisfaction at the utilization of US\$ 500 million Line of Credit extended by India to the Government of Myanmar for development priorities of Myanmar. The Line of Credit is being utilized for infrastructure development projects in the Agriculture and Irrigation, Railways, Road Construction, Telecom and Rural Electrification sectors in Myanmar. Both Ministers welcomed the discussions during the recently concluded senior official level LoC review meeting on 7 July, 2015 at Nay Pyi Taw, where both sides reviewed the progress of the projects undertaken under the LoC and committed to work closely for early implementation and completion of all these projects.

28. Identifying the need for special focus on the development and prosperity of the people in bordering areas, the two Ministers agreed to enhance cooperation to bring about overall socio-economic development in the border areas by undertaking both infrastructure development and micro-economic projects, including upgradation of roads and construction of schools, health centres, bridges, agriculture and related training activities in accordance with the MoU on India-Myanmar Border Area Development. Indian side informed that funds may now be utilized for the second year projects of US \$ 5 million. Other important initiatives that are being undertaken are Hospital upgradation projects at Yangon

& Sittwe as also, setting up of the Advanced Centre for Agricultural Research and Education, Rice Bio Park and Myanmar Institute of Information Technology. It is anticipated that these institutes will emerge as centres of excellence that will be able to address the capacity building needs of Myanmar's agricultural sector and IT industry respectively. In this context, the Ministers noted with satisfaction that other projects undertaken with Government of India's assistance, like India-Myanmar Centre for Enhancement of Information Technology Skills (IMCEITS), Myanmar-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre (MIEDC), Myanmar-India Centre for English Language Training (MICELT) and Industrial Training Centres at Pakokku & Myingyan have been satisfactorily completed and are of benefit to the people of Myanmar.

29. Minister of External Affairs of India offered financial assistance for small developmental projects especially in Rakhine state of Myanmar.

30. In keeping with a request made by Myanmar, External Affairs Minister of India invited Myanmar to send separate delegations (i) to discuss skill development opportunities in India in the sector of gems and jewellery;(ii) to study solar and wind energy solutions; and (iii) to study arid/dry land farming in Gujarat as well as Andhra Pradesh

POWER & ENERGY

31. The two Ministers emphasized the need for closer cooperation to further energy security. They encouraged investment by Indian companies in Myanmar oil and gas sector, including in available blocks that are being offered for investment which have good prospects. They also agreed to encourage investment by Indian companies in the petroleum industry.

32. The two Ministers discussed possible opportunities for Joint Ventures in Myanmar in the power sector, particularly hydro-electric power. In this context, External Affairs Minister of India welcomed the Myanmar proposal for establishment of a coal based power plant at Kalewa and said that the proposal could be further discussed between two sides.

33. On Myanmar's request for purchase of 2-3 MW of power from Moreh, Manipur for the power station sub-station at Tamu, Myanmar, External Affairs Minister reiterated India's proposal for a joint technical visit to Moreh to finalise modalities.

34. Both Ministers encouraged relevant Ministries to conclude the proposed MoU between India and Myanmar on Cooperation in the field of Power and MoU on Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy will be in Mutual interest.

CONSULAR AND CULTURAL MATTERS

35. The two Ministers expressed satisfaction at the ongoing pace of work on the project for conservation and restoration of the Ananda Temple in Bagan, Myanmar by the Archaeological Survey of India.

36. The two Ministers welcomed the formalization of contacts between Indian and Myanmar think tanks and academic institutions and urged scholars to participate actively and exchange views in academic events being held in either country.

37. Both Ministers welcomed the initiative of the formation of the India-Myanmar Friendship Association at the earliest.

38. Both Ministers agreed to pursue the project to restore two temples, stone inscription and rest house of King Mindon and Bagyidaw in Bodh Gaya. For this purpose, it was agreed that a delegation from Myanmar will visit India for discussions with concerned State and Central Government authorities within 2015.

39. Myanmar Foreign Minister assured Myanmar's cooperation and support for organizing Festival of India event in Myanmar this year, which would include dance performances, food festival, art and culture activities.

COOPERATION UNDER MULTI LATERAL FRAMEWORK

40. External Affairs Minister of India congratulated Myanmar on its successful chairmanship of ASEAN and noted that the meetings held under Myanmar's chairmanship were a testimony to Myanmar's diplomatic and organizational capabilities in the international arena.

41. The two Ministers reiterated their commitment to further enhance the regional and sub-regional cooperation under (the BCIM-EC and) the BIMSTEC framework.

42. The two Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work closely in the UN and other multi-lateral organizations including WTO. They underscored the importance of coordinating national positions on emerging global development architecture including Post-2015 Development Agenda and other multi-lateral issues of common interest. Both Ministers reiterated the importance of an effective multilateral system, centered on a strong United Nations, as a key factor in tackling global challenges. Noting the slow pace of progress of UN Security Council reform, the two Ministers called for outcomes to be achieved at least in the 70th anniversary year of the United Nations. They reaffirmed their commitment to

supporting the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) and called for results oriented outcome of the negotiations that brings about comprehensive reform of the Security Council including an expansion in both categories of membership. Myanmar supports Indian efforts for the UNSC reforms. It also supports India's efforts for its candidature for UNSC permanent membership.

43. India expressed its support for the progress made by Myanmar in its ongoing reform process. Both Ministers agreed that the delegations of India and Myanmar would continue to work together closely during deliberations in UN fora.

44. Myanmar Foreign Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin invited External Affairs Minister of India Smt. Sushma Swaraj to visit Myanmar for the next meeting of the India-Myanmar Joint Consultative Commission in 2016. It was agreed that the dates for this meeting would be decided through diplomatic channels.

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