

**Keynote Speech by H.E. U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the
Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the 47th Anniversary of the
ASEAN Day**

(MICC II, Nay Pyi Taw, 6 July 2014)

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mingalaba!

On this auspicious occasion commemorating the 47th anniversary of the founding of the Association of South East Asian Nations, ASEAN, which falls on 8th August 2014, I have the pleasure to extend my warmest wishes and greetings to all of you for your kind presence at this significant event.

First of all, I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to all the Leaders of ASEAN for their leadership and vision which play significant roles in enhancing the quality of life of the peoples of ASEAN. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my warmest tribute to the wisdom and leadership of the founders of ASEAN.

Looking back to the past 47 years, we see that unity and cooperation have been the main strength of ASEAN significant progress in bringing peace, stability and prosperity in the region. It is the uniqueness of ASEAN that unity has been built through its vast diversities. I believe that this very important spirit is the attribute of the common ASEAN values and principles. It has guided ASEAN to overcome the challenges and obstacles during hard times.

We see the Asia- Pacific region as a strategic region of importance. The unity of ASEAN has become more prominent over the decades. ASEAN Community building is based on the achievement of unity. In this regard, Myanmar as the Chair of ASEAN for 2014, has set the theme of “Moving forward in unity to a peaceful and prosperous community”.

Today, ASEAN stands at a critical juncture of Community Building. ASEAN is now transforming itself to become a comprehensively integrated regional organization, sharing same values and norms with the common goal of establishing a community, comprising the political and Security Community, Economic Community and Socio-Cultural Community.

Nowadays, we see changes throughout the region. We see the increasing awareness of people on democracy and good governance. We see countries in the region becoming more interdependent. And we see the information and communication technologies becoming affordable to people. These changes made positive impacts on people's daily lives. I am confident that ASEAN Community building process is capable of enhancing such improvements make them sustainable.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For Myanmar as the current chair of ASEAN for 2014, we are trying our best to establish the ASEAN Community in the targeted timeline. Myanmar strongly supports the people-oriented Community Building process to address poverty and economic disparity among the ASEAN member countries. This is also in line with Myanmar's national policies which focus on eliminating poverty throughout the country, and also with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The Political and Security Community will lead to a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. The Political and Security Blueprint is a strong foundation for fostering cooperation on promoting peace and security in the region. It has also led to a broader participation of various dialogue partners for comprehensive partnership in combatting non-traditional security matters and transnational crimes including the human trafficking, money laundering, communicable diseases, drugs, law enforcement and managing natural disasters and also in promoting the rule of law.

To realize the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, we aim to create this region to become a single market and single production base. The ASEAN Economic

Community will effectively contribute to ASEAN's long term vision of narrowing the development gap and enhancing the equitable economic development among the ASEAN member states. I believe that ASEAN's on-going efforts on the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will effectively contribute to this end.

The Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint formulates increasing cooperation among ASEAN member states in improving the ASEAN region through its cooperation measures on disaster management and humanitarian assistance, environment conservation, protecting and promoting the rights of women, children and migrant workers, addressing the communicable diseases and promotion of education.

ASEAN's aspiration on the Community Building is targeted to be completed at the end of 2015. ASEAN is expediting efforts to reach this target in time. I believe that ASEAN will surely overcome any obstacle with its unity in spite of its diversity.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The people of ASEAN faced profound sadness over the two tragic incidents which occurred recently. The loss of innocent lives with the downing of MH-17, and the typhoon Ramasun and Haiyan that caused high death toll and loss of properties in the Philippines and Viet Nam have been most tragic incidents. The Government and people of Myanmar offer profound condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the families of the victims of the two tragic events. To prevent such tragic incidents in the future, we must work together to enhance cooperation and mutual understanding.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come a half way through to Myanmar's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014. Since the beginning of this year, we have been undertaking duties and responsibilities laid down by the ASEAN. We have hosted Ministerial and Senior Officials Meetings. The 24th ASEAN Summit in May ended with success. The 47th

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and related meetings will be convened in a couple of days in Nay Pyi Taw. The upcoming Ministerial Meetings involve broad participation from ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and, I am confident that, with the support of our fellow ASEAN member countries these meetings will be productive.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me reiterate once again Myanmar's commitment to undertake the obligations of ASEAN and uphold the value of ASEAN Centrality as a responsible ASEAN member state. With this note, I would like to express Myanmar's aspiration to move forward in unity with fellow members to realize our goal of establishing a peaceful and prosperous ASEAN Community.

Let me once again extend my sincere appreciation to everyone present here. I wish you success in moving towards a peaceful and prosperous ASEAN Community.

Thank you .
