

**Press Release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 17 September 2015,  
concerning the joint statement on the elections issued by the embassies of  
Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Norway, Japan, Sweden, the United  
Kingdom and the United States in Yangon**

It is learnt that a Joint Statement on Election was issued on 15 September 2015 by Embassies of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Norway, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America in Yangon.

Cognizant of the important of the upcoming general elections in Myanmar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is appreciative of the support expressed by the “Joint Statement” for the successful holding of the elections. However, the Ministry is also concerned that the Joint Statement could bring about unwarranted, negative impacts on the efforts being made by all the people of Myanmar especially when the election process is progressing smoothly, effectively, and efficiently in a peaceful and positive environment.

With regard to the concerns of the countries expressed in the Joint Statement, the Union Election Commission has already established the mechanisms to address concerns, large or small that may arise in the election process in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations in just and non-discriminatory manners.

President U Thein Sein, in his International Democracy Day message on 15-9-2015, had also clearly stated that “Myanmar is a country where ethnic nationalities are residing side by side with their diverse ethnicity, customs and beliefs. In canvassing votes for their candidates, political parties and voters need to refrain from causing disruption to those harmonious communities and wide diversity of beliefs.” This emphasizes the importance that Myanmar places on the ethnic and religious harmony in communities. The Government, the UEC, the people and all stakeholders are working together in order that the elections will be held in a free and fair manner. Furthermore, the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar ensures equal rights to all its citizens regardless of race, religion or gender.

At a time when Myanmar is in the process of holding nationwide elections and undergoing a campaign period focusing on prevalence of law and order and peace and stability, the Joint Statement prejudices the situation and has potentials to create misunderstandings and doubts based on ethnicity and religion.

Issuance of such statement at this delicate juncture goes against the peaceful environment the people of Myanmar have established for the successful holding of the elections. The Ministry, therefore, categorically rejects the implications in the Joint Statement that instigate misunderstanding and doubts among people.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nay Pyi Taw

Dated: 17 September 2015