

## The World Bank

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

No. 57, Pyay Road,  
6 ½ miles, Hlaing Township  
Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Tel: +95 (1) 654824  
Fax: +95 (1) 654825  
www.worldbank.org/mm

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**Ms. Khin Ohmar**  
**Coordinator**  
**Burma Partnership**

Dear Ms. Ohmar,

### **Myanmar Telecommunications Sector Reform Project: Civil Society Comments**

Thank you for your letter dated January 21, 2014 to Mr. Ulrich Zachau, Country Director, about the proposed telecommunications sector reform project. I am responding on Mr. Zachau's behalf and want to thank you and the co-signing organizations for your engagement and inputs to this important project.

Myanmar today has a unique opportunity in the telecommunications sector to leapfrog its neighbors to reduce costs and increase access as an integral part of lifting millions of people out of poverty. Recent global experience shows the power of expanded telecommunications access to combat poverty, deliver services and connect citizens. In this context, we appreciate the issues you raise in your letter and look forward to working on these together with government authorities and stakeholders.

Turning to the issues you raise, the proposed project makes provisions for technical assistance to help the government conduct a due diligence review of a suite of laws including privacy, data protection, cyber-crime, access to and freedom of information. Last November, when the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) issued its first set of draft rules for public consultation,<sup>1</sup> the government indicated that "the Ministry will be drafting other rules and procedures on a variety of issues such as standardization, type approval, and lawful interception in due time. Such rules and procedures also will be subject to a public consultation process." The public consultation process, we expect, would provide stakeholders an opportunity to engage meaningfully in the development of the rules and procedures.

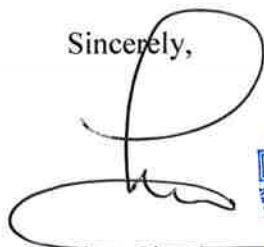
The limited physical footprint of the Project in terms of potential environmental and social impact determine the project categorization. As regards land use, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is being used addresses effects of the Project on rights related to the use of land. A framework approach is being used for environmental and social safeguards because the sites for the pilot sub projects have not yet been identified. We understand that MCIT has committed to conduct additional consultations during project implementation as sites for the pilots are identified. In this context, I welcome and appreciate your recommendations for future civil society consultations, and I also thank you for your concrete suggestions on how to improve the consultation process. Inputs from civil society groups and other actors are important learning opportunities for us, and we look forward to your inputs in future consultations.

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1. Public Consultation Issued by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar: Proposed Rules for Telecommunications Sector Relating to Licensing, Access and Interconnection, Spectrum, Numbering, and Competition. November 4, 2013 (Page 5, 1B.5)

I look forward to further engagement on this and other projects in Myanmar, and I would be happy to have a more detailed discussion with you and other stakeholders at a mutually convenient time.

Sincerely,



Kanthan Shankar  
Country Manager, Myanmar  
The World Bank