

**Opening Speech**  
**By**  
**His Excellency Major-General Khin Aung Myint, Minister of Culture**  
**At the Opening Ceremony of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Committee on**  
**Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI) and 6<sup>th</sup> SOMCA Meeting**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

Minglaba,  
Auspiciousness to you all,

It is my pleasure to extend my warm welcome to ASEAN delegates for culture and Information to our new capital city, Nay Pyi Taw. We are delighted that the Ministry of Culture of the Union of Myanmar has privilege to host the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information ( ASEAN-COCI) and 6<sup>th</sup> SOMCA Meeting. The hosting of this meeting is the initiative taken by the two ministries: Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Information.

At this 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-COCI Meeting, we will review and evaluate the progress of the outgoing and ongoing projects over the past year. We will also look at some other new projects, which will help enhance and promote more knowledge about ASEAN among our population and people all over the world. So I hope that at this gathering, we will give new ideas and suggestions in order to give a reflection of ASEAN image to the world, to open wide our doors to welcome friends and guests to our culture diverse ASEAN.

Our ASEAN nations have made more progress in building an ASEAN Community particularly in implementing the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) in line with ASEAN Vision 2020 which has now been brought forward to 2015. Part of that vision is an ASEAN that is ever more closely integrated as economies and societies – a free trade area, an investment area, the freer flow of services, the free flow of information and cultural exchanges and so on.

In this spirit, we are here today representing the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI). The Committee has been active in formulating and implementing many projects involving different groups of people in the society. There are many programmes and projects carried out under the ASEAN-COCI have to a large extend brought benefits towards achieving this objectives. However, much more needs to be done to meet the set plan especially in international understanding about ASEAN. Therefore, as both communicators and cultural workers, we need to further create public awareness among ASEAN so that the international community will grasp the essence of ASEAN and its vision.

The Fifth Meeting of the ASEAN and ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials on Culture and Arts, has been held in January this year in Naypyi Taw. At this meeting, the capacity-building programmes in the area of SMCEs through projects for workshops and seminars on best practices in the respective areas are considered. Under the ASEAN Plus Three frame work, the ASEAN member countries would initiate the development of ASEAN HRD and establishment of network of experts in cultural heritage as priority

areas for joint projects and activities. I hope, at this 6<sup>th</sup> SOMCA Meeting, the undertaking of coordination of activities in each specific programme areas can be done.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

After being severely hit by the Nargis Cyclone , Myanmar who is committed to living up to the rule by taking turns to host this meeting, take the privilege to hold this meeting as its schedule. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, Cyclone 'Nargis' that devastated the southern part of Ayeyawady delta and Yangon was an absolute nightmare for Myanmar people. The severe natural disaster left hundreds of thousands of local people dead or missing. Local people lost so many relatives and massive property. Nowadays, our government has been rehabilitating and reconstructing the storm-hit areas with the assistance of ASEAN countries, neighbouring nations, the international community and UN. In this regard, we would like to strongly express our appreciation to all ASEAN members who are giving hands and this is also proving that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

Before concluding, I would like to express our appreciation to the Organizing Committee and officials from the respective Ministries for their cooperation and support in preparing to host this meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. And also I would like to thank the ASEAN Secretariat for its continuous support.

I wish all of you a pleasant stay in this new city Nay Pyi Taw. It is our hope that sincerity and humbleness of Myanmar people as well as our warm hospitality could feel you at home. I am fully confident that the discussions at the 43<sup>rd</sup> COCI Meeting and 6<sup>th</sup> SOMCA Meeting will be productive and fruitful. I wish you every success in your deliberations.

May I declare, the 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN COCI Meeting and 6<sup>th</sup> SOMCA meetings are officially opened.

Thank you.