



# CANADA-ASIA AGENDA

## Influencing the Burmese Spring: Keys to Success for Canada

**Robert Hanlon & Kenneth Christie**

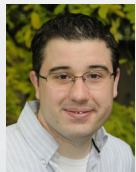
Canada's efforts to court Myanmar are in full swing this week as International Trade Minister Ed Fast makes his tour as the first Canadian Trade Minister to visit Myanmar. In this piece, authors Robert Hanlon and Kenneth Christie contend that Canada will face major challenges when investing in the country unless Canada gains greater leverage in the relationship by helping improve local human development through good governance, sustainability and education.

Over the past year, Canadians have witnessed Ottawa's re-engagement with Southeast Asia's erstwhile 'outpost of tyranny.'<sup>1</sup> Since Myanmar announced sweeping political reform, Canada, along with other governments, has rushed to support Myanmar's apparent transformation.<sup>2</sup> Renewed diplomatic relations across the globe have seen the United States

ease economic sanctions, Japan forgive Myanmar's personal debt, while Australia has promised substantial development aid. Efforts to court the impoverished nation are now in full swing.

Canada's attempt has been slow and unremarkable. The Harper government strategy has been limited to the

### About The Authors



Dr. Robert Hanlon is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, as well as a Lecturer in Political Science and International Studies at Simon Fraser University. He also teaches a graduate course on human security at Royal Roads University. He completed his PhD at City University of Hong Kong while working for the Asian Human Rights Commission and the Canadian Chamber in Commerce Hong Kong. He has spent the past decade researching corporate social responsibility, corruption and human rights in Asia.



Professor Kenneth Christie specialises in issues of human rights and democratization in Southeast Asia. He has taught and conducted research in these areas in universities in the USA, Singapore, South Africa, Norway, the UAE and most recently Canada. His most recent appointment is Program Head of the Masters in Arts in Human Security and Peacebuilding at Royal Roads University in British Columbia, Canada. He has conducted evaluations of human rights NGO's for the Norwegian government development agency, NORAD, in Southeast Asia.



easing of sanctions, plans to open Canada's first Embassy in the country, and endorsed high-level diplomatic relations.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the International Trade Minister, Ed Fast, has endorsed "cautious Canadian investment" so that the government "can help anchor and expand Burmese reforms while positioning our companies for future opportunities."<sup>4</sup> While the trade minister's statement provides some insight into how Ottawa perceives its new relationship trajectory with Myanmar, it offers no direction on how a sustainable rapport can be built with Naypyidaw. What exactly can Canada offer the people of Myanmar?

In this article, we argue Canada faces significant challenges when investing in Myanmar given its limited capacity to influence the Myanmar government. In order to gain leverage, we argue Ottawa should build a relationship around improving the human development of the Burmese people by designing policy that helps promote good governance, sustainability and education. To illustrate this, we begin with a brief review of the recent political developments in Myanmar along with an assessment of the current investment climate within a development context.

## Background

Until recently, Myanmar has been the prime example of a pariah state. Ruled by a hard line junta since 1988, the military remains the dominant political institution. Disastrous economic policies have prevented this resource-rich country from achieving its economic potential. Myanmar now has the lowest income in the region and is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> on Foreign Policy's 2012 Failed States Index.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, Myanmar's ASEAN membership along with its relationships with China and India has helped prevent complete diplomatic isolation.

Since late 2010, however, there have been some positive developments which look promising for the development of the country.<sup>6</sup> In November 2010, Aung San Suu Kyi, the main opposition leader was released from prison and reforms were implemented. Thein Sein, representing the junta and a key reformist was sworn in as President in March of 2011. In the following year, more reforms were initiated and in April 2012, in the first open election since 1990, the National League for Democracy (Suu Kyi's party)



Photo Credit: Justin Blethrow

both the US and the European Union to ease sanctions on the regime. Thein Sein has guided the country through a series of reforms and changes in the period between 2011 and 2012, often dramatic in nature. Myanmar has opened its doors to Western investors and has loosened restrictions on dissidents.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, international and regional pressure appears to have diminished somewhat following the election of 2010 and by-elections of 2012, moving to a more cooperative stance. The next elections in 2015 will prove crucial to the future of these reforms taking place in the country. ASEAN has also responded by giving Myanmar the chair of its organization in 2014, which would represent a dramatic rehabilitation. While the changes appear substantial we should exercise caution. Thein Sein is reputed to suffer from heart disease and recently in July 2012, the military nominated a former general with close ties to the country's previous military junta to be the Vice President, a typically ominous sign in a country with a military past.<sup>8</sup> The military is guaranteed 25 percent of the seats in parliament, solidifying its role in a political system that requires over three-quarters parliamentary vote to bring about any constitutional change. There remain doubts as to how quickly reforms should be implemented in some circles precisely because of the role the military has played in the past.

## Investment Climate in Myanmar

Myanmar's economic climate is weak and has been throughout its modern history. Since its independence

in 1948, Myanmar’s struggles have proven to be a consequence of colonial mismanagement and the horrors of World War II. As the International Crisis Group notes, “The country began life in economic and political crisis from which it has never really recovered.”<sup>9</sup> In 1962, a military coup intervened and set out to transform the nation into a socialist state.

As a result, a dysfunctional banking sector emerged coupled with low levels of industrialization. One of the major development challenges in Myanmar is to enable a comprehensive reform of the financial sector. The decades of isolation from the global system and the cultivation of crony capitalism, along with economic sanctions, have proved detrimental to positive development in this area. Myanmar needs to progress towards this before the ASEAN Economic Community emerges in 2015.<sup>10</sup>

Compared to the rest of Southeast Asia, only a few private banks exist within the country and its economy remains mainly based on cash. Investors will be cautious as they wait for financial reforms to allow for economic growth and development. Presently, the International Monetary Fund has been invited to tackle the problem of four different exchange rates, while Parliament is drafting new investment laws. These developments are important and should be responded to by Canada not only with approval and diplomacy but real actions that show how these reforms bring attractive benefits. Specific actions discussed below include the delivery of important development aid, new foreign investments guarantees, and exclusive capacity building projects.

Myanmar - Foreign Direct Investment (Millions of dollars and percentages)					
	2005-2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
FDI flows - Inward	459	976	963	450	850
FDI stocks - Inward	1,210	3,211	7,516	8,273	9,123

Source: UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2012, www.unctad.org/wir

Myanmar is desperate for reforms as it is continuously ranked the poorest country in Southeast Asia with an income per capita of around US\$ 900/annum. Health and education levels are also low with life expectancy reaching 64 years. Roughly 25 percent of the population does not have access to electricity while two-thirds of the population is employed in the agricultural sector. The country’s infrastructure is poor with government struggling to cap-

ture higher taxation given the prominence of the thriving shadow economy.<sup>11</sup>

Yet with growth rates expected to sustain a level of eight percent over the next decade, some analysts have predicted key growth areas including foreign investment and a rise in commodity sales.<sup>12</sup> Of course, even with the imminent market entry of brands such as Coke, Pepsi and Visa, the overall purchasing power of the average Burmese citizen is low. Moreover, the Economist Intelligence Unit predicts that most of the capital spent will be on low-cost Chinese commodities based in the food, beverage and tobacco sector<sup>13</sup>.

Apart from a fledging consumer market, the business environment remains harsh. The business community in Myanmar revolves around crony capitalists, the military and political elites. Informal networks flourish and are only balanced through endemic levels of corruption. The weak rule of law along with a complicated tax system is also causes for concern. While Myanmar has been designated as one of the most expensive countries in the world to do business, it also has an under-developed civil service and low levels of skilled labourers. Moreover, the absence of a thriving professional sector including lawyers, accountants and auditors is noticeable.<sup>14</sup>

### Weighing the Competition

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently hinted that Myanmar could become the next economic frontier of Asia.<sup>15</sup> The question remains what role can Canada play in Myanmar’s political and economic development? How can Canada compete with other foreign investors seeking to win-over this new frontier? After all, Myanmar has long and established relationships with its neighbours including China, Japan, India, Singapore and Thailand. Capturing attention away from local interest will prove challenging, especially with other Western states scrambling to build relationships with the government.

The main foreign investors in Myanmar are China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Thailand.<sup>16</sup> In 2011, China surpassed Thailand to become Myanmar’s leading investor with cumulative projects totalling US\$9.6 billion.<sup>17</sup> Despite China’s significant investment in the country, some commentators have suggested that this is no measure for assessing Beijing’s political influence in the country.

They argue Chinese investment in Myanmar is on a similar growth trajectory as in many other countries throughout the region. Moreover, the suspension of the Beijing-backed Myitsone Dam may suggest Myanmar’s government has an interest in limiting Chinese investment growth in the country.<sup>18</sup>

These signals are positive for Canada and others looking to offer an alternative investment portfolio to the Myanmar government. Given Canada’s experience in the extractive and mining industries, Myanmar is of obvious interest to Ottawa. In fact, the extractive industry accounts for roughly 68 percent of Myanmar’s inward investment.<sup>19</sup> Tourism, manufacturing and the energy sectors follow as top performing areas of investment.<sup>20</sup> Yet most of the FDI that has entered Myanmar in the last decade has created little direct employment and few linkages with existing industries, limiting their positive benefits.

Canada-Myanmar Trade Relations (CAN\$)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Exports	29,561	243,625	153,903	2,747,774	841,651
Total Imports	7,914,412	749,951	59,612	14,623	62,657
Trade Balance	-7,884,851	-506,326	94,291	2,733,151	751,995

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Trade Balances, www.ic.gc.ca

Canada is not the only player to consider entering the emerging economy. Japan and Australia have aggressively been making inroads. After years of appeasing Western sanctions over the past decade, Japan has now comfortably re-entered the economy.<sup>21</sup> Japanese products are well-known and found in the major cities while the government has relied on Tokyo for important development aid. In April 2012, Japan wiped clear Myanmar’s US\$3.7 billion debt to Tokyo. The move has leveraged Japanese influence in the country with government officials recently signaling out the country as a ‘rebuilding friend’ at a high-level UNESCO meeting in Qatar.<sup>22</sup>

Australia is also asserting its interest in developing a relationship in the country. The government has committed over US\$82 million in development aid over the next four years. Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr announced in June 2012, “a major new education package to train more teachers, lift student attendance and provide nutritious meals at primary schools in Myanmar.” The government promised 50 tertiary scholarships to Burmese students by 2015, while citing the Millennium Development Goals in Myanmar as its baseline for setting

its aid agenda. The government also put aside over US\$3 million for human rights training and suggested it would offer support for academics from the Australian National University and the University of Sydney to assist in building the capacity the parliamentary practices, the rule of law and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from Australia and Japan, others such as France, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union have shown unique diplomatic strategies in courting the Southeast Asian country. Canada has been slow and unhelpful in establishing itself as a unique actor willing to assist in Burma’s development. In fact, as of August 2012, Canada has offered zero direct bilateral humanitarian assistance although has actively been involved in multilateral and indirect aid programs focused on Burmese refugees in Thailand such as the Burma Cyclone Relief Fund and the Burma Border Assistance Program: Building Social Capital.<sup>24</sup>

In order for Canada to compete for investment opportunities in Myanmar as outlined by the Minister Fast, the government must develop a foreign policy that centers on improving the human development of the country. Only through such development will Myanmar be able to move forward and solving some of its most pressing human security issues such as the Rohingya refugee situation.<sup>25</sup> Here we offer three policy recommendations that we think will enhance Canada’s influence in Myanmar.

International Human Development Indicators 2011*		
Category	Indicator	Value
Health	Life expectancy at birth (years)	65.2
Education	Expected Years of Schooling (of children under 7) (years)	9.2
Income	GNI per capita in PPP terms (constant 2005 int'l \$)	0.391
Poverty	Multidimensional Poverty Index (%)	0.154
Gender	Maternal mortality ration (deaths of women per 100,000 live births)	240
Sustainability	Ecological footprint of consumption (global hectares per capita)	1.8
Demography	Population, total both sexes (thousands)	49,336.8
*Data refers to 2011 or the most recent year available.		
Source: United Nations Development Programme, Myanmar: International Human Development		

### Engaging Myanmar

First, the government should extend an invitation to assist in building the good governance capacity of the financial sector. The rapid political changes taking place in Myanmar should be seen as an opportunity for Canada to adopt a responsive posture, working with the authorities to



develop the economy. Canada has an excellent record of fiscal responsibility and has weathered the global recession well as a result. It can bring this expertise and knowledge to the table in Myanmar in the banking, economic and financial sectors to improve relations and get a foothold for solid investments. Such a program should be a multi-stakeholder initiative that involves political support from the federal government, the administrative strengths of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), along with the expertise and efficiency of the private sector. The program could enhance the image of Canada while entrenching the Canadian private sector throughout the



©istockphoto.com/ivanmateev

Private sector support for good governance will be critical in establishing long-term relationships with local business network. Approaching investment through an ethical framework that leverages Canadian values can minimize risk. Moreover, businesses in Myanmar are signaling to the international community of their interest in attracting ethical investment as was recently on display with the launch of United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in Yangon. The government has also hinted at joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, a major project that works to enhance transparency in the oil, gas and mining sectors. In July, Myanmar's Minister of Industry was quoted as saying, "We are preparing to be a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to ensure that there is maximum transparency in these sectors and try to make sure the benefits go to the vast majority of the people and not to a small group."<sup>26</sup> Foreign investors should take note and promote key corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies such as community engagement, publicly support the UNGC while participating in the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

As the country most notably behind in development in the region, Myanmar, as with other developing countries, requires strong investment and economic partnerships to achieve economic and social growth. This comes at a time when the country may be beginning to realize that there are environmental and social implications of development projects. With an abundance of natural resources but lack in capital, it would be easy without investment for it to slide back into a state of under-development. A more robust Canadian economic presence in the country which stresses Canadian values of sustainability, education and health care would offer an alternative source of investment to those coming from other regional players. At the same time, vigorous economic partnerships between the Canada and Myanmar would strengthen Canadian investment and aspirations Southeast Asia, benefiting from its strategic location.

Second, Canada should offer its expertise in sustainable development.<sup>27</sup> Myanmar faces immense challenges in the area of sustainability and has been prone to natural disasters. In May 2008 for instance Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar, leaving an estimated 140,000 people dead and affecting nearly 2.4 million others. Despite the massive scale of the destruction and natural disaster, the country's junta was slow to react, denying entry visas to humanitarian workers and preventing the delivery of aid. The tragedy drew attention to the complete lack of human security for individuals. As the regime moves from a policy of isolation to reform and openness, Canada is well-equipped to provide assistance with its expertise on disaster and emergency management as demonstrated in Haiti's post-reconstruction following its devastating earthquake in 2010.

This could be part of a concerted effort to develop sustainable practices and safeguard human and environmental development here. In recent years, the challenge of sustainability has come to the fore, not only in developed, but developing societies. It would now appear that safeguarding the environment is on the public's radar as no other issue has been for decades, lending new urgency to global government, business, community and individual actions to preserve a planet weakened by over consumption and resource depletion. Even in the very challenging economic times that we now face, it is clear that sustainability and environment are still high on the public agenda. The challenges facing Myanmar are

complex in this regard, but similar to the ones facing most developing countries. Canada needs to emphasize strong environmental stewardship in Myanmar and can do so with the wealth of green knowledge it already has stored in its repository. Canada is seen as a leader and is highly respected in issues of sustainability and the environment.

To do this Canada should leverage the expertise of Canada's International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). These organizations have decades of experience in building sustainable communities in the Global South while delivering important micro-level aid. The government could strengthen the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives for Burma. This initiative focuses on human rights, good governance and democratic development. Funding should be increased by several hundred thousand dollars in order to endorse community-based sustainability projects. Moreover, governance involves the ability to manage and accommodate the diverse ethnic and identity groups which have frequently spelled conflict in Myanmar. The Canadian model of diversity which emphasizes balancing individual freedoms and social equality, as well as recognizing difference is a crucial learning model to help Myanmar overcome its deep seated conflicts and develop a unified identity and purpose. Ottawa should take the forefront in making Myanmar aware of the benefits in developing its civil service capacity along with sharing Canada's experience in promoting multiculturalism.

Finally, the Canadian government should work towards improving education levels in the country. Only two-thirds of children attend school in Myanmar, with over 40 percent never finishing their primary years.<sup>28</sup> Education is of central importance to the government with President U Thein Sein recently stating "Only when all youth become intellectuals and intelligentsia in the future, will the nation enjoy fruits of development."<sup>29</sup> Australia is well aware of Myanmar's dire literacy rates and has offered to provide teacher training, food aid to remote schools, textbooks, water as well as improve sanitation facilities in schools.<sup>30</sup> Australia is not alone, with France, the United Kingdom and the United States recently offering educational assistance for Myanmar's outdated university system.<sup>31</sup>

Canada should take note and offer similar educational assistance in areas already identified by the Myanmar



©istockphoto.com/hadynyah

telecommunications, energy, forestry, education and health.<sup>32</sup> Canada has expertise in all of these areas. However state-owned enterprises in Myanmar will still have a monopoly over certain sectors including teak extraction, oil and natural gas, among others. One area where Myanmar has loosened up is in health services. Canada can invest in health education. For example, Canada should emphasize to Yangon its expertise and model health care system to improve the lives of its people and increase productivity within Myanmar. The health system seems primed to assist and invest in this sector which is poorly under-resourced.

Developing the public education sector is also in-line with Myanmar's development goals and an area where Canada excels. In 2012, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) acknowledged Canada is the most educated country in the world.<sup>33</sup> Canada can help Myanmar by extending its expertise on learning especially in the K-12 years. Ottawa could offer student loan repayment holidays to newly minted university graduates to go to Myanmar and teach English while sharing their experiences of Canada with the Burmese people. Canadian universities should also be encouraged to expand their franchise and develop the Canadian "brand" of education which is trusted in quality and excellence. Such franchises are becoming increasingly popular in Southeast Asia. Investment in education at all levels is also a way of strengthening civil society. Not only would such initiatives contribute to developing the country's educational capacity, it will also promote Canadian ideals within Burmese society.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

The Burmese spring is afoot and though it remains to be seen how to resolve the bitter divisions within the country and to avoid increasing political turmoil, a cautious optimism does appear to have taken hold. In a state which has been isolated for so long and holds one of the worst human rights record, strengthening Myanmar's democracy from within should continue to be a top priority for foreign policymakers. Enabling a cohesive and integrated society will not only improve Burma's human development; rather it will also promote regional socio-economic stability especially for Myanmar's neighbours.

Economic development will continue to be a top priority for the Myanmar government, an area that Canada can offer valuable insight. This approach should be in-line with Asian perspectives on development that centre on economic prosperity and the strengthening of the rule of law. Promoting Western-style democracy in Myanmar will not help the situation; rather, Canada should engage the country by indirectly touching on issues that promote democratic ideals such as good governance, sustainability and education.<sup>35</sup>

As Myanmar moves forward in its transition to democracy, the Canadian government can help the country develop social cohesion through promoting human development programs and enhancing its capacity for community engagement for building durable peace.



©istockphoto.com/Nikada

For investors, Myanmar's fledging business environment will continue to be a challenge that could bring serious financial risk if foreign ventures do not consider the social implications associated with entering the market such as corruption. The business community should consider the strategic benefits of ethical investment while building partnerships that pay close attention to the needs of the people of Myanmar.

As Canada increases its diplomatic engagement with Myanmar, Ottawa should take into account that building a strong relationship also depends on what we can offer the people of Myanmar. Enhancing the Canadian brand and investment opportunities for our entrepreneurs will depend on how well the government can leverage its resources. Showing a genuine concern for the human development of the Burmese people can introduce the country to Canadian values while planting the seeds for future generations of Canadian engagement.

<sup>1</sup> Along with Burma, former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice named Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Zimbabwe, and Belarus. See here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4186241.stm>

<sup>2</sup> In this paper use of the words 'Myanmar' and 'Burma' are interchangeable. In 1989, the military government replaced the name Burma with Myanmar although many countries refused to recognize the new title. The country's official name is currently the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Canada still does not recognize the name Myanmar.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird visited the country in March 2012 while Minister of International Trade Ed Fast in early September 2012. See here [http://www.international.gc.ca/media\\_commerce/comm/news-communiques/2012/08/26a.aspx?view=d](http://www.international.gc.ca/media_commerce/comm/news-communiques/2012/08/26a.aspx?view=d)

<sup>4</sup> For the full press release from the Minister's office please see here: [http://www.international.gc.ca/media\\_commerce/release\\_photo\\_distribution/2012/25.aspx?lang=eng&view=d](http://www.international.gc.ca/media_commerce/release_photo_distribution/2012/25.aspx?lang=eng&view=d)

<sup>5</sup> For the full list, please see here: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed\\_states\\_index\\_2012\\_interactive](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive)

<sup>6</sup> See Ian Holliday (2011). 'Extending a Hand in Myanmar' In *Dissent*, Vol: 58: 2, , pp. 14-18.

<sup>7</sup> For a good commentary on Myanmar's political reforms see Robert Taylor's 'Myanmar: From Army Rule to Constitutional Rule?; In *Asian Affairs*, Vol. XLIII: II, July 2012



- <sup>8</sup> The commander-in-chief of Myanmar's navy Nyan Htun was nominated in August 2012. For more information see here: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/11530>
- <sup>9</sup> See International Crisis Group's (ICG) Myanmar: The Politics of Economic Reform, Asia Report N°231 – 27 July 2012, Available from <http://www.crisis-group.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/burma-myanmar/231-myanmar-the-politics-of-economic-reform.aspx>
- <sup>10</sup> See International Monetary Fund's 'Myanmar: 2011 Article IV Consultation, IMF Country Report No.12/104 available at [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12104.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12104.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> See ICG 2012, as well as the Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) 'Myanmar: White Elephant or New Tiger Economy?' Available from [www.eiu.com/public/topical\\_report.aspx?campaignid=myanmar12](http://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=myanmar12)
- <sup>12</sup> For an excellent review of FDI in Myanmar see Jared Bissinger (2012). 'Foreign Investment in Myanmar: A Resource Boom but a Development Bust?' In *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 34: 1, pp. 23-52. Also, growth rates have been predicted by the Asian Development Bank. See here: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-20/myanmar-economy-may-see-annual-8-growth-for-a-decade-adb-says.html>
- <sup>13</sup> See Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012
- <sup>14</sup> See International Crisis Group, 2012
- <sup>15</sup> See International Monetary Fund, 2012
- <sup>16</sup> See Bissinger, 2012
- <sup>17</sup> See People's Daily Online (22 Feb 2011), 'China becomes biggest investor in Myanmar', available from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/7295205.html>
- <sup>18</sup> See Bissinger, 2012; Taylor, 2012; Holliday, 2011
- <sup>19</sup> See Bissinger, 2012. Also, for more on mining engagement in Burma see here <http://www.cfob.org/mining.html> and here <http://www.dvb.no/news/laws-stifle-investment-in-mining-sector/23025>
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> See Myanmar Times Online, 'Japan Renews its Claim in Myanmar' Available from <http://www.mmtimes.com/2012/business/640/biz02.html>
- <sup>22</sup> See Statement at the General Debate of UNCTAD by His Excellency Mr. Maung Wai, Leader of the Delegation of the Republic of the Union if Myanmar, Doha, Qatar, 24 April 2012. Available at: <http://www.unctadxiii.org/en/Statements/myanmar-en.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> For updates on Australia's Burma policy and aid strategy, see here: <http://www.foreignminister.gov.au>
- <sup>24</sup> Canada's aid strategy for Burma see the Canadian International Development Agency seen here: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/JUD-7237332-EYR>
- <sup>25</sup> Reaching a sustainable solution with the Rohingya refugee problem depends on how effectively the human development programs are carried out in the Rakhine state. Years of under-development has turned this scenic border region into a simmering conflict zone which is creating multifaceted security concerns for neighbouring Bangladesh.
- <sup>26</sup> See the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (13 July 2012) 'Myanmar considers EITI' available from <http://eiti.org/news-events/myanmar-considers-eiti#>
- <sup>27</sup> Sustainable development can be defined as managing and promoting activities in a way that allows social, economic, and environmental considerations to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and requirements.
- <sup>28</sup> See UNESCO (2011) 'World Data on Education: Myanmar' available here: [www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/.../pdf.../Myanmar.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/.../pdf.../Myanmar.pdf)
- <sup>29</sup> For the full commentary see here: <http://my.entertainment.yahoo.com/news/myanmar-president-wants-investment-education-055041806.html>
- <sup>30</sup> For more see here: [http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc\\_mr\\_120609.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120609.html)
- <sup>31</sup> For more information on university initiatives in Burma please see here: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120625191013424> and here <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/7840847.html>
- <sup>32</sup> See the Economist (23 July 2012) 'Investing in Myanmar Triplicating success' Available from <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2012/07/investing-myanmar?zid=306&ah=1b164dbd43b0cb27ba0d4c3b12a5e227>
- <sup>33</sup> See NBC (3 Feb 2012) 'Canada tops list of the most educated countries' available here: <http://bottomline.nbcnews.com/news/2012/02/03/10281909-canada-tops-list-of-the-most-educated-countries?lite>
- <sup>34</sup> A good example of university engagement in Southeast Asia is the newly launched Canada-ASEAN research partnership involving the University of British Columbia and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore. This initiative could serve as a valuable mechanism for engaging Burma. For more information see here <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/nts/article.asp?id=213>
- <sup>35</sup> One innovative suggestion is to promote development by partnering with Japan in order to use Tokyo's leverage in country. See Holliday, 2011

---

*The opinions expressed in Canada-Asia Agenda are those of the author and are published in the interests of promoting public awareness and debate. They are not necessarily the views of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. While every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of this information, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada cannot accept responsibility or liability for reliance by any person or organization on the use of this information. This Canada-Asia Agenda issue may be copied whole or in part and/or re-distributed with acknowledgement to "the Asia Pacific Foundation, Canada's leading independent resource on Asia and Canada-Asia issues". Archive issues of Canada Asia Agenda, and its predecessor, Asia Pacific Bulletin, may be found at <<http://www.asiapacific.ca/canada-asia-agenda>>. APF Canada is funded by the Government of Canada and by corporate and individual donors.*