

**Joint Statement on Elections from the Embassies of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Norway, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America**

The quality of the parliamentary election on 8 November will be a critical marker in Myanmar's transition to democracy. For that reason, we are supporting efforts to promote a credible, transparent, and inclusive election, underpinned by healthy competition that ensures freedom of expression and respect for human rights.

As the campaign in Myanmar officially begins, however, we, as international partners invested in the success of this country and these elections, are concerned about the prospect of religion being used as a tool of division and conflict during the campaign season.

Being democracies ourselves, we understand well the emotional dynamics of electoral politics. Given the history of division and civil conflict in Myanmar, we call on all stakeholders -- the Government, Union Election Commission, political parties, civic and religious leaders, and citizens alike -- to promote a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect, and equality under the law to ensure the elections are peaceful and inclusive. We call for all election rules and regulations to be applied fairly, consistently, and transparently without regard to ethnicity, religion, or political party. The international community remains committed to support Myanmar and its people during the current election season, and will continue to watch the process closely through the formation of a new government in 2016.