



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY YANGON

Joint Press Release

PARTNERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL VEGETABLE PRODUCTION AND MARKETS IN MYANMAR

Over the next two years 6000 smallholder farmers, with particular emphasis on female farmers, and local small and medium enterprises working in the vegetable sector will benefit from a partnership between East West Seed Company (EWS), Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and the Australian Government. This partnership aims to improve the knowledge and practices of female farmers in Kayin State in growing market vegetables and forming new market linkages for the sale of their products.

Through this partnership, farmers can access quality farm inputs which include training on agricultural knowledge and sustainable production techniques and practices, and quality seeds to increase farm productivity and generate more yield. The commitment builds on MEDA's expertise in women's economic empowerment to embed EWS's female lead farmer approach. The female farmer-centric extension model encourages women's voices, stronger participation in competitive business and income diversification.

Australian Ambassador to Myanmar, Nicholas Coppel, welcomed the partnership. "This project will deliver economic opportunities to help smallholder farmers improve their livelihoods. This shared value initiative will contribute towards the development of a more competitive environment for agribusinesses and greater income for farmers in Kayin state," Mr Coppel said.

This shared value partnership will contribute to the creation of a stronger local vegetable sector and new market opportunities for vegetable farmers and the private sector. Ultimately, this will help in the long-term peace and economic development of Kayin state.

"Knowledge transfer, quality inputs, and market development are inseparable: farmers need both access to know-how as well as quality agricultural inputs like seeds in order to catalyze and sustain the market for vegetables. This is the principle behind our Knowledge Transfer activities in Myanmar. We are excited to work with MEDA to enhance the skills and technical capabilities of Kayin farmers, and help create the conditions for a thriving vegetable sector," said Stuart Morris, Director of East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer.

"MEDA welcomes this partnership with the Australian Government and East-West Seeds and the opportunity to work together to open up new economic avenues for Myanmar businesses and farmers, particularly women smallholder farmers who are a vital backbone to the country's agricultural sector," said Kim Pityn, COO, MEDA.

The Australian Government has committed US\$250,000 to this project, which will be supported through the Australian aid program's Business Partnership Platform. Australia's contribution will be matched by US\$260,000 from East West Seed Company and Mennonite Economic Development Associates. Palladium International Pty Ltd assists the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in implementing the partnership agreement.

For more information, please contact Vanessa Hegarty, First Secretary, Australian Embassy at 012307410 or by email at vanessa.hegarty@dfat.gov.au.

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