Communiqué — Nay Pyi Taw, 29 July 2015

We, the participants in the first Myanmar Health Forum, Investing in health: the key to achieving a people-centred development, held in Nay Pyi Taw on 28-29 July 2015, representing the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, civil society organizations, private sector, international organizations, associations of professional health workers, academia and health experts agree to the following:

- As Myanmar aims to provide universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030, it needs a multi-sectoral approach through inclusive, effective collaboration and coordination, as well as the involvement from all branches and levels of the Government to attain the goals of improving the health of the population, alleviating the crippling health care costs for the poorest citizens, bolstering Myanmar’s economic and social developments and ensuring the sustainability of health programmes across the country.

- Myanmar’s health system needs urgent strengthening to meet the needs of its people and make UHC a pragmatic endeavour. The quality and efficiency of service delivery needs to be upgraded at all levels, in both the public and private sectors. Health service coverage needs to be expanded in an equitable way, starting with the basic package of essential services and reaching the poorest of the poor first. Public and private health facilities, as well as the corresponding human and medical resources, need to be made functional through substantial investment, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas with a focus on equitable and affordable quality services irrespective of the level or location of the health facility, if goals are to be achieved in 15 years.

- Health financing must be further strengthened to ensure the system is more efficient, transparent, sustainable and equitable. Myanmar needs to mobilize more public and external resources, ensure these funds are allocated fairly and equitably while providing maximum value for money, and align incentives with the performance of the health workforce.

- Strengthening the health system will also require better oversight, transparent management and governance. The Ministry of Health not only needs more capacity to suitably manage the health system, but also needs to decentralize some of its decision-making to the subnational level for a more responsive, nation-led, well-governed, proactive and needs-driven health system. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the health sector, other concerned departments/sectors should also play their proactive roles in furthering Myanmar’s economic and social development to facilitate the improvement of the health and well-being of its people.

- The contributions of stakeholders, development actors and civil society, including international best practices as well as the lessons learned, need to be consolidated systematically for working toward the achievement of UHC. This requires a national health policy to clearly define priorities and strategies that are comprehensive and consistent across the functional areas and programmes throughout all levels of the Government. Towards this goal, the Ministry of Health supports the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Health Policy to enable policy dialogue among stakeholders.

Progress has been made in the health reforms and efforts initiated by the Government and other health development partners. Successfully attaining the objectives of the Myanmar Health Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals requires yet still a substantial amount of work, overcoming challenges and making use of opportunities ahead. In reference to the above, we, the participants of the first Myanmar Health Forum, trust that all health actors will strive to keep Myanmar’s health agenda on track to achieve UHC, that progress will be monitored closely and be publicized by the Ministry of Health and key players working in the sector, and that health investments made will bolster the prosperity and well-being of the people of Myanmar, both for the present and future generations.