Excellency, Honourable members of Parliament, dear FES colleagues,

First of all I would like to thank the Parliament of the union of Myanmar for convening us today, and we are especially grateful to the honorable chairman U Maung Maung Swe and to the FES. We would also like to thank Michael Cichon for his presence for this important event.

There is an increasing international recognition of the need for countries at all stages of development to extend social protection with a twofold objective of fulfilling a human right and building the basis for an inclusive growth. In this context, many emerging and developing countries started investing heavily in social protection over the past decades, especially in Asia. ASEAN countries declared their commitment to the extension of social protection in 2013 and are currently developing an action plan for the region on this very issue.

In 2012, President U Thein Sein affirmed the need to extend social protection in Myanmar through the development of a national social protection strategy. The International Labour Organization, along with FES and a number of development partners, supported the interministerial technical support group under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in this process which will be soon completed.

Countries that have been successful in implementing comprehensive social protection systems around the world made an effort of coordination an involvement of all stakeholders and embedded their policies in the legal framework. In this context, the ILO in Myanmar felt it was timely to engage with Parliamentarians on this important topic, and we stand ready to support further our Myanmar constituents to extend social protection. So thank you again for your participation and I wish you a fruitful workshop.