

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE DISSEMINATION**

First Ever ‘Microfinance Success Asia’ Event to be Held in Myanmar

Industry-leading event to be held in Yangon will gather regional and local stakeholders for discussion and networking around the rapidly evolving microfinance industry

Yangon, Myanmar, 11 July 2019 – As the financial inclusion movement in Asia’s developing economies gains momentum, senior microfinance professionals in the region will converge at the first Microfinance Success Asia event to be held at PARKROYAL Yangon from 23 to 24 July 2019. Organized by Singapore-based HBZ Events in consultation with Myanmar Microfinance Association (MMFA), Microfinance Success Asia is the only event in the region focusing on microfinance in emerging Asian economies, offering delegates a world-class conference, a market-leading exhibition and precise networking opportunities.

More than 150 attendees will attend the event, including Myanmar government officials and representatives from the inclusive finance arena; specifically, microfinance institutions (MFIs), SME and entrepreneurship promotion agencies, community and commercial banks, farmers associations, technology companies, consultancy companies, financial cooperative experts, development partners as well as policy makers and regulators.

Managing Sustainability & Impact in a Rapidly Evolving Microfinance Sector

Under the theme of ‘Managing Sustainability & Impact in a Rapidly Evolving Microfinance Sector’, Microfinance Success Asia 2019 will provide a forum for stakeholders to tackle issues and share successes that are at the forefront of the industry. It will also provide opportunities for participants to engage in professional exchanges and to network with players from all sectors of the industry. Herman Zaidin, Managing Director of HBZ Events, said, “This is a very timely event for Myanmar as well as other emerging Asian countries where microfinance plays a critical role in economic empowerment. We invite all stakeholders to join us in this cornerstone event which will be attended by delegates from over 15 countries.”

Key topics which will be discussed at the event include microfinance industry regulations, best practices for MFIs to enjoy sustainable growth, designing microfinance products that are localised to fit culture and social norms, digitization of processes in microfinance and opportunities in the Myanmar microfinance sector. Some of the following industry leaders that will speak at the event include:

Mr. Gonzalo González A., CEO, DAWN Microfinance, and Chair of MMFA ICT Working Group said: “The timing could not be better for this event, when Myanmar is implementing important reforms needed by the country to develop its full potential, and when the whole financial sector, including commercial banks as well as microfinance institutions, is looking for improvements in target segments, products and channels - improvements driven by innovations through the use of technology and healthy, creative partnerships with existing and new local and

international actors. We see this event as an excellent opportunity to discuss and work on those innovations and partnerships.”

Daw Phyu Yamin Myat, Managing Director, Myanmar Development Partners Co., Ltd. and a member of MMFA’s leadership team said: “It is our pleasure and honour to be a strategic partner for this event. We believe it will provide ‘the’ platform for us to learn first-hand microfinance practices and expert knowledge from our Asian colleagues as well as to share our insights with them. Being an active and effective advocate for better microfinance policies in Myanmar, MDP Microfinance together with the MMFA are confident that the best practices to be shared at this conference will be evaluated as part of our continuous policy advocacies, making Myanmar Microfinance stronger and healthier, serving our poor further and better.”

Said Syed Mamnun Quader, Group Managing Director, Southtech which is the Premier Sponsor for Microfinance Success Asia: "Since 1996, Southtech has been helping MFIs and development banks improve the lives of millions of people by giving them the right tools, technology, advice and training, we have enabled them to be highly efficient and cost effective. More than a million people have already benefited from our solutions in Myanmar alone and having established our full-fledged office in Yangon for the past five years, we are well placed to help MFIs in Myanmar grow and prosper their members. We encourage stakeholders to participate in this event to explore ways to grow their business in Southeast Asia."

Cameron Goldie-Scot, CEO, Musoni, added: “We’re excited to be part of the first Microfinance Success Asia conference in Yangon. In Myanmar there is now a huge opportunity for MFIs to leverage technology, improve efficiency and expand outreach, so this event is very timely. We look forward to discussing the different ways that MFIs can ‘go digital’, and will share our case studies that highlight how Musoni, with our local partner ThitsaWorks, currently support some of the largest MFIs in the country.”

Added **Alison Grün, Regional Director Asia Pacific at Software Group**, the Associate Sponsor of the event: “Microfinance is thriving in Myanmar and offering MSMEs means to leverage from, grow their potential and pave forward the economy. We are currently working with Fullerton Finance Myanmar and Early Dawn Microfinance and seek to help more MFIs address the evolving needs of the customer that are convenience centric. Our range of solutions, built on a digital banking platform, enable a quick, digital service at the customer’s doorstep. They help financial services providers increase their outreach and improve efficiency. We look forward to participating in Microfinance Success Asia 2019 and supporting more organisations in their digital transformation journey.”

Only available to registered delegates and partners, Microfinance Success Asia 2019 will be the first event in the region to have its own dedicated app for both Android and Apple platforms, in line with the dynamic and fast-evolving microfinance sector that has identified digitization as one of its core tenets. Participants can expect a more engaging experience through a host of seamless

features such as live polls, Q&As, digital agenda and guide, gamification opportunities for sponsors and exhibitors. The networking experience will be seamless and convenient through the app contacts features leading to ease of forming new relationships.

Microfinance in Myanmar

1.7 billion people are unbanked, globally. In Asia, less than 27% of adults and only 33% of enterprises have an account or a line of credit or loan from a financial institution respectively.¹ The World Bank Global Findex reported that Myanmar has only 26% of the population banked.²

With 8.8 million of the population in Myanmar owning a business, 56% of these enterprises do not have a savings/checking account and only 7% of small enterprises have a line of credit. According to a UNCDF study, 52% of businesses identified access to finance as an obstacle.³ The low trust and penetration of traditional banking methods in Myanmar is particularly chronic in the low income and rural areas where the majority of the population still resides.

Recently, Myanmar has benefited from leapfrogging technology cycles and is widely recognized as one of the last true frontier economies. While the country's microfinance scene is nascent, it is rapidly developing and the market presents tremendous opportunities for microfinance to be an enabler of sustainable poverty reduction, wealth creation and economic progress.

To attend Microfinance Success Asia, visit <https://microfinancesuccess.com/register-now>. To enquire on becoming a sponsor or exhibitor, please contact info@hbzevents.com.

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About Microfinance Success Asia 2019

Microfinance Success Asia is the only event in the region focusing on microfinance in emerging Asia. The event serves as a platform to bring together and coordinate a large number of actors from the microfinance sector and other stakeholders in the region. Microfinance Success Asia 2019 is proudly owned and produced by HBZ Events Pte. Ltd. With a track record of success, HBZ Events has solid experience in successfully organizing more than 100 B2B conferences in more than 15 countries for over 10 years.

About Myanmar Microfinance Association (MMFA)

Myanmar Microfinance Association (MMFA) obtained its permanent license as a non-profit association from the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2017. It is the national association gathering microfinance practitioners (registered microfinance institutions including banks, NGOs and private

¹ Meghana Ayyagari & Thorsten Beck, 23 December 2015, [Financial Inclusion in Asia: An Overview](#)

² Global Findex – World Bank Group, 2018, [Myanmar](#)

³ UNCDF, 4 April 2018, [Infographic Country Brief: Myanmar](#)

companies) and other relevant stakeholders working to improve access to appropriate and affordable financial services for the poor and unbanked people in Myanmar.

MMFA organizes members meetings, working group meetings, and partners with local and international development partners for capacity building training, seminar and conferences and advocates for the development of MFIs and the Microfinance Sector as a whole.

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