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Special Economic Consultant to the State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Sean Turnell has been a researcher of Myanmar’s economy for over twenty years. Concurrently a Professor at Macquarie University in Sydney, and formerly at the Reserve Bank of Australia, Sean has written widely on Myanmar’s economy. In addition to the Myanmar government, he has been an advisor on Myanmar to the US State Department and other agencies, to USAID, to Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to the World Bank, and many other international bodies. In 2009 Sean’s book on the history of the financial sector in Myanmar, Fiery Dragons: Banks, Moneylenders and Microfinance in Burma was published. He has been a visiting fellow at the University of Cambridge, Cornell University, Johns Hopkins, and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. In addition to his advisory role, Sean is the Director of Research at the Myanmar Development Institute (MDI) in Naypyitaw.

Stocktake of Myanmar’s Economy and Reforms

Abstract
In 2016 the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi came into government in Myanmar. Elected on the promise of a new era of freedom and hope, the NLD’s economic platform was no less ambitious in its pledge of dramatic reform. Such reform was desperately needed in a country for fifty years under the sway of erratic military rule and socialist dogma, but from the outset the task was not assumed to be an easy one. Thus it has proved. In this presentation I will present the NLD Government’s reform progress, the obstacles to it, and the current state of Myanmar’s economy. The steep challenges the Government faces will be squarely addressed, as will the reasons for new-found hope in Myanmar’s reform trajectory.