

Dear Mark

With reference to your email to our Chairperson, Dr Robert Kilpatrick, as follows,

Invitation to make a submission to the inquiry into the efficacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade due diligence framework

Terms of reference

Efficacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade due diligence framework, with particular reference to:

- a) whether the due diligence framework used by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is fit-for-purpose in determining the scope of stakeholders who can be engaged by the Government of Australia for the provision of aid to the citizens of Myanmar; and
- b) any related matters.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our interest in this process with mostly reference to your paragraph (b) any related matters. We are reluctant to put in writing anything about paragraph a) but happy to discuss on the phone. We think that any due diligence framework, given that DFAT operates government to government and the Myanmar junta has repeatedly proven to be treacherous and deadly, needs to be loose enough to cope with those organisations forced to operate under the radar.

However, things will change. Accordingly we would like to express our interest in DFAT's ongoing work in assistance to the people of Myanmar, and would request that, if possible, you keep us informed of any developments that may arise from the inquiry.

Sustain Projects Myanmar Inc is a small Australian charity that to date does not utilise the financial or other services offered by DFAT per se. With natural growth and the current destructive activities of the current Junta ruling Myanmar it may be inevitable that major rebuilding of services to the peoples of Myanmar. If and when a higher level of normality returns, we may be very well placed to assist with this rebuilding and will need their assistance more at that point.

SPM has for many years been working with local partners particularly in the medical training sector primarily in the maternal care sector but also in the general sector as well. All training is carried out by suitably qualified professionals to international best practice standards. We also have ongoing projects working with underprivileged families in inner city locations. We do our best to work in with government agencies and certification processes so training and service can be more widely recognised.

Our Board of Directors has a wealth of experience gained both on the ground and in academia, we are endeavouring to govern to the highest level. We strive to do all we do to the highest modern standards and are accredited members of ACFID and we do our utmost to instil these standards on our working partners.

While our work is, and will be, ongoing, we must consider the future. We are at a stage of growth and if we are to approach the Government for financial involvement that will necessitate expansion of our administrative services. Thus our interest in the inquiry. However, we do have concerns regarding security for our staff and Partners which we are sure can understand. We know there is a vast amount of work being done on the ground by numerous small but highly effective and informed organisations after many years of having to work quietly (outside of the more obvious channels) in this region

Our question...Can the senate inquiry encourage a way we, and others like us, can work with DFAT to maximise the effectiveness of government funding and keep documentation to both realistic levels of volume while maintaining high security for on the ground in Myanmar staff, all within the highest ethical standards.

We welcome this opportunity to be involved with you on in the inquiry into the Myanmar situation and ask that while you look the effectiveness of checks and measures for the Aid and Development arena perhaps you may also consider the smaller but very effective entities not necessarily working within government frameworks but needing government backing and protection where possible.

Awaiting your comments with interest.

With kind regards

Rev. Dr. Robert Kilpatrick