

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Embargo 09.00 Myanmar time Monday 3 December 2018**

**Businesses need to do more to include persons with disabilities,  
as customers and as employees**

Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) and Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR Japan) today launched “Employing Persons with Disabilities – A Handbook for Employers in Myanmar”. This handbook aims to give practical advice for employers in Myanmar on how to create accessible employment opportunities and increase recruitment and job retention for persons with disabilities.

The handbook was launched in Naypyidaw at the ceremony to mark the 2018 International Day of Persons with Disabilities whose theme this year is ‘Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’. The ceremony was addressed by from Vice-President-2 U Henry Van Thio, the Chairman of the National Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities who also provided a foreword for the Handbook.

Vicky Bowman, Director of Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business said *“It is clear that persons with disabilities - who according to the 2014 census total 2.3 million people in Myanmar - are not able to participate equally in the workplace. This is not only bad for them; it’s a lost opportunity for business. If companies embrace disability inclusion, they gain access to a new talent pool and more customers”*.

*“A recent report by Accenture out of the USA [“Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage”](#) shows that the most disability-inclusive companies have 28 percent higher revenue; double the net income; 30 percent higher economic profit margins; and twice the likelihood of financially outperforming their peers over a period of four years. This reinforces the business case for employing people with disabilities: it means more motivated staff, greater employee retention, a wider pool of talent – and customers– and a stronger brand for the companies.*

*“MCRB’s experience is that businesses in Myanmar want to become more ‘disability confident’. But many don’t know where to start, which is why this Handbook focusses on practical advice. It addresses common questions such as how to successfully recruit and retain persons with disabilities, what necessary adjustments and modifications may be needed (‘reasonable accommodations’), appropriate vocabulary, and where to get further advice”*.

Yoshio NAKAGAWA, Yangon Office Representative of Association for Aid and Relief Japan, said *“Persons with disabilities need to build their confidence and skills. AAR Japan has been running a Vocational Training Center (VTC) for Persons with Disabilities for 18 years, since 2000 to help with this.”*

*“When companies and other organisations create a culture of inclusion, and champion equal access, this is of mutual benefit. We would like to encourage all employers to embrace diversity and the different types of talent pool. We hope they will take active steps to start employing persons with disabilities, or increase the number they employ.”*

The handbook, which also has an introduction from Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, the Vice-Chairman-1 of the National Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, covers demographic information about person with disabilities in Myanmar; examples of discrimination against person with disabilities in the workplace; the Myanmar legal framework protecting person with disabilities and promoting their participation in society; terms, definitions, and communication about disability; success stories from person with disabilities; tips and advice for employers; and contacts and sources of more information to build links between disability organisations and potential employers.

## **Background**

1. “Employing Persons with Disabilities – A Handbook for Employers in Myanmar” is available in Myanmar and English languages, including online at MCRB’s website. It is a joint initiative by the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) and the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan), and part of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Partnership Program in Myanmar with the support of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities.
2. Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) was set up in 2013 by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) and the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) with funding from several donor governments. Based in Yangon, it provides a trusted and impartial platform for the creation of knowledge, capacity, and dialogue amongst businesses, civil society organisations and governments to encourage responsible business conduct throughout Myanmar. It is in a strategic partnership with business disability international (bdi). See [www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org](http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org) for more information.
3. Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) is an international NGO that reaches out to the most vulnerable populations around the globe, guided by the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Founded in 1979, it has been conducting activities for Emergency Response, Disability Assistance, Mine Action, Health and Awareness Raising. In Yangon, AAR Japan has been running a Vocational Training Center (VTC) for Persons with Disabilities since 2000 under the cooperation of Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The VTC has provided training in haircut/beauty, tailoring and computer, and supported employment of more than 1,700 persons with disabilities across Myanmar.
4. The Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) and the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) will organise a second multi-stakeholder workshop with the aim of promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in February 2019. A previous workshop was held in November 2017.

## **For further information, please contact:**

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