



PRESS RELEASE

MCM supports Myanmar citizens to #BeCyberSmart

- COVID-19 lockdown heightening cybersecurity risks such as fraud, identity and data theft, online human trafficking, and misinformation; cybercriminals targeting social media, video and digital payments
- Ministry of Transport and Communications- ITCSD, Myanmar Computer Federation and US ICT Council for Myanmar organize 2020 Myanmar Cybersecurity Month, in partnership with Wave Money and corporate sponsors Google, Facebook and VISA

12 October 2020, Yangon, Myanmar – Cybersecurity experts are joining hands to support and protect Myanmar citizens against cybersecurity risks and threats, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Speaking at a virtual media briefing to announce the 2020 Myanmar Cybersecurity Month (MCM), U Ye Naing Moe, Director of the Information Technology and Cyber Security Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MOTC-ITCSD), highlighted the importance of being cyber aware and cyber smart as millions of Myanmar citizens leverage technology for social connection, information, entertainment and e-commerce.

“The stay-at-home measures are making us more digitally dependent. Cybersecurity education is especially important because criminals like to prey on people’s fears, anxiety and uncertainties during a crisis like this pandemic. Cyber attackers may use email or text messages to commit fraud or steal identities and data like passwords and other confidential information. They may use social media to deceive, defame and disinform people. Businesses and government, and those working or schooling from home using video conferencing tools, are also more vulnerable now more than ever. We have to work closely to secure our online activities, our devices and networks; and keep our families safe,” U Ye Naing Moe said.

According to Police Colonel Nyunt Wai, Head of the Cybercrime Unit, Myanmar Police Force, cybersecurity cases have risen sharply in the last five years due to the lack of cybersecurity knowledge. *“In 2015, there were about 20 cases. In 2016, over 220 cases; in 2017 and 2018 more than 320 cases; and in 2017, more than 370 cases. For 2020, there are already 550 cases to date.”*

“There are 23 million Facebook users in our country today, many of whom do not even know the password of their account. There are also cases of human trafficking online; while some people use fake websites or account to scam people to transfer money. It is the responsibility of every digital device user to understand cybersecurity,” Police Colonel Nyunt Wai added.

As of 2019, internet penetration in Myanmar was at 40%. During the first wave of the pandemic in April, telecommunications companies reported a 25% increase in internet usage. Video conferencing, multimedia content streaming, e-commerce, mobile money and digital payments have also surged dramatically. Wave Money, Myanmar's leading mobile financial services provider, reported mobile wallet users and registrations increased in triple digits in the first half of 2020, with users growing by 401% and registrations by 426%, year-on-year over the same period.

"Wave Money is delighted to support Myanmar Cyber Security Month as the Official Partner to help educate consumers and organizations on cybersecurity and to create a safe, secure and thriving environment for mobile money and digital payments. With our vision to "Create a fairer future for Myanmar" through financial inclusion, we believe that digital literacy is critical and remains as one of our top priorities," said Brad Jones, CEO of Wave Money.

MCM 2020 Platinum Sponsor Google states, *"Security is core to everything we do at Google. We invest significantly in teams and technologies that offer the highest level of data protection and user privacy. Globally, we are also an active partner in raising awareness of cybersecurity on all fronts. We are delighted to support MCM 2020 and look forward to sharing tools and tips that can help citizens and businesses be cyber smart."*

MCM is an annual program that aims to educate and raise awareness of cybersecurity and how to be safe online. It happens every October in conjunction with other international month-long cyber security awareness campaigns around the world. Now on its second year, MCM goes by the theme *'Do Your Part' #BeCyberSmart'*. MCM 2020 is organized by the MOTC-ITCSD, Myanmar Computer Federation and US ICT Council for Myanmar; with support from the Ministry of Commerce, Central Bank of Myanmar, UMFCCI's Digital Economy Association; Official Partner Wave Money; Platinum Sponsor Google, and Gold Sponsors Facebook and VISA.

"Together with US ICT Council member companies, ITCSD and MCF, and our government and corporate partners, we are delighted to coordinate a series of webinars designed to build a culture of cyber resilience in these extraordinary times. We are honored to have such enthusiastic response and contribution from our partners toward the shared goal of raising cyberawareness in Myanmar," said Gretchen Kunze, Executive Director, US ICT Council for Myanmar.

"MCF along with its sub-organizations, Myanmar Computer Professionals Association and Myanmar Computer Association, have members throughout the country who are very willing to share their cybersecurity expertise to our local communities. Awareness is especially crucial in times like these for children, parents, workers and employers alike," said U Ye Yint Win, Vice-Chair of Myanmar Computer Federation.

Apart from on-going education via MCM's Facebook page MCM partners are organizing webinars and virtual meetings on topics such as Cybersecurity and Privacy, Safeguarding Digital Payments, Social Engineering and Misinformation, Cybersecurity for E-commerce, Cybersecurity for CEOs and Directors, and Creating a National Cybersecurity Framework, among others.

Media Contact:

Pyae Phyo Aung, RICE

09792587843

pyaephyo.aung@ricecomms.com