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AGTA Releases Report on Burma Trip

Dallas, Texas - December 22, 2016 -- In October, a delegation representing the United States gemstone and jewelry industry traveled to Myanmar (Burma) to discuss bilateral trade between the two countries with the intent of re-establishing direct lines of commerce between the countries.

The delegation was led by American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) President Jeffrey Bilgore, and included AGTA CEO Douglas Hucker, Jewelers of America (JA) President & CEO David J. Bonaparte, and Gemological Institute of America's (GIA) Dr. Jim Shigley. Also joining the delegation were Timothy Haake of Haake/Fetzer, senior counsel to JA, and the Inle Advisory Group, a Myanmar-centric business consulting firm.

The delegation met with representatives of the Myanmar government, including members of Parliament and Ministerial delegations, members of Myanmar gemstone industry and local representatives of civil society. The delegation also traveled to Mogok, the famed center of gemstone mining and trade, visiting numerous mines, meeting with various groups of miners and dealers.

"With the sanctions on the importation of jade and ruby removed," said Hucker, "it was very important for the delegation to get a first-hand look at conditions on the ground and to provide whatever guidance we could to the Myanmar government, and the members of the gemstone trade in establishing a more lasting and responsible gemstone industry."

"Our goal in traveling to Burma was, first and foremost, to demonstrate that the gem sector in Myanmar is as worthy as any in the world, and that responsible commerce can only help all of us improve and make democracy stronger," said Bilgore.

The findings of the delegation have been incorporated into a comprehensive authoritative report that is available at: <http://agta.org/info/docs/burmawhitepaper2016.pdf>

The American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) is a not-for-profit Association serving the natural colored gemstone and cultured pearl industry since 1981. The AGTA serves the industry as "The Authority in Color" and has its headquarter office in Dallas, Texas. Visit www.agta.org for more information.

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