

Statement on consultation organized by border-based civil society organisations with the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT)

November 24, 2014

On November 22-23, 2014, 42 representatives of 25 border-based civil society organisations (CSOs), working on education, health, media, migrant workers' rights, refugees, the environment, women's issues and human rights, held a consultation meeting with the NCCT. This was the first such meeting with the NCCT held formally by a broad grouping of border-based CSOs.

During the consultation, we were able to discuss various issues with the NCCT, including women's and civil society participation in the peace process, the role of media in the peace process, mega-development and foreign investment, and human rights and justice.

The groups urged the NCCT to involve more women and civil society in the peace process, and made the following recommendations for the NCCT to discuss with the government: to have independent human rights and ceasefire monitoring during the peace process; to stop natural resource extraction and mega-development projects until there is genuine political reform; to address the issue of increased drug cultivation and trafficking, and take action against influential drug dealers; to raise the issue of reparation for human rights victims as a step towards transitional justice; and to ensure that any refugee or IDP return or resettlement is carried out according to international standards.

The NCCT clarified that their mandate was limited as a working group for negotiation on behalf of the ethnic armed groups. They explained that there were differences between the Burmese government's Union Peace Work Committee and the Tatmadaw; and that the Tatmadaw's uncompromising stance had caused deadlock over the "single text" of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement during the sixth meeting on this issue.

The NCCT welcomed the recommendations made by the civil society organisations. They said they hoped there could be further cooperation and support from civil society on various issues related to the peace process, and further discussion of the recommendations.

This first formal meeting between the NCCT and a broad range of border-based civil society organisations involved frank discussion and sharing of opinions.

We hope that this meeting will pave the way for further such meetings, with broader discussion and information sharing between the NCCT and border-based civil society groups.

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