

For Immediate Release

26 July, 2016

### **Burma Border-based Civil Society Organizations Send an Open Letter to State Counselor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**

On 25 July, 2016, 40 civil society organizations (CSOs) based on Burma's borders sent an open letter to the State Counselor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to request the state to restore their original citizenship and allow them to take part in the transition to a democratic federal union, and the nation-building process in Burma.

59 representatives from 33 CSOs based along Burma's borders held a consultation meeting from 7 to 9 May, 2016, regarding their role and participation in the current transition and political reforms in Burma. Following the meeting, the border-based CSOs decided to send an open letter, requesting to participate in the transition process of the National League for Democracy-led Government.

"We, border-based CSOs, wish to take part in various roles during the transition and utilize our skills that we have been learning for many years to rebuild a better country," said Nai Kasauh Mon, Director of Human Rights Foundation of Monland.

"The border-based CSOs have worked on campaigns to secure support from the United Nations and the international community such as to establish a democratic federal union and to free political prisoners. We have also been working for internally displaced persons, refugees and migrant workers' education, health, and capacity building along the border. In addition, we have continually conducted consultation meetings to build trust between democracy activists and ethnic groups and for our country's peace and development," he continued.

Thwel Zin Toe, a Steering Committee member of the Women's League of Burma stated, "We believe that, with the experience and skills gained on the border, we can support and help strengthen the process of national reconciliation, peace building and the democratic transition. Therefore, we would like the Government to consider restoring our original citizenship status and set necessary guidelines for this as soon as possible. We also request the Government to disclose names of activists who remain on the blacklist. We wish to take part eagerly in the nation-building process during the time Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is leading the country."

The signatory border-based CSOs who sent the open letter to the State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are generations of democracy activists, ethnic, youth and women's groups who have crossed the border since 1995 due to political oppression. They have been based in the border liberated areas and working for human rights, democracy, peace and a federal union in Burma.

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