



# What are Women Saying about the Myanmar Peace Process ?

May 17, 2019

"The role of CSOs in the Myanmar peace process" research findings report launching ceremony and panel discussions were held at the Sedona Hotel in Yangon on May 16, 2019.

This one-year research project was initiated and implemented by EMReF in collaboration with the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (IPTI) and funded by Joint Peace Fund (JPF).

The launch event was followed by two panel discussions: "The Role of CSOs in 21st Century Panglong Peace Process and Effectiveness" and "The Role of CSOs in Building a Culture of Peace in Myanmar". The voices of women in the panel discussion and their views regarding the current peace process-making process are described below.

## I am feeling farther from peace

"When the current situation of the peace process making process does not work and we didn't receive the satisfactory result in every stage of the peace making process, gradually I feel turned away from peace."

## Government is the main official which is responsible for the fading Peace process

"Government who has been in the decision making role is the main body not to fade away peace building

process. They should have followed the strategy as they set up. There is nothing more important than peace in our country."

## Prepare the best way forward for our country

"The NCA (National Ceasefire Agreement) has been reviewed and discussed. Not only the NCA but also the 2008 Constitution needs to be amended. If this is the best way for our country, we shouldn't burden to amend."



**Daw Doi Bu**

Political Party Representation of Land, Natural Resources, Environmental Working Group (UPDJC)

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**Ma Thida- sanchaung**

Author

### We want a collective dream

“To have the better practices in the peace process, I want to encourage all to have a collective dream which is based on the consent of all stakeholders. We need this collective dream to be dream by all, and I still want to continue.”



**Ma Thinzar Shunlei Yi**

Youth Advocate and Activist,  
 Advocacy Coordinator Action  
 Committee for Democracy  
 Development (ACDD)

### There is no mechanism to listen our youths' voices

“ Our “stop war” movements has been evolving for 7 years, as it began in 2012. We adopted different strategies. As youth groups, there have been many sectors we have been involved in. We urged various kinds of ways to implement a youth private channel in the 21st century Panglong peace process. There is no mechanism to listen our youths' voices. We feel our future is being neglected as our voices are ignored.”



**Daw Thandar Oo**

Director, Women and  
 Peace Action Network (WAPAN)

### Let's think of the peace process as an opportunity rather than challenge

“Let's think of the peace process as an opportunity rather than a challenge on this current situation, so that each group involve in the peace process will have a chance to evaluate by themselves. Then they are more likely to adopt better policies. We also have such kind of plan. Then CSOs can proceed and lead the peace process whether 21st century Panglong conference is going on or stops.”



**Daw Nang Phyu Phyu Linn**

National Advisor  
 Alliance for Gender Inclusion in  
 Peace Process (AGIPP)

### We can't imagine the future of the peace process

“ We don't imagine the future of the peace process. I want to ask, though I am afraid to ask, whether the cease-fire period would be extended or not. And how long would it be extended? I also want to know whether the structures, names and frameworks of the Union Peace Building Conferences would be changed or not. As the CSOs are not in decision making roles, we cannot say anything.”

### Gaps in the Network

“ We have the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs in which the Women's peace and security technical working group is one of the components. This TWG was organized by the government officials and civil society to support women's peace and security issue in Myanmar's Peace Process. But they are not connected with the Union Peace Congress. The participants are connected but they are not included in the official mechanism.

### Civil Society organizations want to be involved in the Peace Process officially

“ In fact, civil societies who represent the people can bring people's voices and can advise to formulate better policies. But we didn't have an official space to give advice. It would be better if the role of CSOs, their involvement and their capacities and capabilities in peace building are well recognized. The civil societies who represent the citizens want to be officially involved in the peace process because this is the important case of the country.”

# Parliament is urged to enhance rural women's livelihoods

May 4, 2019

The participants urged the government to enhance rural women's livelihoods in Myanmar, at the Amyotha Hluttaw on May 3, 2019.

If rural women's livelihoods are not enhanced, the rural would be lost. Therefore, member of Parliament Dr. Tin Tin Win submitted in Amyotha Hluttaw, urging the government to develop with the relevant departments for the enhancement of rural women's livelihoods, including the following: to engage with the government's economic system, to reduce economic migration to other countries, to develop domestic businesses, to provide loans for investment, to encourage value-added good manufacturing, and to develop and sustain markets for them.

Currently, the rural areas are facing labor shortage problems because of migration. The rural women are also migrating to urban areas or other foreign countries to find jobs – sometimes which results in human trafficking, extending slum areas in urban areas, and an increased number of sexual violence cases. Thus, Daw Tin Tin Win pointed out that women's security has been threatened.

"Rural women will disappear if we discard rural women this way," she said.

The members of the women and children committee at the , Amyotha Hluttaw identified women's issues in their constituency and this proposal based on their findings. According to their findings, 70% of Myanmar's population includes rural women, 50% of the total population are women, and to get fair income without working in urban areas, and to work towards enhancing export in national economic, so this proposal was submitted to change women's lives.

The percentage of women in the formal labor force is 50.5 % of Myanmar's Population, but only 20% of women are provided with job opportunities. Daw Nwe Nwe Aung, Amyotha Hluttaw MP from Mon constituency, recommended this proposal to Parliament. Then she added that the challenges facing rural women are receiving limited support in capital provision, and limited knowledge regarding health and education.



Daw Nwe Nwe Aung said that women's issues should not be neglected, and the government needs to create and implement policies for enhancing women's livelihoods by supporting necessary tools, technology and capital.

U Aung Kyi Nyut, MP of the NLD party rejected that proposal. He explained that at present, the recent government's program for women's involvement in economics has been transparent. Then he stated that different government departments are also implementing their own projects to develop and sustain markets.

"Currently, we hear that it is a very bad situation to neglect rural women. I am not thinking about that, because the government doesn't neglect the rural development", he said.

Parliament did stand majority voting system if it should discuss that proposal. If recommended person are about 40, accept that proposal but if not, didn't accept. The recommended person are above 100 person, so they accepted the proposal.

Source: *The Irrawaddy Burmese Edition*

May 1, 2019

As Myanmar has strived to become a democratic country, many young women activists have emerged. Some, like Ma Thinzar Shunlei Yi, stand up for their beliefs and express their desires to those in power without fear, despite the threat of arrest.

For her work in media and communications, Ma Thinzar Shunlei Yi has been named the winner of the Women of the Future Award for Southeast Asia. She was chosen from among six finalists from Myanmar, Cambodia, Singapore and Malaysia, who included two company directors, an insurance executive, a marketing manager, and an actress.

The award ceremony for the Southeast Asia region was held for the second time in Singapore. The awards were started 13 years ago in Britain to find and recognise inspirational women across diverse sectors.

“This award is crucial for a grassroots young woman activist like me, as it highlights the importance of my work with youth, farmers, workers, former political prisoners, villagers and other activists in Myanmar,” she said.

“Our voices will be heard internationally and recognised worldwide. I’m thrilled to be named as winner alongside other talents in Southeast Asia. It has boosted my confidence and hope for the future and for our region,” she said.

### Inspiring the next generation

She doesn’t have any duties with regard to the award, and it has no strings attached. It gives her a chance to display her work to the wider region and world and to inspire the next generation of women leaders.

“I feel encouraged that there are people supporting my work and backing me for what I believe,” she said.

Besides media and communications, the award recognises outstanding achievements by women in the region in business, entrepreneurship, the professions, social and community work, arts and culture, science, technology, mentoring, and infrastructure and

# Leading the way in male-dominated Myanmar society



.....  
**I’m sure that the long-hidden root cause of many of our country’s problems has led to bad policy implementation and trapped us in poverty. It is not OK. We need to break this cycle.**  
.....

construction.

“I exchanged views on the political situation and issues in Southeast Asia with other young women. We women are treated as the second sex and face cultural barriers in most of our countries. We have broken the glass ceiling in our respective fields, but we are facing a backlash, so we have to be stronger to empower the next generation,” she said.

About the current situation in Myanmar, she said the first civilian government is struggling to make an impact amid different challenges, including lack of capacity and political will.

“However, I’m still hopeful. As long as we have a next generation – maybe a small group of thoughtful people who care about freedom of expression and democratic rights – our future will be in good hands. We just have to keep trying to be better,” she said.

As a young woman, she was not exceptional. She was in a vulnerable situation, as people could easily exploit her, and harass her mentally or physically. When she became an activist, she again felt like a minority who was threatened and oppressed.

Political activism is not encouraged in this country. People are traumatised about politics, as activists can be arbitrarily arrested or jailed for political views and criticism.

### Overcoming challenges

“There are restrictions and censorship I put on myself, as this field is new to me. Also, there are limitations because of my family, education, environment, society and culture. When I express my opinions, people start judging, criticising and even asking my parents to stop me,” she said. She overcame these challenges just by being persistent.

She already has a career goal in mind. “I want to pursue a federal union with social democratic values, where diverse communities are fairly treated and human rights are a national priority,” she said.

Despite all the obstacles that activists like herself face – as a young person, a woman, an ethnic or religious minority, as a disabled person, or as an LGBT – we just have to carry on, she said.

“The young generation must never underestimate themselves about what they can achieve and making an impact for change. If we know our rights and responsibilities, and we are accountable for what we do, we will be ready to claim our own space, so we mustn’t lose heart. We are experiencing dark days, but the light will be brighter in our eyes when we all work to see it,” she said.

She urged women to break the cycle of a male-dominated society. Although 51 percent of Myanmar’s population is female, only six of its 137 cabinet ministers are women, only 13pc of its MPs are women, only



Photo: Thinzar Shunlei Yi Facebook

one of the 330 township administrators is a woman, and only 87 of the 16,743 ward/village tract administrators are women.

“A woman’s place is not in the house, but in the houses of Parliament. It is not OK when half of us are held back

from representation. I’m sure that the long-hidden root cause of many of our country’s problems has led to bad policy implementation and trapped us in poverty. It is not OK. We need to break this cycle.”

**Source: Myanmar Times**

## World Famous Quotes



Photo: blog.ted.com

“In Politics,  
If you want anything said,  
ask a man.  
If you want anything  
done, ask a woman.”

..... Margaret Thatcher

# Gender discriminations and Post-Nargis Social Impact Monitoring

May 16, 2019

More women died than men in Cyclone Nargis and the post-disaster response period was bias in men's favor, as reported in the Post-Nargis Social Impact Monitoring (SIM).

This research was launched in May-2019 (11 years after Cyclone Nargis). This SIM is a ten years long longitudinal study exploring the impact of Cyclone Nargis, aid efforts and long term impacts of cyclone affected areas. According to research findings, female deaths were more than male deaths, accounting for about 61 percent of the deaths the night that the storm hit Myanmar.

In addition, men dominated the post-disaster relief and resettlement efforts, which led to bias and also affected women's needs and vocations, reported by the research. Although some programs, such as water and waste water management, were implemented in the post-disaster relief efforts and benefited both men and women, the research showed that women were not supported in the process of accessing these systems.

There are social limitations for women accessing loans, according to the research regarding gender and access to loans. The loan programs that are connected with some training programs (e.g. agriculture and livestock) sometimes make it difficult for women to access loans, since women cannot attend trainings because they are busy with household chores. Small loan programs that support women's groups are the most prominent activity to enhance women's livelihoods.

This research was conducted by Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF), in conjunction with World Bank Myanmar.



Photo: MOI Webportal, Myanmar Facebook page

## Workshop held on empowering women candidates for 2020 Elections

May 9, 2019

A Workshop on empowering women candidates for 2020 Elections and tackling disinformation and hate speech in Myanmar was held in Nay Pyi Taw, on May 8, 2019.

Union Election Commission (UEC) Chairman U Hla Thein said that strategic planning (2019-2020) for the 2020 Election was focused on enhancing inclusiveness, and the plan has been implemented by engaging with different stakeholders including women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

There were a total of 6,038 election candidates from 91 political parties in the 2015 General Election. Out of 793 women candidates, there were 151 women candidates who won the election. When it came to assigning duties to the poll masters and their teams, efforts had been made to empower women in these roles, he said.

When it came to the time of the election campaign, efforts were made to avoid the spread of hate speech and misinformation among one another, said U Hla Thein. Then, attendees took part in a group discussion; they discussed gender equality in the elections, women's empowerment issues, and effective ways to combat hate speech and misinformation.