

Resolutions of the 'Basic Principles' Seminar

February 12, 2005

The seminar to lay down the basic principles for the future federal constitution was successfully held at a location on the Burmese border from 9 to 12 February 2005. It was attended by 106 elected people's representatives, leaders from political organizations, women organizations, youth organizations, and civic society institutions from the Union of Burma.

Following the seminar, the delegates unanimously endorsed the following basic principles for the future federal constitution:

The Basic Principles

1. Sovereign Power

The sovereign power of the Union shall derive from the people.

2. Equality

Every nationality in the Union shall enjoy equal political and ethnical rights.

3. Self-determination

Every nationality shall fully enjoy the right to self-determination in political, economic, social, and cultural affairs.

4. Federal Principles

The Union shall be established with states which fully enjoy the right to self-determination, and the Union Assembly shall be a bicameral legislature consisting of a Chamber of Nationalities (Upper House) and Chamber of Deputy (Lower House).

5. Minority Rights

All rights of National Minorities who reside in the member states of the Union shall be fully guaranteed by Constitution

6. Democracy, Human Rights, and Gender Equality

Discrimination based on religious belief, ethnicity, or gender shall not be permitted and fundamental human rights and democratic rights shall be protected and guaranteed by law.

7. Secular State

The Union shall be a secular state.

8. Multi-party Democracy System

The federal Union shall practice a multi-party democracy system.

In addition to the abovementioned basic principles, delegates at the seminar also agreed to include the following issues when drafting the future federal constitution:

1. Civilian Supremacy: The Union Defense Services shall be subordinate to and subject to the control of civilian authority.
2. Conditions that permit the establishment of new states within the Union
3. (a) Protection of the environment
(b) Promotion of the welfare of women and children and safeguarding of their interests through special measures

Resolutions relating to future tasks

The Seminar resolves:

- (1) To continue the federal constitution drafting process based on the basic principles agreed at the seminar for drafting the future federal constitution,
- (2) To assign the NCUB (National Council of the Union of Burma), the NDF (National Democratic Front, the UNLD (LA) [United Nationalities League for Democracy (Liberated Area)], the KNPP (Karenni National Progressive Party), the SDU (Shan Democratic Union), the WLB (Women League of Burma), and youth organizations to carry out the task
- (3) To establish the Constitutional Drafting Coordination Committee and an Advisory Committee consisting of experts to facilitate the federal constitution drafting process, and
- (4) To make dynamic efforts toward winning broad and extensive support for the basic principles from the following:
 - a. All the people
 - b. Political parties inside the country
 - c. Armed ethnic forces which have concluded ceasefire agreements
 - d. The SPDC's Defense Services
 - e. Governments globally and international institutions