

## **Press Release**

### **Federal Constitution Drafting & Coordinating Committee-Union of Burma (FCDCC)**

9 December 2005

A milestone occurred this week in the history of Burma's long struggle toward democracy. The FCDCC completed a draft constitution based on democracy, federalism, equality, and self-determination for all the people of Burma. The FCDCC acts with the mandate of the Burma Democracy Movement, including Members of Parliament elected in Burma's last free election in 1990, ethnic nationality groups, women's groups and youth groups.

The draft constitution is to be used for open debate and discussion among the people to get their input and feedback. The FCDCC will use the constitutional process to foster national reconciliation and to initiate talks with the Military Regime, who to date refuse to negotiate with those desiring democratic change in Burma. Importantly it gives expression to eight key principles that reflect the will of democratic forces and Ethnic Nationalities inside and outside Burma.

The FCDCC represents the exiled Burmese democratic forces and ethnic nationalities political organizations and has strong links within political organizations and grass roots leaders inside Burma. This constitution will allow all Ethnic Nationalities in Burma to freely enter into a Federal Union of Burma. Self-determination is the fundamental basis of the federation, and this historic FCDCC constitutional process is built on this principle.

The States representatives, including their Constitutional Drafting Committees and over 100 organizations, launched the constitution writing process by drafting their State Constitutions. The work of this committee has built upon that foundation as the FCDCC proceeds to write a federal constitution.

Mahn Aung Than Lay, Chairman of the FCDCC of the Union of Burma, today condemned the Military Regime of Burma for proceeding to hold a national constitutional convention that does not represent the people of Burma. Instead, the SPDC's National Convention seeks to constitutionally mandate military rule.

"We challenge Senior General Than Shwe, Burma's Supreme leader, to make the national convention inclusive and democratic as we in the FCDCC process have. Our process is free from censorship and control."

"FCDCC knows that for peace to prevail in Burma all political groups must come together to reach a political agreement that can produce a constitutional framework for the democracy and equality that all people desire."

"We invite the international community to reflect upon the contrast between our constitutional process and the military-dominated process taking place at the National Convention. We believe that attention to this contrast demonstrates our preparedness to begin the transition to constitutional democracy."

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