

Women's Response to President U Win Myint's New Year Greeting



Author- Mae Loon

On the occasion of Myanmar New Year, the newly elected President U Win Myint gave a greetings and good wishes speech to his people. He mentioned promoting Human Rights, strengthening the judiciary sector, combatting corruption, combatting narcotic drugs, and uplifting of the socio-economic life of farmers. He also mentioned the need to reduce central control to make preparations for the Federal Union administrative system. Right after his speech comes out we saw a lot of feedback regarding his promises to the citizen. Among all the feedback, Hi Burma wants to collect feedback and opinions of the female activist and leaders.



Padoh Zipporah Sein (Former Voice
President of The Karen National
Union)

**Padoh Zipporah Sein (Former Vice President of The Karen
National Union):**

Overall, the president speech is good. According to his speech, I think people/citizen may have more expectations. Especially what he mentioned in his speech that he really considers the wellbeing of people/citizens. He mainly focus on the civil service personnel, students and farmers. When we look back at the whole thing these are the important sectors that need to improve in a country. Of course that is not a new thing, but in a country like Burma as we are not like other country, the President mentioned this in his speech. But, we expected to hear about peace in the country and about ethnic affairs. I feel sorry that he did not mention these two issues.

As he is a new elected President on the Myanmar, I want to hear how the peace process will go on but he did not mention it. If we look from the ethnic people's perspective, as President his promise and his future plans do not include the ethic people in the country. From my personal perspective, since the current fighting is going on especially in Hpa-Pon Karen State and also in Shan and Kachin States, he should say something about this ongoing fighting. He needs to talk how peace processes will continue, but as he did not, I feel a big concern.



Mi Sue Pwint (Member of
Union Peace Dialogue Joint
Committee – UPDJC)

**Mi Sue Pwint (Member of Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee –
UPDJC):**

I have concern that the government wouldn't give up on the peace process and national reconciliation, nor lose the enthusiastic about these things. But overall, his new year speech reflected the real situation of people and he might be able to approach people from the ground. Stability and change are both important and how much of success it will be depends on how much the people in the country can go along with it.



Daw Kha Kha (LHEO
Training Coordinator)

Daw Kha Kha (LHEO Training Coordinator):

I am happy to hear the President mentioned workers in his speech. If we want have a strong system of social security then the government has many things systematically. Such make the worker aware of their rights for social security, hospitals, quick response for the social security and the workers need to be able to hold the social security in their hand. And in order to have secure livelihood for the worker, the daily cost(expense) must be in balance with the income. If the commodity prices increase excessively then the worker's can not survive.



Daw Tin Tin Nyo- Policy Board
Member of Women League's of
Burma

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Burma:**

Regarding to the "law", there should be specific provisions on women and female children. In Judicial system, aside from impartial and effectiveness, we need Justice personal who are understanding of gender-sensitivity and ready to stand up for it. It needs to get into this judicial system anyhow.

While dealing with rape or domestic violence cases, the police often handle them wrong. Such as made fun of the women or act like not really respect the women. These are the things that need to change. If the Judges, lawyers, Polices do not act appropriate ways, then the survivor of violence will not try to seek justice from legal channels. If it ends up in these ways, then the wish of the President that he want to shore up with the judicial sector will face with barriers and delayed.

As the Mr. President mentioned about the involvement of people with authority and their efforts to interfere, it is really good if he can take action on it. Regarding to the "people with authority" not only targeting specific people but should refer to "anyone". If the case is committing by the people with arms, seeking for truth should be also impartial.



Naw Ohn Hla- (Democracy and Peace Women Network)

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In U Thein Sein's government a farmland management body was formed to solve the farmland problems and later on the land administration system came out but it did not really solve the problems. Finally U Thein Seinon lost the election in 2015 and NLD took over the government. Later on U Htin Kyaw established order 15/16/ and 14/16 to help solve the farmers and their land problems but instead of solving the problem it become confusing during 2 years of NLD government. The farmers face more difficulty. Now again U Win Myint's government mentioned farmers and I wish he can implement according to what he said. If he doesn't follow what he said, or elected government are the same as previous, then the people will lose hope.

I warmly welcome President U Win Myint to his appointment and his speech but it should be realistic in implementation. In the previous President, he said the land must return back to the landowner but in realistic the landowning law made worse. The law passed in the time that he took the position as the speakers of State and Region Hluttaw. So I want to remind him, now he is a President of the country and if he wants to do for the farmers he has to change the landowning law.



Daw Khin Ohmar- Policy Board member, Burmese Women's Union

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His speech established a plan on how he is going to lead during his Presidency. His speech is good. Including the promise to amend the constitution...but how the government is going to do this and what is the home affair and army's role, how they are going to coordinate... we have to keep on watching. There is a very important thing that he miss to mention in his speech and that is "Peace". Or maybe a possibility that there is a divide responsible/role between President and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Does that mean Daw Aung San Suu Kyi takes a role for Peace? If this way, what is the plan for Peace process and what is the goal? Especially it will be good if she can speak out about what will be done for the people who flee from fighting. Especially there was on going fighting in Kachin state and people who flee from the fighting were blocked and could not received humanitarian aid while the Buddhists are

enjoying it's new year Thin Gyan water festival. It will be really nice if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi can mention how she is going to help displace persons from fighting.



Naw Hser Hser-Joint General Secretary I of WLB

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Regarding his speech, it is good to hear. Even though his speech does not cover for the whole country, at least he point out the main and current problems that he wants to change. Mainly he focus on the country's development parts. But, in practice the issues of fighting in ethnic areas, IDPs and those fleeing from fighting were not considered. Another one, from the women's justice point according to my experience I don't think even the President has the power to do something about the sexual violence committed by the Burmese army in our ethnic areas. Looking at this I do not have that much trust. But since he mentioned developing people's livelihood or Political reform, I want to see the reform and change in general. We have to keep on and watch whether he is able to do or not, he will do or he will not.

Especially he mentioned the cooperation with CBO's and CSO's ...

So we have to wait and see that how much CBO's and CSO's will have a channel to support for the future federal union. My perspective is not only talk but I want to see the practical.



Cherry Zahau (Human Rights Activist)

Cherry Zahau (Human Rights Activist):

It is really good that the president gave a speech to the people on the Buddhism New Year's Day. Regarding Human Rights, he mentioned a lot but he did not include how to prevent Human Rights violations and what should be done for Human Rights protection. For example, U win Myint did not dismiss the laws, specifically the obstacles such as political and civil rights of citizen while he was the taking the position as a Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw . He did not amend it. There is a question that even he did not amend during his time of the Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw and how he is going to change right now as the president. In the same way, when we look back the things he had done during the past 2 years, the role of the speakers of State and Region Hluttaw were really limited in his term. As the Central control, he directly guided and lead the State and Region Hluttaw. So.. the second question came out that will he make a change on those things

immediately right after he becomes president? The another bothering thing to me is, he mentioned people for those “who works for Human Rights must also give respect to the dignity of other”. This kind of words is a word that come from the HRs activities who always stand up for those who have been violated.

So.. what does he means for this quote? For example, does he want to refer to the situation in Rakhaing State? In Rakhaing state, the Rohingya are not accepted by our country. Does he mean that the world criticizes that Rohingya are not treated like humans in Burma? Human Rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of colour, religion, etc. As human rights activists, we have to stand up for any actions or things against inhumane behaviors. An interesting point is that although he mentioned about Human Rights, but there's still ongoing fighting in Burma especially in ethnic areas. The people from Kachin state do not get the right to life and to live in safety which are referred to as basic human rights as. He did not say anything regarding those. Also did not mention anything about human right violation in Rakhing state which is well-known by the world. I guess as a Burmese people, they don't think really deeply to the situation but they will only satisfy with what the President speak out even it is only in a word, and he well known on this as well. That is only the outer surface. It is a doubtful thing that how he will be working on human rights even he did not highlight and talking about the real situation and the human rights violation in Kachin, Rakhaing state and other areas in the country.

A high school female teacher from Mon State:

In the past two years term of government, the country is in debt and I do not hope the salary will increase. In previous government they increase often and by the month of April we are waiting for a new salary. Since March, we were waiting for salary even though the commodity prices getting higher and higher but we still live on low wages. I did not hope that

this term government would be able to increase the salary in 2 years.

Anyhow I am happy to hear these good news. Some people blame that the increased amount is very small amount proportionally to the commodity prices. For me I do not think in that way. I want to thank them for what they give. The president's speech encouraged the civil service personnel. The increased amount is not that much, may be 30,000 kyat. However this amount will improve the situation for us. For me I can not survive only with my salary. I have to teach extra to cover my expense. I really like when he mentioned building housing for civil service personal and it will be great if we receive health care as well. As teachers, we need health care after we finish our service. The pension money is only 100,000 kyat and we can not survive. If the government provides a house then we do not need to worry about where we are going to stay after finishing our service.