

**Smile Education and Development Foundation – the killing of U Ko Ni is a great loss for human rights and democracy in Myanmar**

Smile Education and Development Foundation today condemns the killing of Sayar U Ko Ni, the respected constitutional lawyer and legal advisor to the NLD and State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. He was fatally shot yesterday at Yangon International Airport on his return from Indonesia where he had been continuing his tireless work for Myanmar.

Smile Education and Development Foundation has been honoured to work with U Ko Ni for the last 6 years. His support for democracy and human rights in Myanmar over many years has been beyond measure and we cannot express our gratitude enough for his commitment.

*“This is a loss for all of Myanmar and especially for democracy and human rights - U Ko Ni was an engine for change in Myanmar. He was involved in so much of our work on interfaith harmony, hate speech, hate crime and discrimination and his courage, humility and intelligence are irreplaceable”* said Myo Win, executive director of Smile Education and Development Foundation.

Smile Education and Development Foundation also wishes to honour concerned citizen U Nay Win, the taxi driver who gave chase to U Ko Ni’s assailant and was also fatally shot, for his bravery and we send his family our heartfelt condolences.

Smile Education and Development Foundation extends its deepest sympathies to the family of U Ko Ni and calls on people of all faiths and beliefs in Myanmar to honour U Ko Ni by following his example and continuing to work for interfaith tolerance, democracy and human rights.