



Ethnic Nationalities Affairs Center (Union of Burma)

တိုင်းရင်းသားလူမျိုးများရေးရာစင်တာ (ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

Supporting the peace process and development of democratic institutions in Burma

THREE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNION PEACE CONFERENCE – 21ST CENTURY PANGLONG

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The second session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong was concluded on May 29, 2017 in Naypyidaw. 700 representatives of the government, parliament, Tatmadaw, political parties, and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), and over 120 observers attended the conference. After 6 days of deliberation by participants, ENAC notes the following three key achievements at the second 21st Century Panglong.

1. A Culture of Dialogue

Throughout almost 70 years of civil war in Burma, no substantive political dialogue has taken place between the various parties involved in the conflicts. The second session of the 21st Century Panglong enabled the EAOs, the government, and the Tatmadaw to engage in political dialogue and find some common ground that could possibly lay the foundation for a future cessation of armed conflict in the country. More importantly, the conference seems to have established a culture of dialogue, setting precedence for political dialogue as a tool for finding political solutions in Burma.

2. The Inclusion of AA, MNDAA, and TNLA

The Arakan Army (AA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) attended the 21st Century Panglong with their allies in the Northern Alliance. Although they were invited as observers only, their inclusion was a significant milestone in the peace process. The groups have consistently been denied the ability to sign the NCA by the Thein Sein government, the Tatmadaw, and the NLD government. However, the second session of the 21st Century Panglong included these groups. This is was a positive sign of inclusiveness in the peace process. It is hoped that such progress signifies a willingness to include all EAOs, including the United Nationalities Federal Council, in future dialogues.

3. Thirty Seven Points Agreed to be a Part of the Union Accord

A total of 45 points from the four sectors – politics, economics, social, and land – were proposed for negotiation at the conference. The representatives agreed on 37 points, and signed an agreement to include them as provisions in the first part of the Union Accord. All proposed 25 points under economic, social, and land sectors were agreed upon, while 8 of the 20 political points were not. The fifth sector, security, was not discussed.

The outcome of the second session of the 21st Century Panglong is arguably a moderate success. It served as a venue where viewpoints were openly exchanged in an attempt resolve long-running armed conflicts. Such conference, however, must include all stakeholders to be fully effective. The principle of inclusiveness is essential to finding durable solutions and to ensure sustainable peace. ■