



**Ethnic Nationalities Affairs Center (Union of Burma)**

**တိုင်းရင်းသားလူမျိုးများရေးရာစင်တာ (ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)**

*Supporting the peace process and development of democratic institutions in Burma*

## **THREE KEY REASONS WHY THE UNFC IS NOT ATTENDING THE UNION PEACE CONFERENCE – 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY PANGLONG**

**ENAC Briefing No. 20**

**24 May 2017**

The Union Peace Conference – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Panglong will convene in Naypyidaw today thru May 28, 2017. Representatives of the government, parliament, Tatmadaw, political parties, and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) are present for the conference. However, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) is not attending for the following reasons:

### **1. “Special Guest” Status**

In a statement on May 23, 2017, the UNFC said it would not attend the Union Peace Conference – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Panglong because it was invited as a “special guest” without equal status to participate in negotiations and decision-making processes. “Special guests” may attend but do not have the right to participate fully, throughout the course of the conference. Only signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) have the right to take part in decision making.

### **2. The UNFC 9-Points Proposal**

To strengthen the NCA to ensure successful implementation, the UNFC created a 9-point proposal to the government and has negotiated on it since the National League for Democracy (NLD) took office a year ago. Since the negotiation on the 9-points proposal is still ongoing with the government’s Peace Commission and no agreement has been reached, the UNFC is unable to sign the NCA and, thereby, is not attending the conference.

### **3. State Level Political Dialogues**

According to the NCA, only signatories to the NCA are allowed to hold state-level political dialogues and submit the outcomes to the Union Peace Conference. Consequently, as a non-signatory group, the UNFC was not allowed to hold political dialogues in its respective constituencies, and will not have the voices of its constituents represented at the Conference, even if it is allowed to participate fully in discussions.

For these reasons, the UNFC decided not to attend the conference. Nevertheless, it stated that it would welcome and support all political dialogue meant to establish a federal democratic union based on the principles, spirit, and commitment of the 1947 Panglong Agreement, which enshrined equality and self-determination for every ethnic group in Burma. ■