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Ethnic Health Committee

Ethnic Health Committee's statement on the Government formation of COVID-19 prevention Coordination Committee to cooperate with EAOs

Date: 06/May/2020

On April 27th, the office of President, Republic of the Union of Myanmar announced the formation of a coordinating committee to cooperate with (EAOs) Ethnic Armed Organizations to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The government states it has a “no one left behind” policy to combat COVID-19 pandemic. We (EHC) Ethnic Health Committee welcome the announcement of the formation of above mentioned committee as it recognizes the role that ethnic health organizations play in areas governed by Ethnic Armed Organizations.

We firmly believe that there is a need for all sectors to collaborate combating COVID-19 since this is a global pandemic and it means all sectors of society must be protected equally in order to protect all. In order to perform the COVID-19 containment effectively in EAOs administrative areas, the government and military must stop first their attack in ethnic areas and cease threatening or obstructing the work of EAOs to contain COVID-19. Moreover, there is a need to have support for COVID-19 containment including the capacity building of Ethnic Health Organizations. By supporting health structures of only the central government, this will leave those people living in ethnic areas more vulnerable to the pandemic, which in turn will make everyone in Burma more vulnerable.

Therefore, in order for the effective containment of the (COVID-19) Coronavirus Disease in Burma, we urge the following:

1. In order to allow all people irrespective of their nationality, belief, and areas of Burma to combat the (COVID-19) Coronavirus Disease together, the government and military must stop their attack in ethnic areas and cease threatening or obstructing the work of EAOs to contain COVID-19 immediately in accordance with the demand of United Nations and European Union.

2. It is urgent that local and international donors begin providing funding direct to EHOs for COVID-19 containment since EHOs are the frontline and only workers for the disease containment in EAOs administrative areas.
3. As the pandemic situation is different from state to state with different needs and risks which are changing rapidly, there must be a coordination mechanism between each State Health and Sport Department (SHSD) and Ethnic Health Organization (EHO) respectively and there is a need to recognize each other to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in each region.

We state that Ethnic Health Organizations will cooperate with international health organizations, local health organizations, and ethnic communities altogether to contain the (COVID-19) Coronavirus Disease.

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