Policy Announcement of Burmese National Union 1/2012

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As people leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi envisioned, representatives of Burmese ethnic group should join ethnic affairs talks - either at "21 Century Pinlon" or a multi-ethnic conference to be held before 2015 as stated by Minister Aung Minor at the Tripartite Conference that demanded by oppositions once or at any other peacebuilding settings. Since the Burmese ethnic population is more than half of the country's population, their representation and involvement are critical.

In resolving the issues among ethnic groups, negotiations should be carried out through trust-building achieved by mutual understanding, sympathy, tolerance and forgiveness, especially between the Burmese majority and other ethnic groups. We believe that mutual trust achieved by these means is the foundation for ceasing ethnic conflicts and nation-building.

At these conferences, we must be able to demonstrate our genuine attitude, open-mindedness, solidarity and love for the country. We need to get prepared from now on as these factors are critical for making amends for ethnic issues. There is a saying that "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." We need to learn from the mistakes in history and not repeat the same mistakes. From the first Burmese Empire established by King Anawrahta to the second Burmese Empire established by the King Bayinnaung in the Taungu era and to the Third Burmese Empire established by the Kind Alangphaya in the Kongbong period were established by invading and conquering other nations.

However, the fourth Burmese Empire built by ethnic leaders led by General Aung San was expected to be different. The country was meant to be formed based on mutual respect and understanding, and the Pinlon agreement guarantees especially equal rights of ethnic groups and self-determination. Nevertheless, the country became a one-party state under the 1974 constitution rather than becoming a genuine Union in practice.

The sovereign state has been engrossed in rampant ethnic strife, and its myriad ethnic groups have been involved in one of the world's longest-running ongoing civil wars. Later on, the military seized power under the claim to save the country from disintegration.

The military dictators enforced the 1974 Constitution taking advantage of people's lack of knowledge of federalism and lack of Burmese representatives who would protect the essence of the Pinlon agreement.

The dictators constantly propagandized that federalism would disintegrate the country. Because of this constitution, only the so-called Union emerged, lacking the essence of the Pinlon Agreement. People lived in fear under the repressive military rule closing off the rest of the world. The country is listed as one of the least developed countries with human rights violations. Myanmar lost so much of its prestige under military rule in the world political landscape. The junta has also banned/discouraged the traditional practices and literature of ethnic minorities, much to the detriment of many ethnic groups.

Today's Pseudo democratic government formed by former military officials holds the 2008 Constitution. Since this constitution is not drafted based on the Pinlon Agreement, a genuine union cannot emerge this time again. Without a constitution that embraces the essence of the Pinlon Agreement, we cannot either establish a genuine union or cease the 6-decades-long civil war. As a result, there is no guarantee of ethnic minority rights, democracy and human rights. Under these circumstances, any civilian government will inevitably face the same tragedy as in 1962.

To break free from this vicious cycle, we must have the courage to live up to our beliefs, as stated in the preface. Just as political problems must be resolved through political means, ethnic issues must be resolved on the basis of ethnicity. History has called for a strong Burmese ethnic group to emerge.

Today all ethnic nationalities born in the Union must work together in a balanced manner to draft a constitution that guarantees ethnic eights and build a genuine union. Only then will we be able to end ethnic conflicts, establish a peaceful new country, and develop a new democratic state with full human rights.

Working Committee
Burmese National Union