



Ethnic Nationalities Affairs Center (Union of Burma)

တိုင်းရင်းသားလူမျိုးများရေးရာစင်တာ (ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

Supporting the peace process and development of democratic institutions in Burma

THE 8TH DPN-PC MEETING: FURTHER DISCUSSION REQUIRED

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The Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) and Peace Commission (PC) held their 8th meeting at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) in Yangon from 8-9 November 2017 to further negotiate the 8 Points Proposal of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC). In addition to PC and DPN members, several NCA-signatory Ethnic Armed Organizations representatives and members of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) attended the meeting – an encouraging development. Military officers from UNFC member organizations also joined because the meeting focused on Point 5, which relates to the JMC and various military issues. According to spokespersons from both DPN and PC, the meeting was a productive step forward. U Zaw Htay, spokesperson of PC, was quoted by the New Light of Myanmar that both sides were able to openly discuss several issues and that they were able to move closer to what they had hoped for. Meanwhile, Khu Oo Reh, leader of DPN and General Secretary of UNFC, expressed hope that consensus would soon be found, breaking the deadlock of extended negotiations. Most Points have now been agreed on and the 9th meeting is scheduled for November 16th, hopefully to finalize discussions on the few remaining substantive issues.

At the 7th meeting on October 23rd – 24th, the PC had revisited Points 1 – 4, which had been previously been finalized as agreed upon by both parties. The PC's renewed interest in these Points meant further discussion were needed on these topics at the 8th meeting last week. Most of the proposed changes were agreed.

However, perhaps the most important issues remaining to be discussed are some of the UNFC's core principles, the legal binding of the Proposal and who will sign once an agreement is reached. These are sensitive issues that could further hinder the negotiation process but are of paramount importance to guarantee the full implementation of the 8 Points once they are agreed.

While only a limited number of substantive and implementation points remain to be discussed by the stakeholders, it is important to remember that there is no final agreement until *all* points have been fully agreed. The 8 Points Proposal is a package that must be fully agreed to ensure trust in the NCA implementation process. Fortunately, the progress and narrowing scope of recent talks may signify that both sides are nearing a final, mutually acceptable agreement. ■