

URGENT ACTION FUND
FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Movement-Building and Advocacy Priorities:

**A Policy Brief from the November 2013 Convening hosted by the
Women's League of Burma and Urgent Action Fund**

Background

In November 2013, Women's League of Burma (WLB) and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF) hosted a convening for Burmese women's activists in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The convening--a part of a longer term collaboration between WLB's women activists and UAF--was planned in response to identified emerging opportunities for movement building and increased collaboration among Burmese women's groups inside Burma and along its borders.

The workshop built on a process initiated in October 2012 with the strengthening of WLB's membership and strategy to ensure that women's voices from all ethnic communities are represented in determining the future of Burma under the current reform process. The need to expand the discussion and include a wider group of women's activists from both sides of the border was identified. The first Myanmar Women's Forum, jointly organized by WLB and the Burma-based Women's Organisations Network (WON), was subsequently held in September 2013, bringing together over 400 participants from ethnic nationality areas, ethnic Burmese groups, foreign and border based women's organizations, political parties, female MPs, and various CSOs. The National Women Dialogue on Women in Leadership Roles addressing peace, security, and development was also held in November 2013.¹ In December 2013, Burma hosted its first ever International Women's Forum discussing women's role in Burma today, bringing a number of international representatives into the overall discussion of experiences and priorities. The convening in November in Chiang Mai and the upcoming convening inside Burma in 2014 are the first attempts at a joint strategy and action planning across diverse focus areas in relation to women's rights.

In the past three years, the new government has instituted a series of reforms that have been heralded by the international community as the beginning of a new era in the country's development. This is in particular symbolized by opposition party National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release from house arrest and entry into parliament, the release of a large number of political prisoners, and the removal of 2,000 names from the former regime's 'black list.'

However, many grave challenges and concerns remain; particularly in respect to human rights, and not least the pursuit of genuine peace for the ethnic nationalities. The Burmese military allegedly continue to carry out human rights abuses in ethnic nationality areas with impunity, including forced labor, the use of child soldiers, extrajudicial killings, land confiscation, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. Since 2010, renewed fighting has begun to erode fragile ceasefire agreements between government military and ethnic armed groups: in particular, the reignited conflict between the Burmese Army and the Kachin

Independence Army since June 2011ⁱⁱ and the breaches of ceasefire agreements in Shan and Karenⁱⁱⁱ states leading to escalation in militarization of large areas. Combined with the plight of the Muslim Rohingya people in Arakan State, and the recent anti-Muslim violence in central Burma, it raises serious questions about the willingness of the Government of Burma to end the culture of impunity, ensure protection of human rights, and pursue genuine peace for all the peoples of Burma.

Human rights activists and critical observers are increasingly criticizing the ‘top-down and skin-deep nature of reforms’. The new laws meant to usher in new freedoms of association, assembly, and expression have fallen well short of guaranteeing full rights for all. The pace of reform has slowed down, and there is concern about backtracking in areas where progress had been promised and a tendency can be seen towards rule *by* law rather than strengthening the rule *of* law.^{iv}

The three major and inter-related areas of concern to women’s groups operating across Burma and in its border areas were at the Convening identified as:

1. Women’s participation in decision-making processes
2. Domestic violence and gender-based violence
3. The peace process and women

The discussion of current work and possible joint priorities and strategies evolved around these three areas throughout the Convening.

Women’s participation in decision-making processes

Although Burma is a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as one of the few international human rights instruments it has signed^v, the area has received very little attention, and discrimination against women remains a serious issue in the country. CEDAW details the specific measures that should be taken to ensure women’s full involvement in political processes, such as peace negotiations, and in formulation and implementation of policy, including during the resolution of conflict. As Burma is a signatory to CEDAW, the Burma government is bound by international law to ensure participation of women at all levels of the country’s peace-building process. There is in general little awareness about the state obligations under CEDAW at the political level as well as to the public in general, and its implementation has received little attention. Few are aware of the recommendations issued by the UN Committee on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women on the examination of state and shadow reports on Burma’s performance. There is a great need for dissemination of this information, preferably in Burmese and other ethnic languages, not least among members of the legislature, as the 2008 Constitution does not guarantee equal rights and promotion of the lives of women, and several existing laws are directly discriminatory in wording and application.

Women’s right to influence decisions on matters directly or indirectly affecting them through participation in political decision-making processes, economic empowerment and strengthening of entrepreneurship, access to natural resources and land, etc. are fundamental preconditions for real equality. Although far from the only way to determine equality,

women's participation in politics and governance at local, national, and international levels is a significant way of measuring if women have equal access to the enjoyment of their rights.

In Burma, only 53 of the 1100 representatives in Parliament are women. Further, less than 3% of management level positions were held by women in eight districts and divisions surveyed in a recent study by women's rights groups under the Gender Equality Network (GEN).^{vi} Up until very recently women could not join the Army, giving them almost no access to decision-making levels in a country that for decades has been run by various military regimes, and that in accordance with its 2008 Constitution still give the military the right to appoint 25% of the seats in Parliament, effectively excluding the possibility of laws passing that go against the interests of the Army.

With the growing space for civil society since 2011, women's groups are experiencing an emerging but slow recognition of women's issues and rights in their interactions with government ministries and representatives. Whereas the Government previously showed little interest in women's rights and failed to recognize gender discrimination as a problem, there has been a recent tendency toward more collaboration and some attention to the issue.

There is, however, little scope to discuss issues relating to crimes and violations committed by the military, including sexual violence against ethnic nationality women, or violations committed by state actors in general. Further, women's groups primarily seem to have access to less powerful parts of the government structure, such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief & Resettlement, limiting their direct access to high-level Government decisions, and the scope for identifying powerful champions of their cause. These obvious obstacles are further exacerbated by the little international exposure of many parts of the state structure, resulting in very limited, if any, knowledge of international obligations in terms of women's rights and a complete lack of understanding of the reasons and means of engaging with civil society in implementing their duties.

Lack of access to education for girls, in particular in ethnic nationality areas, contribute to the under-representation of women, as does discriminatory customary and civil laws that do not guarantee equality for women with respect to marriage and divorce, inheritance, land access, and access to financial institutions and loans. GEN has recently undertaken a review of existing laws in relation to gender-based discrimination and produced a set of recommendations for law reform and amendments of out-dated and discriminatory laws. The current legal framework combined with the low number of women in the military, police, judiciary, executive, and legislature at national, regional, and local levels put women in a legally vulnerable position with limited access to justice and equal protection under the law. There is dire need for further research on existing legal framework relating to women's economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as norms and practices under customary law in various regions of Burma.

As of yet no national strategy and program on women have been developed and the national budget does not include funds for the implementation of activities addressing women's issues. Although some funding by international donors is allocated to women's rights the major part is channelled through the larger government related organizations, with very little reaching the women's groups and organizations operating on the ground and reaching the more remote communities. There is thus need for a joint strategy and multi-faceted

approach to combat the lack of representation of women in decision-making forums at all levels of the Burmese society.

The identified priorities include the following:

- Continued research and documentation of the impact of discrimination against women, including various aspects of civil and family laws in need of reform;
- Lobbying for a National Strategy and Plan of Action on Women and inclusion of financing in the national budget, to ensure implementation of CEDAW as well as UN SC Resolutions 1325 and 2122;
- Capacity building of potential women leaders and sensitization on the political, legislation, and policy making process and on constitutional reform processes;
- Increased number of women members of political parties and candidates for the 2015 elections;
- Increased percentage of women in Parliament, Cabinet, Regional Parliaments, and Local Committees;
- Engage potential allies and champions of the cause, including progressive traditional and religious leaders to ensure they listen to the voice of the people;
- Lobbying of donors to 1) prioritize inclusion of women's rights in funding requirements; 2) channel more funding directly to women's groups and networks active at the grassroots level; 3) push for potential powerful champions of the cause to meet and engage with the women's groups.

Domestic and gender-based violence

In general women have a relatively low status in Burma with their formal status dependant on husbands and fathers. They continue to be the primary caretakers of children and family homes and are perceived to be in need of the protection of men and the society with limited public roles and influence on their situations. These factors contribute to the various forms of discrimination and violence against women in Burma. Despite significant under-reporting, domestic and gender-based violence appears widespread in the country, not least in areas of past and ongoing conflicts between the Burma Army and non-state armed ethnic groups.

The 2008 Constitution and a number of existing discriminatory laws leave no effective legal protection of the lives and safety of women. While women in Burma are facing general obstacles in relation to access to justice (geographical distance, lack of access to resources, illiteracy, lack of familiarity with formal procedures, fear of stigma, etc.), the lack of specific protection, redress, and rehabilitation mechanisms exacerbates these obstacles in relation to domestic and gender-based violence as does the lack of women in police, judiciary, local authorities, and health care, as well as widespread corruption. There is thus an urgent need for reform of the 2008 Constitution and a review and amendment of relevant national legislation in accordance with CEDAW in order to provide the needed protection for the women of Burma.

A number of local women's organizations, as well as international NGOs and the UN, have documented incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers in the Burmese Army over the last decades.^{vii} According to this documentation, rape and other

forms of sexual violence are conducted in a systematic and widespread manner and therefore often described as a war strategy or a weapon of war. Yet, except for very few cases^{viii}, neither the Army nor the State justice system has investigated, prosecuted, and punished the perpetrators in the large majority of cases. President Thein Sein in October 2012 stated that “our military is very disciplined, there is no reason for the military to commit acts of rape and murder.”^{ix} The documentation from the last decades, as well as since 2010 when the reforms were initiated, indicates that sexual violence by army forces is widespread and taking place across the various ethnic nationality areas, and with many incidents committed by higher ranking military personnel, at least with tacit approval of higher levels of authority in the Myanmar government.

In January 2014, WLB launched its report “Same Impunity, Same Pattern: Sexual abuses by the Burma army will not stop until there is a genuine civilian government.” The report documents 104 rape cases in the period from 2010-2013, some involving children as young as eight. Forty-seven of the cases were gang rapes, and 28 women were either killed or died of their injuries. Most of the documented cases are linked to the conflicts in the border areas of Kachin and Northern Shan State where the Burma army is still fighting armed ethnic groups. The report states that the widespread and systematic nature of the sexual violence indicates that rape continues to be used as an instrument of war and oppression despite the current reform process.^x

WLB and its members are advocating for bringing justice to the victims through ensuring truth, justice, and accountability as well as legal protection from future violence. The report thus outlines a series of necessary actions to stop the violence, including reform of the judicial system, enforcing legal protection of women, and amending the Constitution, which provides amnesty for and prevents civilian judicial review of all military action.

The Burmese government and army however continue to deny systematic and widespread sexual violence being committed. In response to the report, a spokesperson for the Burmese government said using rape was not army policy and that any details on incidents committed by individual members of the Army should be submitted to the Government and Army for further action.^{xi}

The findings of the report has contributed to strong critique of the UK government’s decision to engage in a training programme for the Burmese Army, arguing that crimes committed by the army since the reform process was initiated amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity (including rape and gang rape of ethnic women, including children, deliberate targeting of civilians, arbitrary executions, arbitrary detention, torture, mutilations, looting, bombing of civilian areas, blocking humanitarian assistance, destruction of property, and extortion). The crimes have largely been committed with impunity and are continuously negated by the government. The engagement with the military could be seen as some level of approval and seems to contravene the declaration on ending sexual violence in conflict, which was spearheaded by the British government, and which the Burmese government up until now has refused to sign.^{xii}

Increased understanding of sexual violence and its detrimental impact on not only the immediate victims and their families, but on their communities and future development of

the country thus is essential. The protection of women's rights to physical and bodily integrity, health, education, economic empowerment, participation in political decision-making processes and related rights is central to ensuring national development and overcoming the root causes of the on-going conflicts.

The identified priorities include the following:

- Advocating for an independent investigation into sexual violence in conflict areas of Burma, to be carried out by independent international groups, as well as grassroots organizations working to support and protect women survivors;
- Lobbying to stop the continuation of training the Burma Army, and set clear preconditions for further training, including the ending of Burma Army attacks and abuses, and withdrawal of troops from ethnic conflict areas;
- Lobbying for international governments to provide direct support to community-based women's organizations in conflict areas for their work in documenting and advocating against sexual violence by Burmese government troops, and assisting rape survivors;
- Using the launch of the 16 days of activism against Violence Against Women on the VAW day for a joint campaign on ending violence and create peace with the involvement of women;
- Lobbying for a National Strategy and Plan of Action on Women and inclusion of financing in the national budget, to ensure implementation of CEDAW and UN SC Resolutions 1325 and 2122;
- Lobbying for drafting of laws and policies protecting women, including a focus on access to services;
- Lobbying for a gendered security sector reform – also as part of the ceasefire talks and the peace process;
- Increased connection between work at national policy level and at grassroots level through establishment of partnerships that cuts across the national political level, CSOs, and community groups);
- Development of interrelated strategies addressing children, parents, husbands / fathers, community, religious and traditional leaders as well as the policy-making and government structure;
- Ensure that government authorities are locally elected, with women in leadership, as there is currently little access to protection under the law due to either a lack of formal structure or an appointment structure opposed to the ethnic nationality.

The peace process and women

The United Nations Security Council (UN SC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (adopted in October 2000) is still a key instrument of reference for women's groups across the globe fighting gender-specific violence. It represents the first time the UN SC officially emphasized the positive role women and girls play in peace processes, conflict resolution and prevention of violence, and recognizes that women are more than just victims, but also actors that should participate equally in peace negotiations and processes. Since 2000, a number of subsequent resolutions have been passed by the UN SC with Resolution 1820 to better protect women from violence; Resolution 1888 to explicitly charge peacekeeping missions with the job of protecting women and children from sexual violence

in conflict; and Resolution 1889 to strengthen women's role in peace processes. In June 2013 Resolution 2106 was passed to strengthen the monitoring and prevention of sexual violence in conflict.

The resolutions following Resolution 1325 have to a large degree put emphasis on the issue of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Resolution 1820 thus elaborates further on issues relating to sexualized violence in conflict, and officially designates the use of sexual violence as a war tactic, and therefore a potential threat to world peace and international security, and that such crimes must be punished. There is no doubt that with a lack of physical safety and adequate protection mechanisms, women's active role will be reduced and the resolutions have certainly contributed to an increased awareness of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Yet, the relatively narrow focus on sexual violence have by some been criticized for focusing more on the victim role of women and their need for protection and toning down the importance of women actively taking part in the peace process.^{xiii}

With the adoption of the UN SC 2122 in October 2013 came a more systematic approach to the implementation of commitments on women, peace and security and a potential rebalancing of the focus on sexual violence to the important role of women in conflict resolution.^{xiv} The Resolution thus takes a more holistic approach to addressing the full range of forms of violence and human rights violations against women in conflict as part of securing international security and peace through highlighting the crucial importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. This way it recognizes the relation between strengthening women's position and power in peace-making and decision-making and the combating sexual and gender-based violence in the longer term, and the necessary range of means to address experienced violations.^{xv}

Continuous lack of implementation of Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions in practice, have led some to raise the question if the adoption of the new resolution 2122 would change anything, the main issues being lack of legal obligations and sanctions in relation to non-compliance. However, the resolutions continue to play an important role in legal and political advocacy work and are an important reference framework for the growing network of women's organizations of Burma and can potentially be a tool for insistence of tackling issues that are at the forefront of hindering women's active participation and for their inclusion at decision-making levels. It is therefore important that international stakeholders and donors supporting the peace process push for implementation of the UN SC resolutions and seek to establish coherence between political, security, development, human rights (including gender equality), rule of law, and justice activities. It is equally important that they provide support for building women's capacity to take active part in and contribute to the process – and that they are held accountable for any lack of prioritization of the issues highlighted in the resolutions in their engagement with both sides to the conflicts.

The women's groups are therefore advocating for a process that allows all issues to be put on the table and for representation of all groups through inclusion of civil society and special interest groups. Yet, it is still the experience of all women's groups involved in advocacy work for peace and an end to violence that both sides to the conflicts, the government / Burma Army and the leaders of the non-state armed groups see women's participation as

unnecessary, and have so far only in very few situations included women in any of the meetings. They are continuously being excluded from the ceasefire talks with some promises of inclusion in the subsequent political dialogue at a later stage. In the few instances women's groups have gained access to discuss women's involvement in the entire peace process, their lack of technical skills and understanding has been highlighted as a reason for their exclusion, as has their lack of representation at the senior level political party / organization level. Some ethnic nationality women's organizations have become effective messengers to inform communities about updates from armed groups; however, women's groups are presently not in a position to watchdog these negotiations. Despite these challenges and limitations, women's groups, not political leaders, are the ones discussing the peace process and ceasefire negotiations with communities. They are in a strong position to document the people's position and the people's demands. Some groups have started to provide capacity building to counteract these arguments.

There has been a general tendency to avoid defining what is actually meant by peace on the different sides of the conflicts. While most ethnic stakeholders are emphasizing structural changes to the state and real autonomy for the ethnic communities, the Burma Army is emphasizing 'unity' and is perceived to be a strong opponent of any form of federalism. The Government has primarily avoided a real discussion of these issues, and given primary focus to development and humanitarian issues of ethnic communities, which unfortunately has led donors supporting the peace process to favor technical solutions to much deeper-rooted problems underlying the conflict.

While ceasefire agreements may in some areas have led to decrease in fear and improved livelihoods with less restricted movement by villagers, there is still widespread anxiety that the government and ethnic armed groups may fail to reach a political settlement and a break down of the peace process.^{xvi} Ceasefires are obviously the first step but there is urgent need to move towards an actual peace-building process based on multi-stakeholder political dialogue to consolidate the existing ceasefire agreements.

The peace process has so far taken place with limited international involvement or external mediation, and the international community has primarily provided its funding to the process through 'traditional' and government controlled channels, and favored technical and development-oriented solutions^{xvii} rather than the much needed political solutions based on local needs and realities. There has thus been a tendency to avoid the complexity of the conflicts and situation of the ethnic nationalities from the international community and bilateral donors' side, and a lack of understanding of the structures that hinder women's representation and voices.^{xviii} Of particular priority is the need to combat the labelling of ethnic nationality women's groups, as well as women's human rights defenders who remain outspoken and critical of the reform process, as "spoilers" or "enemies" of the reform process. There is urgent need to focus on root causes of the conflict and involving *all* relevant stakeholders, not least (ethnic nationality) women whose experiences and grievances must be addressed for the peace to be genuine and sustainable.

However, despite efforts in advocating for the inclusion of women in the ceasefire and peace agreement negotiations, women have largely been invisible on both sides of the negotiation table cutting across the ethnic nationality areas.^{xix}

The absence of women in these processes that ultimately defines and shapes the cessation of violence means that a gender analysis and any references to gender are likely to be missing entirely from the substance of the agreements to end violence. Not only does this exclude an understanding of structural gender issues prior to the conflicts, the specific experiences and issues faced by women and men during the conflict in relation to gender, but it also puts at risk future peace, development, and stability of the country as issues relating to security reform, economic and social rights, and development will be missing the necessary gender analysis and solutions, thereby addressing the root causes of the initial conflicts.

In this legal and political space of ending the conflicts, women are and will continue to be struggling to influence policies that affect them directly and indirectly. The great risk is that they remain subordinated by dominant discourses that disregard the value of placing their needs and views at the center of the conversation about ending societal violence although this is exactly what is needed.^{xx} An implementation plan for UN SC Resolution 1325 and the recently adopted Resolution 2122 should be on the top of the agenda for the international actors supporting the peace process in Burma.

The identified priorities include the following:

- Using the launch of the 16 days of activism against Violence Against Women on the VAW day for a joint campaign on ending violence and create peace with the involvement of women;
- Lobbying of government and non-state armed groups for inclusion of women representatives and issues in the ceasefire talks as well as the subsequent political dialogue and peace negotiations;
- Sensitization of influential potential champions of the cause, including democracy movement leaders, and influential MPs and government representatives;
- Grassroots level petitions, signature campaigns, protests for peace – combined with public awareness campaigns ensuring a clear message to combat an emerging government construction of ethnic nationality peace and women’s groups as enemies of the reform and transition process;
- Strong linkages to strategies for women’s participation in political decision-making, including continued capacity building efforts;
- Explore the best possible structure for coordinated efforts through which some alignment of priorities and a joint system for monitoring of progress as there are several different peace networks and structures working in different areas and at different levels;
- Sensitization and trust building between groups that are operating from all across Burma and groups that are operating from its border areas.

The formation of a women’s movement

Activism in Burma still carries significant risks, not least for women, and the potential safety in numbers as well as support from a variety of network and movement members is important to help increase the security of individual women’s activists. With the continued restrictions on rights relating to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, activists advocating for peace are regularly harassed and subject to arrest. Several peace activists, including women’s groups have been charged under the country’s Peaceful Assembly Law

for alleged unlawful or unauthorized demonstrations or public events, such as in relation to the International Peace Day when demanding an end to the on-going conflicts in Kachin State and other ethnic regions. With the women still playing the central role in the families the costs of active participation in peace promoting activities becomes particularly high, and is exacerbated by lack of specific support of women political prisoners and obstacles in accessing justice as discussed above.^{xxi}

The joint activities and meetings during the last few months have contributed to an increased mutual understanding of the work of the various participating groups and organizations, but perhaps also made it clear that there are still some divides in terms of priorities and strategies. In particular, there is need for sensitization and trust building between groups based within Burma's borders and border-based groups. There is still a need to forge awareness and understanding that issues facing ethnic nationality women are rooted in the same issues facing the Burman majority women and can only be addressed if women form a movement across this divide as well as the divides between urban and rural women's groups, elite and illiterate, etc. Some issues are still controversial and highly sensitive, such as sexual violence by state and military actors, and some groups will still hesitate providing open support to the issues raised, for example in WLB's recently released report.

While the Women's Forum held in Burma had a broad scope bringing together numerous organizations, groups, MPs, business leaders, etc., the Convening in Chiang Mai sought to build on that with a focus on groups working on the ground on both sides of the border. There is still need to reach out and include more groups working at grassroots level in areas still not represented in the meetings so far for the movement to be more inclusive and representative. Strengthening women's organizations ability to engage in domestic advocacy is highly necessary, as it remains unclear how effective it is for activists to engage with institutions (Parliament, state parliaments, chief ministers, the Human Rights Commission, etc.). Additionally, many activists for years have focused on working underground and doing international advocacy; therefore, their needs to be some support for activists to transition into and develop their ideas for how to do advocacy domestically. At the same time it has become clear from the meetings that there are still issues the various groups do not necessarily agree on, especially in relation to prioritization. This can hinder the movement building process and identification of common goals, and it poses the question if there is need to develop a structure that allows for sub-groups and meetings around particular issues.

The women's groups represented at the Convening identified peace and an end to violence as an overarching goal uniting all three priority areas. As the Convening took place in the weeks just before the marking of the Violence Against Women's Day and the launch of the 16 days of activism, a joint message was agreed upon: "Women must be included for genuine peace."

Women's groups organized a national level ceremony on gender equality and violence against women on the VAW Day, involving prominent persons from politics, business and the arts, as well as events across the country and in the border areas.^{xxii} WLB had produced a short awareness raising video to be used by the groups, and the VAW events also launched a dressed in 'white campaign' during the 16 days of activism for the promotion of peace and an end to violence. Twenty-seven groups were involved, including groups that have previously not taken part in these joint events.^{xxiii} In a continuation of this campaign, groups

then organized efforts to wear sky blue every Saturday to show solidarity in demanding women's genuine participation in the peace process. This was an important step in the movement building process as it marked joint efforts on both sides of the border and with a large number of groups, organizations, and networks involved.

Recommendations

The groups have identified a need to move from meetings and discussions to actual joint strategy and action planning, outlining level of involvement and division of responsibilities. A continued joint strategy process will also enable increased sharing of resources and materials, which is important to a women's movement with limited financial as well as technical resources.

At the Convening, it was generally recognized that for a successful joint strategy and action plan development for women's rights there is an urgent need for further research and documentation of the types of violations faced by women. While some documentation on sexual violence against women has been provided by women's groups, so far there has been very little focus on the broader types of violations against women that reaches into both conflict and non-conflict times and areas, such as various forms of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, as a consequence of armed conflict and an escalation in large-scale development projects and business investment with involvement of the military.

Building on the current momentum, four immediate steps are proposed by WLB for continued movement building:

- Call for a new Convening for the same groups and organizations as well as additional groups active at the grassroots level for further development of a joint strategy and action plan;
- Call for 2nd Women's Forum to discuss status and the broader areas of collaboration as well as work undertaken on the ground and by sub-groups;
- Support for sub-group meetings in between in relation to particular issues / focus areas;
- A 2015 National Women Conference taking stock of developments in relation to women's situation in Burma and what a women's movement should aim to achieve following the 2015 elections. For this Conference, WON and WLB are aiming to establish an independent "Women Umbrella," serving as a collective effort within the international community moving forward.

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ⁱ http://peacewomen.org/news_article.php?id=6142&type=news

ⁱⁱ <http://womenofburma.org/kwat-oct-2013-undermining-the-peace-process/>

iii On most recent attacks: <http://www.bnionline.net/index.php/feature/kic/16643-burma-army-violates-ceasefire.html>

iv <http://www.burmapartnership.org/2013/09/rule-by-law/> and <http://www.burmapartnership.org/2013/06/conflicting-realities-reform-repression-and-human-rights-in-burma/> and http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/images/uploads/Thein_Sein_President_of_Burma.pdf

v Burma is a signatory to CEDAW, CRC as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2012; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2011; Charter of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in 2008; Human Rights Declaration of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2012 (which has been criticized for lack of conformity with international human rights standards, also in relation to women and SOGI).

vi <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/profile/crusading-peace-empowering-women-kachin-activist-finds-calling.html#.Uqh6kkmDji8.facebook>

vii A collection of recent sources on violence against women and related issues can be found here: <http://www.burmapartnership.org/category/resources/women/>

viii A recent incident that allegedly is being investigated: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/burma-military-investigates-alleged-rape-13-year-old-girl.html>

ix <http://karennews.org/2013/03/myanmar-needs-to-admit-rape-of-minority-women.html/>

x <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25730758>. The report can be downloaded here: <http://womenofburma.org/same-impunity-same-pattern-report-of-systematic-sexual-violence-in-burmas-ethnic-areas/>

xi <http://www.bnionline.net/index.php/feature/kic/16650-burma-army-using-rape-as-a-weapon-of-war.html> and <http://www.bnionline.net/index.php/news/imna/16656-womens-group-calls-burma-army-to-end-systematic-sexual-violence.html>

xii See <http://www.bnionline.net/index.php/feature/kic/16663-british-govt-accused-of-training-war-criminals.html> and http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/images/uploads/British_Training_Of_The_Burmese_Army.pdf

xiii Medica Mondiale has some resources discussing the status of implementation of UNSC Res. 1325 and the adoption of UNSC Res. 1820 available here: <http://www.medicamondiale.org/infothek/positionspapiere/?L=1>

xiv [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2122\(2013\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2122(2013)). See also the UN Secretary General's 7-point Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peace Building from 2010: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf

xv <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/21/un-resolution-2122-women-peace-processes>

xvi <http://www.burmapartnership.org/2014/01/the-burma-army-and-its-language-of-aggression/>

xvii <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/9190-what-is-the-peace-process-in-myanmar-local-and-global-realities.html> and http://peacewomen.org/assets/file/position_paper_-_burma_peace_funds.pdf

xviii See also a discussion of the complexity of ethnic conflict by various ethnic groups at a seminar in November 2013 here: http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/seminarbangkok112013_web_0.pdf

xix <http://www.burmapartnership.org/2013/05/where-are-the-women/>

xx An excellent and comprehensive discussion of gender and (post)conflict processes can be found in: F.D. Ni Aolain, D.F. Haynes & N. Cahn, *On the Frontlines: Gender, war, and the post-conflict process* (Oxford University Press 2011)

xxi <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/profile/crusading-peace-empowering-women-kachin-activist-finds-calling.html#.Uqh6kkmDji8.facebook>

xxii <http://www.burmapartnership.org/2013/11/cooperation-needed-to-end-violence-against-women-of-burma/>

^{xxiii} <http://www.irrawaddy.org/women-gender/activists-launch-campaign-raise-awareness-violence-women.html>