

(1) TITLE:

Women, Pluralism, and Political Participation in Peacebuilding, Democratizing and Developing Burma/Myanmar

(2) CONVENERS: Sar Yar Poine (MWO) and Chosein Yamahata (AGU)

(3) DESCRIPTION OF PANEL:

Decades of civil war and military rule have had a tremendous impact on the people of Myanmar. The brutal repression committed by the Burmese Army has left a deeply ingrained sense of distrust, grievance and fear in the minds of ethnic minority people. Myanmar is a society of great ethnic, ideological, religious, and social heterogeneity. However, the prolonged military dictatorship has transformed this rich diversity into deep division at various levels, exacerbated by inequality, discrimination, poverty and human insecurity. Therefore, on the one hand there have been a number of development and peace initiatives after the advent of NLD-administration, on the other hand, there is still a long way to go to build a fully democratic society that can bring sustainable peace and development to the people. Aung San Suu Kyi has stated many times that her government's top priority is to resolve ethnic conflict as soon as possible through an 'all-inclusive' peace process, but significant challenges remain to be addressed.

Against this backdrop, an increasing number of women's organizations have emerged and have in turn formed coalitions. Many women are joining hands across the ethnic boundaries playing an especially important role in the socio-environmental sphere. Some have even actively participated in the political decision-making processes in peacebuilding as well as underpinning democratization and development. Women play the roles of unifiers and peacemakers and have an innate endowment for promoting inclusiveness, and respecting diversity. Without women's presence and active participation in decision-making, it would be difficult to create a democratic and pluralistic society with the potential to bring about peace within the family, community, and the country since the society in Myanmar has been broken into pieces due to the multiple divisions.

Different approaches, various accomplishments, emerging challenges and promising opportunities are hoped to be exchanged, analysed and consolidated among presenters as well as the inputs from the audience for further applications.

(4) DOUBLE SESSION

Presenters:

- 1) Sar Yar Poine
- 2) Makiko Takeda
- 3) Moe Kathy
- 4) Hseng Noun
- 5) TBA
- 6) TBA

(5) Discussant: Myat The Thitsar