

POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 29

OFFICIAL MEDIA

PRESIDENT ADDRESSES 67TH UNGA SESSION

President Thein Sein visited New York from 24-30 September to attend the 67th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Session, which he addressed on 27 September. In his speech, he stressed that Burma is pursuing political, social and economic reforms, while concurrently being confronted with a number of major challenges that require both the continued support and patience of the Burmese, the UN and the international community. He highlighted significant developments that have been implemented to promote democratic changes including granting prisoners amnesty, the return of exiled political forces, the successful convening of the 2012 by-elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, the abolition of media censorship, the freedom of internet access, the establishment of workers' and employers' organizations and the increased participation of the people in the political process. He stressed that the cessation of all armed conflicts is a prerequisite for the building of genuine democracy, and that his government has placed a high priority on achieving a lasting peace in Burma. He noted that the government has reached cease-fires with 10 ethnic armed groups and will hold national-level negotiations to reach a final peace agreement to completely end hostilities. Regarding the recent communal violence in Rakhine State between Rakhine and Rohingya communities, he said that the issue could not be solved overnight, but that it will be resolved through short- and long-term measures using a multi-faceted approach and taking into account political, economic and social aspects. He also noted that opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now participating in the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House of Parliament) not only in her capacity as an Member of Parliament but also that of the Chairperson of the Rule of Law and Stability Committee of the Parliament and praised and congratulated her for being awarded the US Congressional Award for her efforts in promoting democracy.

In addition, the president also met with Suu Kyi separately on 25 September, and held meetings with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, as well as with several world leaders including Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheik Hasina, and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy. He also held private talks with Clinton Global Initiative Chairman former US President Bill Clinton and former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.¹ (*Please see Appendix A for full text of the President's statement*).

VICE-PRESIDENT ATTENDS WORKSHOP ON RAKHINE STATE REHABILITATION

A 2-day Workshop on Rehabilitation, Resettlement, Rule of Law and Sustainable Development was held in Naypyitaw from 22-23 September to discuss the development needs and rehabilitation of those affected by the communal unrests in Rakhine State. The workshop was jointly organized by Ministry of Border Affairs, UN agencies and the Myanmar Development and Resources Institute

¹ President U Thein Sein leaves for New York to attend 67th UN General Assembly – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-25.pdf> (NLM) 25 September 2012 (p. 1) / President U Thein Sein in New York –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-27.pdf> (NLM) 27 September 2012 (p. 1) /

Myanmar will be participating more actively in activities of United Nations in various fields / Standing as a responsible and respectable nation on the world stage, we will take challenges of 21st century in a bold and resolute manner –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 September 2012 (p. 1 & 2) /

Washington's recognition of Naypyitaw's reforms encourages the latter to continue its chosen path / Washington hopes Myanmar citizens would have opportunities to sell their products into US market –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 September 2012 (p. 16) /

President U Thein Sein meets with US Secretary of State Mrs Hillary Clinton, Thai Prime Minister Ms Yingluck Shinawatra and former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger -

<http://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/briefing-room/news/2012/09/28/id-739> (President's Official Website) 28 September 2012 /

President U Thein Sein meets President of 67th session of UN General Assembly, President of European Council, Bangladeshi Prime Minister –

<http://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/briefing-room/news/2012/09/29/id-742> (President's Official Website) 29 September 2012

(MDRI). Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham spoke at the opening session, where he said restoring normalcy to the region was vital and that he hoped the workshop would draft a blueprint for a sustainable development of Rakhine State. He also stressed the need to adopt long-term plans and inclusive measures to address the issues facing the Rakhine State and that it is crucial for the government, local organizations, UN agencies, international organizations and INGOs to be involved. He also stressed the need for both communities to forge mutual trust, sympathy and far-sightedness in order to create a harmonious society in the region.²

LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER VISITS AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE

Lower House Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann led a parliamentary delegation on a goodwill visit to Australia and Singapore from 17-26 September. In Australia, they held meetings with senior government ministers, governor-generals, senators and MPs, including Foreign Minister Bob Carr, Senate President John Hogg, Employment and Workplace Relations Minister Bill Shorter, Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Secretary Richard Marles and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Deputy Opposition Leader Julie Bishop, as well as New South Wales Governor Maria Bashir and former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. They also visited several universities and research institutes. The Speaker said the aim of the trip was to promote friendship and cooperation between the parliaments, as well as strengthening the friendship between the two governments and peoples, and to promoting investment, trade and cooperation in the technology, education and health sectors.

The delegation was in Singapore from 23-26 September, where they met several officials including Acting President J Y Pillay, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong. The Speaker expressed his appreciation for Singapore's support of Burma's on-going reform process and also gave a brief update on recent developments. He also reaffirmed the need to further strengthening of friendship and cooperation between the two parliaments, the two governments and peoples and boosting trade and economic ties.³

UPPER HOUSE SPEAKER MAKES OFFICIAL VISIT TO CHINA

A delegation led by Pyidaungsu and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint made an official visit to China from 19-24 September. In Shenzeng, he gave a speech at a ceremony to mark the International Day of Peace, which he described as an important step to promote strategic relations between Burma and China, and pledged that Burma would continue efforts to strengthen bi-lateral relations and to support the One China Policy. The ceremony was attended by Secretary of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Wang Yang, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and President of the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament Han Qide and other members of the association, leaders from ASEAN countries, and political and economic experts and personnel from UN agencies.

The Speaker met with the Deputy Minister Li Jinjun of the International Department of the People's Communist Party and said that the visit was in recognition of the relations between China and ASEAN. He also Vice-Chairman Han Qide separately and cordially exchanged views on regional stability, Burma's reform measures and further strengthening of cooperation and friendship between the two parliaments and people. The speaker also met with Chinese state media and attended a dinner hosted by Shaoguan People's Congress Chairman Zheng Zhentao.

The parliamentary delegation also visited Guangdong and met Chairman of the Standing Committee of Guangdong Province People's Congress Ou Guangyuan to discuss establishing relations between

² Complex rehabilitation tasks for restoring normal socio-economic lives of victims in Rakhine State will take time – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-23.pdf> (NLM) 23 September 2012 (p. 2)

³ Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker finds new areas of Myanmar-Australia cooperation – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-27.pdf> (NLM) 27 September 2012 (p. 1 & 8) / Singapore supports political and economic reforms in Myanmar, takes interest in investment in the country as well as in different economic spheres – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 September 2012 (p. 7)

the Guangdong and Burmese parliaments as well as cooperation in cultural exchange, mining and tourism sectors and economic and trade sectors.⁴

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

UNFC WRITES TO PRESIDENT THEIN SEIN PRESENTING OUTCOME OF THE ETHNIC NATIONALITIES CONSULTATION

The United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), the alliance of 11 ethnic armed movements, presented an alternate 6-point peace roadmap that a 3-day Ethnic Nationalities Consultation proposed to the Burmese President outlining an approach to furthering peace with ethnic peoples. In the roadmap, the Consultation called for the convening of a political dialogue, the holding of national and regional/state level conferences for ethnic races as well as a Union conference similar to the Panglong Agreement and a timeframe to conduct the peace process.

In his letter to President Thein Sein, UNFC Chairman and Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) Vice Chairman Lt-Gen N. Ban La stated that Points 1-4 of the Government's peace plan could be accepted by the UNFC. These include: (1) to remain forever in the Union; (2) to accept the Three National Causes i.e. Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and Perpetuation of national sovereignty; (3) to cooperate in economic and development tasks legally and (4) to cooperate in the elimination of narcotic drugs. However, "Point (5) Setting up a political party; Point (6) to accept the 2008 Constitution and to carry out amendment in the parliament according to the approval of the majority; Point (7) for eternal peace, the armed organizations are to enter the legal fold, enjoy equality, live and earn a living in accordance with the Constitution, and Point (8) Negotiation for transformation of armed organizations into one and only one armed organization, in accordance with the Constitution - are measures to control our armed ethnic resistance organizations and mould them into an entity as desired by the government, before any political settlement is achieved," and could not be accepted by the UNFC. The Chairman said that under such circumstances, reviewing and modification would be needed to prevent the internal building process from stalling and breaking up.

The 6-point alternate peace roadmap which has been conveyed to the President is the result of the Ethnic Nationalities Conference recently held from 14-16 September and attended by more than 130 representatives from armed and civil society organizations. Though it was not immediately apparent how the President would respond to the alternate roadmap, according to the government's top negotiator U Aung Min, "We're willing to make all necessary compromises to bring peace to the country."⁵ *(Please see Appendix B for full text of the UNFC Chairman's letter to the President)*

GOVERNMENT LAND-SEIZURE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE MOVES TO KAREN STATE

Members from the land investigation committee formed by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) met with land-seizure victims in Hpa-an on 26 September and Chief Minister of State U Zaw Min on 25 September respectively to discuss land seizure matters in Karen State. According to Mi Myint Than, a member of the parliamentary committee from the Lower House, land in Karen State had been seized by authorities from different government departments and that some land had even been confiscated by private companies. She added that in Mon State, however, most land is confiscated by the army. The group has yet to confirm the exact number acres of land confiscated, but is meeting with people and compiling a list of their complaints. Since the 1963 Land Acquisition Act, which nationalized ownership of all land across the country, confiscation practices have been

⁴ Injustice, dominance and breaches of fundamental human rights for years beget adverse consequences – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-25.pdf> (NLM) 25 September 2012 (p. 16 & 8) / Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker visits Shenzeng, Shaoguan, Guangzhou – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-26.pdf> (NLM) 26 September 2012 (p. 1 & 8)

⁵ Rebel peace roadmap presented to the president – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4975:rebel-peace-roadmap-presented-to-the-president&catid=85:politics&Itemid=266 (Shan Herald) 28 September 2012 / Letter of UNFC Chairman to President, U Thein Sein – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4976:letter-of-unfcs-chairman-to-president-u-thein-sein-&catid=102:mailbox&Itemid=279 (Shan Herald) 27 September 2012

widespread for a variety of reasons—including project construction, expansion of urban areas, establishment of industrial zones and building army bases. While Burma is an agricultural country where the majority of people are farmers, no one has had the right to protest land seizures during the last five decades of military rule. However, the recent political reforms have resulted in many victims beginning to speak up in an effort to get confiscated land returned.⁶

ANALYSIS

In his address to the United Nations, President Thein Sein stated that while the political, social and economic reforms taking place in Burma are irreversible, the country is also being confronted with a number of major challenges which require both the continued support and patience of its people, the UN and the international community at large. Reading between the lines, the President's statement reflects the government's commitment and willingness to reform while at the same time admitting that they will need the assistance of the international community. As a result, the trip to the UN has not only provided the President the opportunity to present his reformist agenda but also to re-establish Burma's presence within the international community after years of isolation. While acknowledging the role to be played by the international community is crucial to the democratic transition process in Burma, ultimately it is the Burmese leadership and its people who will need to take the lead. In this context, the role of Aung San Suu Kyi in her capacity as opposition MP will no doubt become more crucial than ever before.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that even with a reformist leader at the helm who is aided by other like-minded people, the success of the reforms cannot be assured and the on-going conflict in Kachin State only has a negative effect on the national reconciliation process. While no immediate end is in sight for the decades of ethnic armed conflict, the recent peace plan agreed at the Ethnic Nationalities Consultation and forwarded to the President by the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) should be accorded due consideration if cease-fire and peace agreements are to become a reality. The 'peace roadmap' once again highlights the need to convene a political dialogue at all levels together with calls to convene a Panglong-type conference. Whether the government is willing to accommodate the wishes of the ethnic peoples or continue to implement its own peace process remains to be seen.

⁶ Government Land-Seizure Investigation Committee Moves to Karen State –
<http://www.kaowao.org/2012news-September-26.php> (Kaowao) 26 September 2012

Appendix A:

PRESIDENT THEIN SEIN'S STATEMENT TO THE 67TH UNGA SESSION

Myanmar will be participating more actively in activities of United Nations in various fields

Standing as a responsible and respectable nation on the world stage, we will take challenges of 21st century in a bold and resolute manner

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Sept— *President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein delivered an address at the 67th United Nations General Assembly today. Following is the full-text of the speech of the President.*

Mr President,

Mr Secretary-General of the United Nations, Distinguished Delegates, First and foremost, I would like to congratulate you on your well-deserved election as the President of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your country, Serbia and Myanmar has traditionally enjoyed the close friendship and cooperation. Under your able leadership, the General Assembly will make deliberations on measures to address the challenges being faced by the world today. I am confident that your vast wisdom, rich experiences and high diplomatic skills would guide our deliberations to produce desired outcomes.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, H.E Mr Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his outstanding leadership at the 66th session.

Mr President,

Myanmar consistently pursues an independent and active foreign policy. One of the basic tenets of our foreign policy is to actively contribute towards the maintenance of international peace and security. In so doing, we encourage efforts to settle differences among nations by peaceful and amicable means. This position of ours matches well with the essence of one of the high-level themes of the current session, namely, "Settlement of disputes by Peaceful Coordination or Means."

Mr President,

There exist differing views and assessments on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Brazil in June this year. A number of important decisions were taken on various issues such as the renewing of commitments, the linkage of sustainable development to the Millennium Development Goals-MDGs, the renewable energy and the establishment of arrangements for a better coordination on the sustainable development. It is necessary for the member states to turn these decisions into actions in order to leave behind the legacy of a safe and sustainable environment to our future generations.

Mr President,

Since becoming a member, Myanmar has always adhered to the founding principles of the United Nations. Our participation in the General Assembly here in New York amply demonstrates our commitment to an active participation in and cooperation with the work of the Organization.

The world today is replete with new challenges and opportunities. Urbanization and industrialization are taking place in developing countries in an unprecedented scale. The rapid progress in information technology is giving an impression that our world is getting smaller. On the other hand, the natural environment and climate is encountering new threats and challenges. In short, the world is changing as never before.

In addition, it is also timely and appropriate to pay our attention to issues like the post-2015 Development Agenda and Rule of Law during the current session.

Mr President,

Myanmar is making progress on her democratic path. But this has not been an easy task. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to share our experiences in this regard. In the ongoing reform process, we are facing challenges as well as opportunities. Within a short time, the people of Myanmar have been able to bring about amazing changes. I feel greatly privileged and honoured to dutifully serve the people as their President at this crucial time in the history of our nation. I truly take my people as my own parents and elders.

After taking office about 18 months ago, the Parliament, the Judiciary, the Armed Forces, the national races, political parties, civil societies and the people at large have been taking tangible irreversible steps in the democratic transition and reform process. Leaving behind a system of authoritarian government wherein the executive, legislative and judicial powers were centralized, we have now been able to put in place a democratic government and a strong, viable parliament following a practice of check and balance.

Despite the challenges, we can now witness encouraging progress and significant developments in the country. They include granting of prisoners; the coming back with dignity of the exiled political forces; the successful convening of 2012 by-elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, the abolition of censorship of media,

the fourth estate; freedom of internet access; the establishment of workers' and employers' organizations and the increased participation of the people in the political process.

At the current stage of the political process, we can witness the emergence of democratic characteristics such as increasing of participation from different political forces and their mutual tolerance, the magnanimity, expansion of the scope of political participation of a representation and the accountability. Our government and other stakeholders have now been able to foster a new political culture of patience and dialogue.

Mr President,

The then main opposition leader Noble Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now participating in the Pyithu Hluttaw (Parliament) not only in her capacity as an MP (Member of Parliament) but also that of the Chairperson of the Rule of Law and Stability Committee of the Parliament.

During this week she is also in New York. As a Myanmar citizen, I would like to congratulate her for the honours she has received in this country in recognition of her efforts for democracy.

The political progress in our country is enhancing its political legitimacy. This, in turn facilitates the creation of basic political stability thereby paving the way for economic and social transformation necessary for better living standard of the people.

Mr President,

The legislative body has also been progressive well and functioning more effectively at each session and the parliament has now been able to adopt landmark laws through the democratic practices.

Laws and bylaws are being promulgated bearing in mind that: the economic development must not lead to the widening of the rich-poor gap; citizens' rights are to be protected; the natural environment is to be preserved; our workers are to enjoy rights in line with international standards. We are giving a careful attention to the investments in the extractive sector like the energy to ensure transparency and impartiality.

Mr President,

We believe that cessation of all armed conflicts are a prerequisite for the building of genuine democracy. As such, we place high priority on achieving a lasting peace in the country. In accordance with our motto "From War to Peace", we are working hard to bring an end the longstanding difficulties in the regions of our ethnic nationalities. We have so far achieved ceasefire agreements with 10 armed groups. While further strengthening confidence building measures, we will continue the peace talks. National level peace negotiations will then continue to reach a final peace agreement that would completely end the armed hostilities.

In order to redress the situation in northern part of Myanmar, the leaders of the Government Peace Work Committee and the Kachin armed group (KIA) are holding informal consultations and working to further strengthen the confidence building measures. We consider any loss of life and property from either side in the armed conflict as a loss for the country.

Mr President,

While the Government is resolutely pursuing political, social and economic reforms, some unfortunate and unexpected issues have come up in our way. A case in point is the recent communal violence in Rakhine State. In this connection, I would like to mention in the first place that the people inhabiting in our country, regardless of race, religion and gender, have the rights to live in peace and security.

As you are aware, a national level independent investigation commission has been established to investigate the issue. To ensure impartiality, the composition of the Commission is made up of representatives from all strata of the society, including the widely-respected personalities from the Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Hindu faiths. Upon completion of its task, the Commission will be submitting its findings and recommendations to me.

Demonstrating our determination to resolve the issue in a transparent manner, we have facilitated field visits to the Rakhine State by the representatives from the OIC, ASEAN, UN agencies, the United States and resident foreign diplomats in Myanmar. When it comes to the relief assistance, access is being facilitated to those organizations that are willing to provide it to both the communities without discrimination.

The issue at hand cannot be solved overnight. It will be resolved by taking short-term and long-term measures through a multi-faceted approach taking into account political, economic and social aspects. I sincerely believe that as an independent and sovereign state, Myanmar has the right to secure our borders and also to safeguard and protect our sovereignty. We will do our utmost to solve this issue in line with international norms.

Mr President,

I am well aware of the fact that Myanmar's democratic transformation process would be a complex and delicate one that requires patience. To complete this process, we certainly need the understanding and support from the United Nations and its member states, the international community as a whole and, last but not least, the people of Myanmar. At the same time, it is equally important that Myanmar should be viewed from a different and new perspective. It is also necessary for us to be able to work in a more conducive and favourable environment than never before.

Mr President,

Myanmar is now ushering in a new era. As a member in the family of nations, Myanmar will be participating more actively in the activities of the United Nations in various fields. Standing as a responsible and respectable nation on the world stage, we will take the challenges of the 21st century in a bold and resolute manner.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his re-election and on his achievements thus far.

Mr President,

Before concluding, allow me to mention briefly about an important figure. It is none other than U Thant, a brilliant son of Myanmar who had served as the third Secretary General of the United Nations. Even during his days, U Thant had had a vision of "One World". He envisioned a global society that is guided by a spirit of "One World", a world safe for diversity and a place of peaceful co existence where global citizens practice the virtues of tolerance, cooperation, understanding and compassion. We believe that if we materialize his vision, we will be speedily achieving a state of the world which is more peaceful and prosperous.

U Thant's tireless endeavours for peace and his achievements during his tenure as the Secretary-General of the United Nations will never be forgotten. The people of Myanmar will always take pride of and remember him as a great son of Myanmar.

I thank you.⁷

Appendix B:

LETTER OF UNFC CHAIRMAN TO PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN

Letter Nr. Na/ PaKaBa - 50 / 2012

Date: 27/ 09/ 2012

To

His Excellency President U Thein Sein
Government of the Union of Burma (Myanmar)
Union of Burma

Subject: Request for Negotiation to Resolve Political Problems

Excellency Mr. President,

Our United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) has been studying critically your work programs and reforms for the emergence of peace, stability, progress and the democratic system in the country. We presume that you are undertaking reforms with noble intentions for the country and the people.

Though we do not have any criticism against the democratic changes made in the political reform process carried by the government under your leadership, we find that there are programs, without fairness and equality, in the procedure for establishment of understanding and unity with the armed ethnic resistance organizations. For the rectification of those programs in time and with a view to the interest of the country and the people, we would like to submit work programs for peace, which bear equality and justice, and which are acceptable to us.

Though it is possible to negotiate for resolution of the points from (1) to (4), contained in the peace negotiation program at the Union level, issued by the government under your leadership - our view is that Point (5) Setting up a political party; Point (6) To accept the 2008 Constitution and to carry out amendment in the parliament according to the approval of the majority; Point (7) For eternal peace, the armed organizations are to enter the legal fold, enjoy equality, live and earn a living in accordance with the Constitution; and Point (8) Negotiation for transformation of armed organizations into one and only one armed organization, in accordance with the Constitution - are measures to control our armed ethnic resistance organizations and mould them into an entity as desired by the government, before any political settlement is achieved. As these

⁷ Myanmar will be participating more actively in activities of United Nations in various fields / Standing as a responsible and respectable nation on the world stage, we will take challenges of 21st century in a bold and resolute manner – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2012-09-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 September 2012 (p. 1 & 2)

deny equality, freedom and justice, it is not possible for us to accept them. Accordingly, we would like to urge you to review and modify them so as to prevent the internal peace building process from stalling and breaking up.

At the Ethnic Nationality Conference held from September 14 to 16, and which was participated by representatives of the armed ethnic resistance organizations, political organizations, youths and women organizations and civil society organizations, a 6-point political process of the ethnic nationalities for peace was adopted. We the ethnic nationalities believe that the 6 points prevents the taking of more advantage by one side or the other, and it is a political process for equal and fair negotiation. For that reason, on behalf of all the ethnic nationality forces, we the UNFC, propose for building national unity and internal peace in accordance with this process.

The 6 points of peace process of the ethnic nationalities are:

1. The armed ethnic nationality organizations, political parties, women and youths organizations and civil society organizations are to hold meetings and lay down points to be included in the Framework for Political Dialogue;
2. Representatives of the Union government and the unified representatives of the armed ethnic organizations are to hold meetings and establish the Framework for Political Dialogue
 - a. Holding meetings in a place acceptable to both sides;
 - b. Proceedings of the meetings are to be conducted in the presence of neutral international observers and the points agreed upon are to be promulgated jointly for public knowledge.
3. After establishing the Framework for Political Dialogue by representatives of the government and the armed ethnic resistance organizations, conferences of the ethnic peoples are to be held in the states or in divisions, as necessary, for clarification and approval;
4. To hold a national conference of the various nationalities participated by representatives of the ethnic armed organizations, political parties, women and youths organizations and civil society organizations;
5. A Union conference, participated by an equal number of representatives from the ethnic forces, the democratic forces and the government is to be held in the form, acceptable to the three forces, and based on Panglong Spirit; the agreements adopted by the conference are to be regarded as the "Union Accord" and
6. The Union Accord is to be implemented in accordance with a time frame, precisely.

With cordial regards,

Lt. General N-Ban La

Chairman

United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC)⁸

⁸ Letter of UNFC Chairman to President, U Thein Sein – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4976:letter-of-unfcs-chairman-to-president-u-thein-sein-&catid=102:mailbox&Itemid=279 (Shan Herald) 27 September 2012