

**Statement 4/2013 of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2013**

1. On the International Human Rights Day, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) joins the international community in celebrating this auspicious day.
2. The International Human Rights Day is especially significant for the Commission. The Commission was able to distribute for the first time the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Myanmar language to certain important sectors of the Government, the Parliament and the Public in 2013. The Commission will continue to distribute this important document on a wider scale so that the Myanmar community will become fully aware of what their inalienable rights are.
3. During 2013, the Commission was able to intensify its activities to promote and protect human rights by conducting certain outreach activities for the first time such as visits to Taikkyi and Okkan townships in Yangon Region, Okpo, Gyobingauk, Zigon and Nattalin townships in Bago Region, Mandalay, Wundwin, Pyawbwe and Meiktila townships in Mandalay Region, Lashio township in Shan State, Sittway, Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, MraukU and Thandwe townships in Rakhine State and visits to the prisons in Kawthoung and Mawlamyine townships in September. Based on the findings during these visits, the Commission submitted many important recommendations to the Government so that necessary and preventive measures could be taken to prevent acts of violence from happening again in those townships and to improve the situation in the prisons under reference.
4. On the promotion of human rights, the Commission held several workshops in Myanmar on some important human rights themes in cooperation with the office of the High Commissioner Human Rights (OHCHR), Regional Office in Bangkok and the Raoual Wallenberg institute of Sweden. The themes covered in these workshops included such important subjects as Business and Human Rights and the Media. These workshops also included two workshops on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) for the specific objective of preparing the relevant Ministries' Officials for their future role in implementing these two Covenants when Myanmar becomes State party to them. Worth special mentioning is the Workshop on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) jointly organized in Nay Pyi Taw by the MNHRC and OHCHR, Bangkok. The active participation of Parliamentarians, Government Officials, Civil Society representatives and the Commission Members will certainly contribute to the UPR process and the preparation of the UPR Report of Myanmar to the Human Rights Council due in 2015.
5. In its promotion work, the commission actively participated in the workshops organized for civil society in Yangon and Mandalay by OHCHR. Civil Society representatives were also invited to the commission to brief them on its experiences during the field investigation trips by the commissioners and to seek their views on the enabling law of the Commission, which is expected to be adopted by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The engagement with the civil society will continue to feature as priority area in the future activities of the Commission.

6. Regarding the protection of human rights, the Commission has received a total of 1599 complaints from 1 January to 31 October 2013, out of which 1206 complaints have been examined by the Commission and the relevant complaints have been forwarded to the Government for necessary actions and remedies. While the flow of complaints remains persistent and the Commission appreciates the cooperation of the relevant Departments of the Government, the responses still indicate that there remains much to be done to improve the complaint handling mechanism as a whole. The commission is planning to take effective measures such as more active conciliation between the concerned parties and more verification and investigation trips to the scenes of violations.
7. The MNHRC cooperation at the regional level remains as strong as last year by active participation of the Commission Members in all regional meetings on human rights and by engaging with regional level human rights organizations such as Southeast Asian National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) and the Asia Pacific Forum (APF). Through its cooperation with the APF, the Commission has already formulated a Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2016 for the promotion and protection of human rights under which many activities are planned at domestic, regional and international levels.
8. On this Human Rights Day, the commission fervently hopes that it will receive the full cooperation from all the relevant stakeholders in the country in fulfillment of its mandate of promotion and protection of human rights in Myanmar, without which the vision of a Myanmar Society where human rights are respected, promoted, protected and fulfilled will not be realized.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
