

Message from the President U Win Myint, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on Commemoration of the 71st Independence Day

4th January 2019

Dear Esteemed Citizens, On the auspicious occasion of the 71st Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all national races.

Myanmar, which had existed as an independent and sovereign country throughout the history, was invaded by the British Colonists in 1824, 1852 and 1885 and lost its independence in November 1885. To regain independence, all national races together with the sharp-witted and patriotic leaders, sacrificed their blood and sweat with untiring perseverance and diligence, under the guidance of the national hero, the founding father of Tatmadaw, and the architect of independence General Aung San, who had both courage and fortitude.

Due to the united effort of all the nationals, Myanmar regained its independence and emerged as the sovereign state, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on 4th January 1948. The architect of Independence General Aung San claimed that "... only when the country practises the democratic system, will there be independence. Only that system ensures peace. Therefore, we must aim to build a democratic nation." He also stated that "In my opinion, we cannot build a Unitary State, meant only for one major national race. We must build a federal state, specifying the rights of each national race.

After gaining independence, due to the divide-and-rule policy practised by the colonists, trust among ethnic brethren became thinner and suspicion grew stronger, resulting in different kinds of conflicts among national races. As we have inherited negative consequences, peace and stability of the country has deteriorated and our country has been lagged behind other countries.

Taking lessons from those negative experiences in history, all the national citizens must strive for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of the national unity and perpetuation of sovereignty with the collaborative effort of all the national brethren, so that our country would eternally stand as a proud, peaceful and prosperous Union in the world.

Now is the time when all the national citizens are trying to build a Democratic Federal Union envisioned by General Aung San, the architect of independence and other patriotic leaders, under the leadership of the government. The 21st Century Panglong Union Peace conferences have been held for national reconciliation and peace. The third 21st Century Panglong Conference has successfully been convened and agreements on democratic practices and federal principles have been reached. A peaceful and prosperous democratic federal union will surely be built through mutual trust and cooperation and by strengthening the national unity and national reconciliation.

The main ingredient required for the success of peace process and building a democratic federal union is trust. All the national brethren must cooperate in finding solutions, having complete trust among them. With the everlasting solidarity of all the national races, we must strive together for the emergence of a constitution drafted in accordance with the democratic practices and federal

principles that suit our nation.

Thus, I would like to urge all the national people to work in unity for the realization of the following five national objectives of the 71st Anniversary of the Independence Day, with commitment to build a democratic federal union whereby all national people can enjoy justice, freedom, equal rights and self-determination.

- To protect our nation with the 'united effort' for the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of the national unity and perpetuation of sovereignty
- To strive for the emergence of a constitution that is suitable for the country drafted in accordance with democratic principles and norms to be able to build a Democratic Federal Union
- To effectively prohibit the drug abuses that can harm the health and morality of the nationals
- To ensure the well-balanced development of states and regions
- To support the government's endeavor for the development of the proper market-oriented economic system and the development of the private sector I would like to urge all the national people to strive with good will for the building of a democratic federal union; for peace, prosperity and modernization of the union; and for everyone to enjoy the fruits of Democracy regardless of the states and regions they reside in.