

Women's League of Burma

23 December 2002

Statement on the Second Congress

The 2nd Congress of the WLB was held in a liberated area near the Thai-Burma border on 15-18 December 2002.

The WLB was established on 9 December 1999, comprising eleven women's organizations based along Burma's borders with India, Bangladesh and Thailand. The aims and objectives of the WLB as laid down by founding members are: to work for the empowerment and advancement of the status of women; to build trust, solidarity and mutual understanding among women of all nationalities in Burma; and to work for the increased participation of women in the democracy movement, and peace and national reconciliation process.

Since the foundation of the umbrella organization, the WLB has worked on capacity building of women, international advocacy and elimination of discrimination and violence against women. During the past two years, the WLB has been able to raise the voices of women from Burma within the democratic movement locally and also internationally.

20 representatives from member organizations, the working team of the first Congress term, and observers from member groups, altogether 32 women, attended the 2nd congress. The WLB's Secretariat submitted an overall report to the Congress and the Congress reviewed the report. Representatives to the congress discussed and agreed upon WLB's policies, future work plans, and shared ideas and suggestions on how to improve the implementation of the programs. The Congress also reviewed the WLB's constitution and made some amendments.

The WLB has declared that the Women's League of Burma is a political organization. People in Burma are facing violence and injustice as a result of the decades-long civil war and lack of democracy. The WLB believes that it is essential for women to be involved in peace-building and development in society and therefore the Congress made a decision to draw up and implement a series of work plans toward peace in Burma.

The WLB member organizations named their Presidium Board members who will make policies and decisions, and selected three secretaries to oversee the programs for the 2002-2004 term. The Congress identified priority areas as: peace building towards national reconciliation, promotion of gender equality and increased participation of women in political leadership.

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