



**The Constitutional Committee on the Revelation of the People's
Aspirations (CCRPA)
Workshop No. (1)**

Press Release

4st October, 2004

The Constitutional Committee on the Revelation of the People's Aspirations (CCRPA) which is jointly formed by the Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC) and the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) (NLD-LA) held a workshop on the revelation of the people's aspirations for the future constitution. It took place on the Thai-Burma border on the 3rd of October, 2004. Over 80 Burmese migrant workers in Thailand attended the workshop. The chairperson of the CCRPA Duwa Zau Awng, the elected Member of Parliament from Waingmaw Township, Kachin State, delivered the opening speech of the workshop. Both the sitting president of the workshop, U Kyaw Thwin who is the secretary of the committee, and the committee member Dr. Myo Win, gave speeches at the workshop.

The Working Groups' members of the committee discussed primarily the rights and legal knowledge on constitution so that the workers would gain constitutional awareness and could share their aspirations on constitution.

At the outset, Naw Cho Cho Thar Htet from Research and Documentation Working Group **introduces the subject of constitution**. She stated that some people in Burma fear laws and that we have to struggle to write the new constitution based on people's aspirations. She added that people would have to attempt to stop the government abuses of power.

In the human rights discussion U Khin Maung Win ,from Holding Mass Meeting Working Group, embarked upon basic human rights by asking what is the nature of human beings and what kind of support is needed for the survival and the development of human beings. One worker answered **“Humans have knowledge, sympathy, kindness, the right to think, they support and respect each other”**. Another worker said that **humans need environment, but also knowledge required for creative thinking, and for more awareness of both social and political issues and finally humans need to work for their survival**.

U Tun Tun Aung from Holding Mass Meeting Working Group explained that **personal security**, the protection from someone's, or especially authorities' abuse, should be guaranteed in the constitution. The migrant workers responded that they are always concerned with their security, their freedom of movement and the sexual abuses on women.

Mi Nyan Htaw from Research and Documentation Working Group started her discussion in a very interesting way by asking what human beings need to live. The workers answered that humans need life. She added that life could not be invented and gave the example of **the right to life** of the Netherlands. As an example she discussed the drug case of a Dutch man in Thailand. At first, the man was punished by the Thai court of death penalty for trading drugs. However the Thai court could not apply the sentence because the right to life in the Netherlands' constitution is firmly prescribed.

The elected MPs and members of the committee conversed warmly with the migrant workers during the lunch.

Later, Khun Robert from Communication and Information Working Group talked about the **freedom of movement** in the constitution. In his discussion, he stated that citizens from democratic countries could travel abroad and return to their own country freely. Workers can take 45 days off and can travel around the world for their holidays.

Ko Kyaw Htun from Holding Mass Meeting Working Group talked about the **freedom of association** that is to say the right for workers to form trade unions, to promote labor's rights and to find remedies for their grievances.

Ko San Thar Aung from Holding Mass Meeting Working Group argued about the role of people's participation in the process of drafting the Constitution by giving example of the drafting process of the Thai constitution in 1997. The 99 members of the drafting committee had collected the aspirations of Thai people. Beforehand they had to educate people about constitution. The committee received 2 millions suggestive letters from Thai people.

At the end, migrant workers asked questions. They wanted to know whether people can object to laws. They were also interested in the issue of education. They thought that if a new democratic government emanates, universities should be brought back together like before.

In conclusion, U Kyaw Thwin expressed his gratitude to the migrant workers for their attendance despite the various pressures. He encouraged them to learn more about constitution to be able to reveal their aspirations with confidence lately.

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(CCRPA)