

**Special Feature**

**"The Facts", issued by Myanmar Embassy, London.**

**"The National Convention in Myanmar— The Facts"**

1. The National Convention that opened on May 17, 2004, is a resumption of the constitutional convention that adjourned in 1996 after the delegates of the National League for Democracy (NLD) were withdrawn and subsequently expelled according to disciplinary rules of the convention.

2. The Government of Myanmar, manifesting its goodwill and magnanimity, invited back representatives of all political parties (including the expelled NLD delegates) and other delegates of the original convention as well as representatives of ethnic nationality groups who had not then returned to the legal fold.

3. The statistical breakdown of 44 delegates from political parties who joined the reconvened National Convention is as follows:

(i)	Kokang Democracy and Unity Party	- 4	delegates
(ii)	National Unity Party	- 8	delegates
(iii)	Union Kyain Nationals League	- 3	delegates
(iv)	Union Pa-O Nationals League	- 4	delegates
(v)	Myo (Kahmee) National Unity Group	- 6	delegates
(vi)	Lahu National Development Party	- 3	delegates
(vii)	Wa National Development Party	- 5	delegates
(viii)	Independent candidates elected in 1990	- 11	delegates

(In the last category there are 6 candidates originally elected under the NLD but were later expelled from the League. The 44 invited delegates from the NLD, the Shan NLD and a small Kokang party have decided so far not to attend the National Convention.)

4. The statistical breakdown of 424 delegates from various ethnic nationalities are as follows:-

(i)	Kachin	- 44	delegates
(ii)	Kayah	- 25	delegates
(iii)	Kayin	- 50	delegates
(iv)	Chin	- 25	delegates
(v)	Mon	- 30	delegates
(vi)	Rakhine	- 37	delegates
(vii)	Shan	- 102	delegates
(viii)	Pa-O	- 28	delegates
(ix)	Kokang	- 16	delegates
(x)	Palaung	- 15	delegates
(xi)	Wa	- 13	delegates
(xii)	Lahu	- 11	delegates
(xiii)	Danu	- 10	delegates
(xiv)	Myo (Kahmee)	- 7	delegates
(xv)	Naga	- 6	delegates
(xvi)	Ahkha	- 5	delegates

5. As in the original convention, the present convention is also attended by delegations from other strata of Myanmar society, namely, the Peasants delegation, Workers delegation, Intellectuals and Intelligentsia delegation, State Service delegation and other invited delegates.

As such, a total of 1076 invited delegates from 8 strata of Myanmar society are currently attending, discussing and deliberating on the fundamental guidelines of the new national constitution based on which the actual drafting of the constitution will take place. Since only 44 delegates belonging to three of the ten officially registered political parties have failed to be present on the opening day of the convention it was announced that 98.99 percent of all invitees have participated in this important historic step toward restoration of a constitutional and democratically elected government in the Union of Myanmar.

This is an actual implementation of the seven-step political Road Map to Democracy outlined by the Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar on 30 August 2003.

Although some may argue that the ideal scenario would have been to meet all the demands of all the political parties and wait till everyone could join, the fact remains that the convention has been adjourned for 8 years creating an undesirable political hiatus. It should be borne in mind that any further delay would also delay Myanmar's transition to a constitutional government and the final goal of installing a multi-party democratic political system for the country.

After all, the importance of the Union's ethnic nationalities who have abandoned their armed struggles cannot be underestimated in a country that has seen 5 decades of armed insurgencies. It would be unfair to make them and the non-political silent majority of Myanmar people to wait any longer.