STATEMENT 116 (12/98)

1. Out of a pure and generous heart and filled with charitable intentions, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy donated rice to the impoverished people from all the townships in the Rangoon Division on two occasions. The first time was on the anniversary of the National Day (13 Nov 1998) and the second was on 30 November 1998 at about 13:00 hours. The distribution centre was at the NLD head office at 67B, west Shwegondine Road, Bahan Township.

2. Everything went smoothly on the first occasion but on the second occasion the authorities blockaded the West Shwegondine Road when the time fixed for distribution drew near. This caused great inconvenience and problems to those who were looking forward to be the beneficiaries of this charity. An ugly incident that marred this event was experienced by one of the donees who was handcuffed and prevented by a group of "Lonehtein" (Special anti-riot police force instituted by the authorities). This illegal restraint amounts to a criminal offence. The man's poverty and destitution caused him to struggle and free himself from the shackles to arrive at the scene with bruised wrists.

3. Charitable distribution of food is considered an act of great merit by Buddhists. We should shower praises on those performing such good deeds. Buddhist Scriptures teach us that obstructing and preventing the performance of such charitable acts can earn one a place in the four nether worlds and denying food to other will transform you after death into a ghost, ghost, goblin etc in one of the four states of suffering.

4. We urge and remind the authorities that they should refrain doing what is not appropriate.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

1 December 1998.