

**International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (Altsean-Burma)**

**Oral Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the
Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burma**

**19th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
March 15, 2012**

FIDH and Altsean-Burma welcome the report by the Special Rapporteur and his emphasis on the situation political prisoners, institutional reforms, and accountability for gross human rights violations. We acknowledge that the government has made commitments, but the small positive steps taken so far still do not meet key benchmarks that are necessary to begin a credible process of national reconciliation.

We call on the government to immediately and unconditionally release all remaining political prisoners, ensure their full rehabilitation, and guarantee their right to participate freely in public life. The most recent release was not unconditional and the released political prisoners could be re-arrested at any time. There are already reports of harassment against them as well as restrictions on their freedom of movement, including through denying their right to obtain a passport.

We regret that the Parliament has so far failed to repeal or amend the laws identified by the Special Rapporteur as in contravention of international human rights standards. No reforms would be credible or sustainable as long as these laws remain on the book.

Attacks against civilians and serious crimes, including sexual violence against women, continue in ethnic areas, especially in Kachin State. Lasting peace and reconciliation requires above all a broad-based and inclusive political dialogue that fully addresses the root causes of conflict, including by fulfilling the rights of victims to truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition. The meaningful participation and representation of women in negotiating and implementing peace agreements must be realized.

We call on the government to cease attacks in ethnic nationalities areas and ensure that an independent investigation into all allegations of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law be initiated without delay, with a view to establish truth, justice and accountability.

It is precisely because of the potential for greater change and the existence of numerous obstacles that the human rights situation in the country requires more than ever the close attention of the international community to ensure that genuine reforms will take place as promised and to assess the progress of implementing previous recommendations made by the Council and the Special Rapporteur.