

## **Statement on the Right to Information in Myanmar**

We, civil society participants in a series of workshops on the right to information that have taken place in Yangon, Mandalay and Shan:

***Noting*** the importance for citizens of having guaranteed access to information, in order to ensure meaningful participation on issues of public importance;

***Aware*** that the creation of a more accountable and responsive government is a critical part of Myanmar's ongoing democratic reforms;

***Stressing*** the importance of civil society engagement and consultation in the development of a strong right to information in Myanmar;

***Stressing*** that progress towards democratisation is a fragile thing, which can be undermined if forward momentum falters;

***Aware*** that the right to information is a key prerequisite for a healthy participatory democracy, and is important for advancing a range of important advocacy issues;

***Adopt*** the following Statement on the importance of the right to information for Myanmar's democratic transition:

The right to information is of fundamental importance as a human right, and has many benefits, including in combating corruption, promoting sound development, enhancing participatory government, promoting public accountability and generating respect for human rights and the dignity of the people.

Over the past few years, Myanmar has taken important steps towards democratisation, but the country still has a long way to go in improving governance, transparency and accountability.

Myanmar should establish a legal framework for the right to information through a consultative process with key stakeholders, including journalists and civil society.

We commit to working collaboratively together to achieve these goals, and we urge Myanmar's government to engage constructively with civil society to create and implement a strong right to information.