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*PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

### **Politicians Graduate from First Multiparty Myanmar School of Politics**

Dawei, Tanintharyi Region, Republic of the Union of Myanmar – 15 politicians from Tanintharyi Region became the first graduates from the Myanmar School of Politics (MySoP) during a ceremony in Dawei earlier today.

The graduates comprised three politicians of each of the registered political parties in Tanintharyi region: DNP, DPM, NLD, NUP, USDP, as well as one member from the Regional Election Commission.

MySoP is an innovative multiparty programme, held during 4 one-week periods of intensive training stretched over a 2-month period. The programme took place in a closed retreat setting in Tanintharyi region, the home state of all participants. The MySoP participants spent 24 hours a-day together, aimed both at providing a serene setting to fully absorb the knowledge, and the chance for participants to get to know each other across party lines.

MySoP participants were trained by teachers from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, and Thailand in political theory and practice. The course was aimed at increasing the democratic skills, knowledge and practice of the politicians and their parties. This included effective policy development, public consultation, political decision-making, election campaigning, and transitional democracy. Enhancing multiparty dialogue was the second aim of the course.

The diplomas were awarded by Chief Minister of Tanintharyi region U Myat Ko, NIMD Programme Manager Ms. Maaïke van der Werf and Demo Finland's Executive Director Ms. Tiina Kukkamaa-Bah.

Says Chief Minister U Myat Ko:

'No matter what our differences are and what party we belong to, we all live in Tanintharyi region and together we are aiming to try hard to develop this area. We may have different perspectives on things but that no longer stops us from moving forward together. Therefore I appreciate MySoP and all the participants, who have in this course had the chance to learn from international perspectives.'

Says Ms. Maaïke van der Werf: 'We are impressed by the positive attitude of the participating politicians towards multiparty learning, both from the executive level as well as from the up-and-coming 'high potential' ones. The fact that all MySoP students



easily made the required 90% attendance rate shows the enormous motivation of the students. All this combined shows the level of commitment of all political parties to learn and contribute to the democratic transition in Myanmar. NIMD and Demo Finland are very impressed to have witnessed this commitment. We look forward to supporting the democratic transition in Myanmar to the fullest by rolling out additional MySoPs in other regions/states in the near future.'

Says Ms. Tiina Kukkamaa-Bah: 'We are very happy to see the first group of students of MySoP graduate and have been extremely impressed with the enthusiasm, openness, and commitment of the students. Democracy cannot function without democrats, and political parties in Myanmar are in a key position in developing democracy in Myanmar to respond to local needs. We, Demo Finland and NIMD can provide the tools and comparative knowledge for that task, but the solutions are always local.'

MySoP is organized by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and Demo Finland, and is held with the support of the Union Election Commission (UEC) and has at its two stated aims to:

**1. Strengthen the democratic role of political parties in a multi-party setting.**

This concerns enhancing the democratic skills, knowledge and practice of politicians and parties at the regional level. MySoP participants will gain the skills and tools necessary for more effective policy development, public consultation, and political decision-making.

**2. Advance multiparty dialogue.** MySoP consists of four 5-day training sessions held in a retreat setting on location within the home region/state. Each session will be attended by the same selected members from the main registered parties in the particular region/state. These participants are taught within the same room to enhance cross-party dialogue.

Since 2000, NIMD established Schools of Politics in 8 countries, including Indonesia. While building on this experience, MySoP has specifically been designed by NIMD and Demo Finland for the Myanmar context.

NIMD is an organization founded by the 7 largest political parties in the Netherlands in 2000. NIMD has worked in over 25 countries throughout the world, supporting over 150 political parties. NIMD focuses on advancing multiparty dialogue as well as on strengthening capacities (knowledge and skills) of political parties.

Demo Finland is an organisation of Finnish parliamentary parties founded in 2005 working globally to strengthen pluralistic multiparty-democracy, constructive cross-party cooperation, and the ability of politicians to peacefully impact socio-political development.



Netherlands Institute for  
**Multiparty Democracy**



Both NIMD and Demo Finland are impartial organizations and always work in a multiparty setting.

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[www.nimd.org](http://www.nimd.org)

[www.demofinland.org](http://www.demofinland.org)

Photo credit: MySoP

Photo text: Chief Minister of Tanintharyi region U Myat Ko and NIMD & Demo Finland representatives present diplomas to a Myanmar School of Politics graduate at a ceremony in Dawei, Tanintharyi region.

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