

U.S. Assistance for Elections and Political Process

March 2015

The United States welcomes the Myanmar government's commitment to hold a general election in late 2015. The 2015 election will be an important milestone in Myanmar's transition to democracy and an opportunity to reaffirm to the world its commitment to political reform. U.S. assistance supports the country's efforts to prepare for this historic event. The U.S. government is providing more than \$18 million in assistance to strengthen the institutions of democracy and support civil society, political parties, the media, and government to conduct inclusive, transparent, and credible elections in 2015. Elections assistance will:

Promote International Standards: U.S. assistance to the Union Election Commission (UEC) includes technical assistance, training, and professional development on international best practices to strengthen overall capacity, operational effectiveness, and transparency. Technical assistance covers a number of areas, including: inclusion of ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities in elections; voter registration; Election Day operations; and, strategic communication, including voter education. Continued dialogue between the UEC and all election stakeholders, including civil society, political parties, candidates, and the media will increase public confidence in the electoral process.

Key Achievements

- Partnered with more than 50 CSOs on voter and civic education, domestic observation, and inclusion activities
- Established the Parliamentary Resource Center to assist Parliament
- Trained more than 5400 political party members from 67 political parties

Increase Voter Participation in the Elections: The United States assists civil society and media organizations to improve voter education and voter turnout on Election Day. U.S. assistance enables civil society organizations to conduct nationwide voter education campaigns, as well as to deploy nonpartisan, independent, accredited observers to monitor election season, including the voter list update and Election Day. U.S.-supported media training helps to ensure that voters have access to credible information on the electoral process.

Improve the Functioning of the Parliament: U.S. assistance supports Parliamentarians in carrying out their legislative, budgeting, and oversight responsibilities in an effective and transparent manner. In 2013, the Parliamentary Resource Center (PRC) was established in Nay Pyi Taw to provide Parliamentarians from all political parties access to research and resources directly related to their work. The PRC hosts seminars, workshops, and discussions for Parliamentarians, political parties, and civil society organizations on a range of legislative issues. The U.S. government has, and will continue to, facilitate policy and legislative consultations between civil society organizations and the Myanmar government.

Strengthen the Capacity of Political Parties to Represent Citizens' Interests: The U.S. government supports a broad range of institutional development activities for all political parties to improve their ability to represent the people of Myanmar. For example, through training, political parties are encouraged to establish and manage effective party offices and ensure their party policies are representative and inclusive. Training promotes political parties' outreach to their constituents to strengthen the link between the people and their representatives, with the goal of making sure all voices are heard. The U.S. will continue to support programs such as the Leadership Training School that increase the civic participation of women in the political process. In compliance with Myanmar law, any support for political parties will continue to be offered equally to all parties.

For additional information on the U.S. Government's assistance work in Myanmar, please contact: Saskia Funston, USAID Development Outreach and Communications, funstonsa@state.gov. For further information please refer to the following: <http://burma.usembassy.gov> (Under Embassy Highlights tab) <http://burma.usembassy.gov/archives.html>.