

National League for Democracy

2015 Election Manifesto

Authorised Translation

Note on the translation: This document is the authorised English-language translation of the original Burmese-language manifesto. In case of any perceived discrepancy between the two versions, the Burmese-language manifesto remains the definitive version.

Message from National League for Democracy Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The NLD, which emerged from the 1988 democratic struggle, has strived for over 27 years to represent people from all parts of society. Our people know that despite facing many difficulties, persecution and dangers, the NLD has always stood firmly for democracy, human rights and the establishment of a federal union.

When the NLD was first established, its primary goals included: the emergence of a truly democratic government that would guarantee basic human rights and be in line with the wishes of the people; the flourishing of a democratic political system in accordance with the desire of the people of Burma; and the laying down of foundations for a strong and durable union. The NLD is still working towards those goals today- and the implementation of those goals will require an NLD-led government.

The NLD contested the by-elections held on 1st April 2012 on the policy platform of constitutional amendment, internal peace, and rule of law. Although the NLD won 43 of the 44 seats that it contested, this constituted less than 5% of the overall seats in Parliament. The NLD was therefore not in a position to be able to implement its objectives.

In the upcoming general election on 8th November, the NLD will contest almost every constituency across the country. I believe that we will be able to win this election and form the new government. This election manifesto lays out, sector by sector, the policies and principles that we will follow if we are able to form a government. We will be able to achieve this only with the support and encouragement of the people of our country. This is the time for change, and I strongly urge you to vote for the NLD.

In establishing a democratic federal union, the NLD will hold firmly to the goal of national reconciliation.

(signed) Aung San Suu Kyi

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It is time to change the lives of our people.

To change the lives of our people, the NLD will strive for:

- 1) ethnic affairs and internal peace.*
- 2) a constitution that ensures that all the people of our country can live together in tranquility and security.*
- 3) a system of government that will fairly and justly defend the people.*
- 4) the freedom and security to prosper.*

1. Ethnic affairs and internal peace

The following actions will be taken for ethnic affairs and internal peace:

1. Work towards a peaceful, prosperous and durable Union, through solidarity with all ethnic groups.
2. Hold political dialogue based on the Panglong spirit in order to address the roots of internal armed conflict and enable people to live in security and tranquility.
3. Strive for the establishment of a genuine federal democratic union based on the principles of freedom, equal rights and self-determination.
4. Lay down transparent projects for the balanced development of all the States and Regions.
5. Work to ensure a fair distribution across the country of the profits from natural resource extraction, in accordance with the principles of a federal union.
6. Resolve problems between ethnic groups through dialogue based on mutual respect.

2. A constitution that ensures that all the people of our country can live together in tranquility and security.

The current constitution will be amended based on the principles below, to ensure that all the people of our country can live together in tranquility and security.

1. To be in accordance with basic human rights and democratic standards.
2. To ensure internal consistency of the constitution.
3. To guarantee ethnic rights and establish a federal democratic union.
4. To create a genuine multi-party democratic system.
5. To ensure that the three branches of government responsible for mutual checks and balances- the legislative, executive and judiciary- are on an equal footing.
6. To defend and protect the equal rights of citizens.

3. A system of government that will fairly and justly defend the people.

a) The following actions will be taken in order to develop a system of government that can fairly and justly defend the people and ensure freedom and security for all.

1. Reduce the number of government ministries in order to decrease government expenditure and establish a lean and efficient government.
2. Take effective action as necessary in order to establish a society free of corruption.
3. Amend and enact legislation as required for the benefit of the people.
4. Establish a judicial system that is fair and unbiased.
5. Establish executive and judicial systems that support the rule of law.
6. Revoke legislation that harms the freedom and security that people should have by right.
7. Defend effectively those rights guaranteed by the constitution, and strengthen those rights in accordance with the present era.

b) The following actions will be taken in order to establish a fair and unbiased judicial system:

1. The Union Supreme Court will be the highest court of the state.
2. The judiciary must stand independently and on an equal footing with the legislative and executive branches. The judiciary must be free of the influence and control of the executive branch.
3. The Union Supreme Court must have the independent authority to oversee and supervise the subordinate courts.
4. Except where restricted under the law, judicial proceedings should be open to the public. The accused must be given the full right to defend him/herself in accordance with the law.
5. Necessary measures will be enacted in order to ensure that judges have independent judicial authority in accordance with the law.
6. Individuals must be considered innocent under the law until sentence has been passed.

c) The following actions will be taken for the defence and security of the country:

1. The Tatmadaw is an essential institution of the state. The Tatmadaw must be an institution that defends and protects democratic principles and that is honoured by all.

2. In order to defend the state, the Tatmadaw will be developed in line with modern standards, with improved technology and combat ability, in accordance with a strategy based on the geopolitical situation of the country.
3. To work towards the Tatmadaw and institutions of national defence coming under the aegis of the executive branch.
4. To work towards a Tatmadaw that is trusted, respected and relied upon by the people.
5. To make the police independent, so as to enable them to carry out their duties in accordance with the law, and under the rule of law.
6. To aim to develop the police force in line with international standards so that it is able to fulfill its duties.

d) The following actions will be taken with regard to foreign policy:

1. To pursue an active and independent foreign policy, and to establish friendly and close political relations. With regard to international matters that may arise, to stand firmly on the side of genuine democratic values.
2. To identify and cooperate with other countries on joint economic enterprises of mutual benefit. In particular, to work together for the benefit of the region on issues relating to regional organisations and programmes.
3. To have close and strong relations with the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other such organisations.
4. To give particular emphasis to the role of civil society organisations in communicating with the international community.

4. The freedom and security to prosper

Changing people's lives for the better requires having the freedom and security to prosper. For the sectors set out below, the NLD will take the following actions:

i) Economy

1. To enable the effective use of the public financial system and the full and systematic collection of financial revenues, we will establish a public financial management system that is transparent, ensures prudent expenditure, and is in line with financial standards.
 - a. For the collection of tax revenues, we will develop a tax system that the public will actually want to support through tax payments. In order to broaden the tax base, we will reduce tax rates. We will collect, systematically and in line with the law, tax revenues from the profits made by the sale or transfer of immovable and other assets. We will ensure, through transparency, that the general public is able to see how these tax revenues are used.
 - b. In order to reduce centralized financial control, the authority and responsibility for financial matters will be divided appropriately between the Union and the State/Regional governments. At the same time, we will work through negotiations to ensure a fair financial distribution between States/Regions.
2.
 - a) We will encourage the establishment of financial markets and financing organisations to enable access to the necessary capital, technology and financing required for national development.
 - b) We will give genuine independent authority to the central bank. We will strive for monetary stability and the development of a financing system that can provide for capital financing requirements, including for local business owners, owners of SMEs, entrepreneurs, and farmers.
3. In order to encourage greater foreign investment in line with the highest international standards, we will lay down paths for economic cooperation that can bring sustainable long term mutual benefits for both parties. Through this, we will be able to enter into international markets, develop more new job opportunities, and benefit from the transfer of technology and improved labour skills.
4. We will construct effective basic infrastructure, including for transportation, access to electricity, and access to information.
5. We will work towards the development of a modern farming sector, the fair resolution of farmland disputes, the establishment of land tenure security, and transparency in line with laws and regulations regarding the protection and transfer of farmland. We will work to ensure sufficient access to necessary inputs and finances for the development of the farming sector and rural areas. We will enable access to livelihood programmes for the landless and itinerant workers. Through the development of the agricultural sector, we will also see the bolstering of the industrial and service sectors and increased exports.

6. Where there is natural resource extraction and usage, we will lay down appropriate methods so as to avoid environmental and ecological damage. We will work to ensure that extractive projects are planned transparently and that the public is informed. We will establish a dedicated fund to ensure that the profits of such projects are used for the long-term development of the country.

ii) Agriculture workers

It is essential to improve the quality of life and reduce levels of poverty in rural areas, which are home to the majority of the country's population. Restrictions on agricultural freedoms and absence of land tenure security greatly harm farmers.

1. Farmers' rights and economic well-being must be secure.
 - a. We will encourage the emergence of independent farmers' organisations.
 - b. Farmers will have the right to freely plant, produce, store, mill and sell their crops.
 - c. Farmers will have the right to own and to transfer land in accordance with the law.
 - d. We will strive, in accordance with the law, to ensure the return to farmers of illegally-lost land, and payment of compensation and restitution.
 - e. We will defend against illegal land confiscation practices.
 - f. We will amend the existing land laws that are not appropriate for the present era.

2. We will draw on modern ideas and practices in the farming sector.
 - a. We will provide assistance to enable small-holder farmers to raise their levels of productivity. In suitable regions, we will encourage the development of a mechanised farming system.
 - b. We will prioritise agricultural research and development and educational programmes for farmers.
 - c. We will prioritise the effective use of seed banks, access to high-quality seeds, the systematic use of high quality chemical fertilizer, insecticide and weedkillers, and access to other agricultural inputs.
 - d. We will encourage greater use of natural fertilizers, increased production and use of organic fertilisers, and the development of organic farming methods.
 - e. We will encourage and support the expanded production of export-quality crops, including rice, that can compete on price and quality in the international market.
 - f. We will prioritise the effective and beneficial use of irrigation to enable agricultural production, greater protection against flood risks, and systematic water resource management.
 - g. We will identify fallow, vacant and virgin lands that are suitable for agriculture, and distribute these lands to landless people, providing them with legal ownership rights.
 - h. We will systematically establish an accurate land registry system, and work to ensure easy access to land records.

3. Rural development and improving the lives of farmers.
 - a. To enable increased agricultural productivity, we will strive to ensure access to the necessary finance, capital (from loans and investment), technology and inputs. We will also support the development of linkages between domestic and international organisations.
 - b. In order for rural farming families to have access to alternative sources of income, we will support the emergence of new employment opportunities through the establishment of enterprises suitable for local regions.

- c. We will support the development of a free market for crops, and protect against exploitation in the market.
- d. We will prioritise the necessary investment and spreading of technology to enable a shift from production of raw agricultural products towards value-added products. We will seek the assistance of the international community for this.

iii) Livestock and Fisheries

We will strive to develop the animal livestock and fisheries sectors in order to ensure access to full nutrition, bolster domestic food security, and support international exports.

1. We will bolster the role of private enterprises in the livestock and fisheries sectors, and work systematically to raise the levels of domestic food security and international exports.
2. We will train experts, and develop research facilities and technologies, in the fields of livestock and fisheries.
3. We will coordinate with domestic and international organisations to enable access to the capital, technology and mechanical equipment required for the development of near-shore and off-shore fishery enterprises.
4. We will work to increase the fish populations in both the near-shore and offshore areas, and prevent the extinction of fish species. In the coastal and offshore areas, we will prevent the monopolisation of fishing by domestic or international companies, and block illegal fishing in Burma's waters.
5. We will help to amend and enact laws suitable for the present era relating to fisheries, irrigation, streams, rivers and lakes.

iv) Workers

We will carry out the following activities in order to improve the lives of working people.

1. We will establish opportunities for workers to develop their skills and expertise.
2. We will implement policies aimed at ensuring that workplaces are safe and fair for all, and that workers receive an appropriate salary.
3. No worker should be discriminated against, and every worker should receive equal compensation for equivalent work.
4. Every worker shall have the right to freely establish and be part of workers' organisations that protect their rights and benefits.
5. We will end all forms of forced labour.
6. We will guarantee the rights of child workers in accordance with the law.
7. We will strive to ensure that migrant workers receive the full rights to which they are entitled in accordance with the regulations laid down by the International Labour Organisation.
8. We will sign up to the International Labour Organisation conventions that are relevant to Burma.
9. We will coordinate with relevant governments and organisations to ensure security and improved access to rights for migrant workers overseas.

v) Education

Education begins on the day of birth, and continues throughout life. Therefore the NLD will strive to establish opportunities for lifelong learning and the obtaining of a beneficial and valuable education.

1. We will establish early childhood care programmes.
2. With the aim of enabling all citizens to complete at least primary-level education and proceed towards further education, we will create learning opportunities progressively. To that purpose, we will:
 - a. Work to ensure that every primary-age child successfully completes his or her primary-level education in school.
 - b. Develop dedicated education programmes for children who face difficulties in gaining a primary-level education, such as children with mental or physical disabilities, children living in poverty, and children living in remote areas.
3. In accordance with the principle of a federal union, we will develop an education system that supports and promotes ethnic languages and cultures. In doing so, we will:
 - a. Strive to ensure that primary-age ethnic children who speak different languages are taught by teachers who are able to speak the mother-tongue of their students.
 - b. Fund state and regional programmes to enable the use of mother-tongue in primary education.
4. We will work towards achieving an appropriate teacher-student ratio.
5. Programmes will be run to improve the teaching abilities and subject-matter expertise of teachers in all schools.
6. We will prioritise the needs of schools in less-developed areas where schools currently lack necessary facilities and equipment, in order to make middle school and high school education more accessible to all.
7. For the improvement of the quality of life of people with limited educational qualifications, we will establish opportunities for further education through programmes for continuing basic middle- and high-school study, and in-school and out-of-school vocational training opportunities of equivalent standard.
8. We will aim to develop a world-class higher education system. In doing so, we will:
 - a. Ensure that universities have autonomy over their own curriculum and governance, and the ability to conduct independent research.
 - b. Develop vocational education so that it gains equal status with academic learning.
9. We will establish effective education services that do not place a burden on parents and communities. In doing so, we will:

- a. Work to ensure the effective, efficient and transparent allocation and use of finances, drawing on state funding, private funding and other domestic and international sources of education funding.
- b. Develop effective educational reforms and management and monitoring programmes based on accurate information and data.

vi) Health

The following activities will be carried out for the emergence of a universal healthcare system:

1. We will improve and expand basic healthcare provision.
2. We will implement projects to reduce maternal and infant mortality, and we will strive to prevent malnutrition and ensure access to medicine.
3. We will bolster school health initiatives in order to encourage good health-related practices, improve knowledge of health issues, and reduce the spread of infectious diseases among our children and young people, so as to support their healthy development.
4. We will cooperate with civil society organisations on awareness-raising programmes for young people on the dangers of drugs, and we will carry out more effective treatment and rehabilitation programmes.
5. We will develop programmes for healthcare provision for the elderly and for people with disabilities, and we will aim to raise the average life expectancy above 64 years.
6. We will implement infectious disease prevention programmes, focusing in particular on reducing the incidence of tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis, and HIV, and we will strive to ensure that there are sufficient drugs for treatment.
7. For non-communicable diseases with harmful health impacts, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease, we will reduce the levels of incidence through prevention programmes.
8. We will aim to enable government hospitals and clinics to provide high-quality drugs and modern treatment methods, raise the qualifications of government health staff (including doctors, nurses and midwives), and ensure that healthcare is provided in accordance with ethical standards.
9. We will permit, in accordance with the law, the opening of private hospitals and health clinics, in order to further improve public health.
10. We will cooperate with international experts and organisations in order to develop and improve drug production, treatment, medical teaching, and research programmes.
11. We will systematically improve healthcare management systems based on accurate data and information.
12. We will implement emergency healthcare programmes for areas affected by natural disasters, and dedicated healthcare programmes for remote and hard-to-reach ethnic areas.
13. We will promote the further development and improved study of traditional medicine.

14. We will systematically strive to prevent people from inadvertently using harmful western and traditional medicines and consuming potentially harmful foods, water and other drinks.
15. We will increase the national health budget, and enable a reduction in the level of out-of-pocket expenditure incurred by the public for medical treatment.

vii) Energy

Burma has many sources of energy production:

- i. Underground:*

 - a. Oil*
 - b. Natural gas*
 - c. Coal*

- ii. Hydropower*
- iii. Solar*
- iv. Wind*
- v. Geothermal*
- vi. Bio-gas*
- vii. Bio-fuel*

1. Underground energy resources are limited, and can cause varying degrees of harm to the environment. Although underground energy resources are the easiest to exploit, they are finite, and it is therefore important to consider future generations when developing energy policy.
2. The construction of the large dams required for the production of hydropower causes major environmental harm. For this reason, we will generate electricity from existing hydropower projects, and repair and maintain the existing dams to enable greater efficiency.
3. For household electricity production, we will encourage the systematic development of small private energy production enterprises such as solar energy, biogas, rice-husk fuel, and mini-hydropower systems.
4. We will strive to establish access to electricity in all areas, both urban and rural.

viii) Environment

The NLD will carry out the following activities in order to reduce the current levels of pollution and environmental harm, and to create a better environment:

1. Forestry: We will reduce the excessive extraction of timber and forestry products.
2. Farming: We will provide education and practical assistance in order to eradicate shifting cultivation practices.
3. Mining: Contaminated mining waste shall be disposed of in accordance with the Mining Law.
4. Industry:
 - a. We will work to ensure that local residents have the right to participate in wastewater and waste-product management systems relating to industrial activity and electricity production, and that these systems are more effective.
 - b. Should local residents be adversely affected, we will impose restrictions as necessary.
 - c. We will reduce and restrict, to the greatest extent possible, and in accordance with the law, air pollution resulting from industry, motor vehicles, and the burning of firewood and charcoal.
5. Land and water:
 - a. We will enact a law aimed at reducing soil damage and erosion.
 - b. We will raise awareness about soil damage caused by fertilisers.
 - c. We will enact a law in order to protect against the destruction of the watershed area, groundwater, swamp and tidal zone ecosystems, and to protect the water flow.
6. Technical awareness-raising:
 - a. We will provide farmers with education on how to adapt their agricultural practices and habitation to the changing climate.
 - b. We will defend against the dangers arising from natural disasters such as storms, floods and drought, and provide education regarding risk mitigation and protection.
7. Sharing of environmental resources:
 - a. We will eradicate the monopolistic management and unfair distribution and usage of natural resources.
 - b. We will establish a system that can resolve environmental disputes.

8. Encouragement: In order to improve the quality of the environment, reduce poverty, and protect trees and forests, we will:
 - a. Establish and develop community forestry programmes
 - b. Support mixed vegetable production.
 - c. Establish household allotments.
 - d. Encourage the setting up of eco-tourism initiatives.

9. Investment:
 - a. We will enact legislation to assess and evaluate the risks of environmental harm resulting from domestic and international investment.
 - b. We will encourage research and investment to reduce environmental damage and support environmental rehabilitation.

ix) Women

1. We will strive to ensure that existing laws are implemented effectively so that women in all sectors- whether government, business, or social - have equal rights with men.
2. We will take action as necessary to end the persecution, insecurity, violence, and other forms of harrassment and bullying suffered by women. We will strive to ensure that women are acquainted with the legal recourses available for their protection, and that they are equipped with relevant general knowledge.
3. We will bolster awareness of the law in order to avoid women losing their land tenure rights within the family.
4. We will work to ensure that female workers receive the same compensation as their male counterparts for equivalent work, and that there is no gender discrimination with regard to workplace promotions.
5. We will work to ensure that there is no gender discrimination with regard to access to education and school entry requirements.
6. Women will receive state healthcare support during the pregnancy period and specified child-rearing period. Working women will have the right to take maternity leave in accordance with the law.

x) Youth

The NLD will strive to carry out the following activities to bolster the physical and mental development and skills and productivity of our young people, who represent the future of our country.

1. We will work to establish opportunities for young people to combine educational study with workplace training.
2. We will endeavour to develop an education system that gives young people a solid foundation for their future lives.
3. We will provide health education and awareness so as to reduce the spread of infectious diseases and drugs-related problems that are the primary threats to our young people.
4. In order to support the physical and mental development of our young people, we will encourage sporting activities by opening sports academies and re-opening sports grounds so as to enable young people to exercise. There will also be increased provision of sports activities in schools.
5. We will encourage the opening of libraries and youth centres across the country to spread general knowledge and awareness among young people, and to encourage a spirit of teamwork.
6. We will encourage the formation of youth organisations that can support the rights and opportunities of young people and engage with other relevant sectors such as health and education.
7. We will foster greater creativity amongst our young people.

xi) Communications

In this modern era, when improved communication has transformed the world into a global village, the NLD will strive to carry out the following activities in order to develop a faster and more effective communications sector in Burma.

1. We will ensure that the public is informed in a transparent manner about the activities of the three branches of government.
2. The news media is the eyes and ears of the people. We will ensure that the media has the right to stand independently in accordance with self-regulation of matters relating to ethics and dignity, and the right to gather and disseminate news.
3. We will support the rights of television and radio broadcasters, print media (magazines, journals, newspapers, etc), and telephone and internet service providers to compete openly on the free market.
4. We will revitalise the postal service- the foundation of communications across the country- in line with the modern era, transforming it into a speedy and efficient service.

xii) Urban

1. We will develop public transportation systems in large cities such as Yangon and Mandalay as quickly as possible.
2. We will renovate the existing urban water, electricity and sewage systems, which have currently fallen into disrepair.
3. We will establish an urban greening programme as quickly as possible, in order to address the destruction of trees and vegetation.
4. We will establish, as quickly as possible, a programme for the rehousing of homeless migrants, who have moved to the cities as a result of natural disasters, economic opportunities, and land confiscation.
5. We will re-invigorate the spaces that had originally been allocated for public recreation, sport and healthy exercise.