

FAILING THE PEOPLE OF BURMA?

A call for a review of DFID policy on Burma



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Executive Summary

The Department for International Development (DFID) funds much excellent work in Burma, and this report is not intended as a criticism of its existing work, but rather to highlight glaring omissions in DFID's current Burma programme. Decades of military rule have reduced Burma to being one of the poorest countries in the world, despite being a country rich in natural resources. The dictatorship spends up to half its budget on arms, and less than 60p per person per year on health and education combined. DFID could play a crucial role in alleviating poverty in Burma and tackling the root causes of that poverty. This report is a call for DFID to fulfil that role. The Burma Campaign UK has three main concerns with the way DFID operates with regard to Burma.

- DFID does not provide any support for projects promoting democracy in Burma.
- DFID does not provide any cross border aid to Internally Displaced People or other vulnerable people who cannot be reached by aid from inside the country.
- DFID provides too little aid. The £8m a year budget is not proportionate to the needs of the country.

NO SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY

As the dictatorship in Burma is at the root of humanitarian problems and underdevelopment, it is impossible to tackle these problems without also addressing their causes, yet DFID is failing to adequately commit to this. DFID does not provide any resources to projects promoting democracy, despite spending millions of pounds on projects promoting democracy in other countries where oppression and human rights abuses are not so severe.

NO CROSS-BORDER AID

In many border areas of Burma where poverty is most severe, aid can only reach people by means of aid workers crossing into Burma from neighbouring countries. DFID refuses to fund such aid. Following public and parliamentary pressure in early 2006, DFID held a review of its policy on Internally Displaced People (IDP) funding. The review was due to be complete in October 2006, but has still not been published by December 2006. While DFID dithers, thousands of people are hiding in Burma's jungles with no food, shelter or medical support.

NOT ENOUGH AID

Given that health, education, and other key indicators are as severe as in many of the poorest African countries, DFID's budget for Burma - £8m per year - is woefully under-funded. Neighbouring Vietnam receives £50m a year. If Burmese people were to get as much aid per head as people in Africa,

DFID's Burma budget would have to increase from £8m in 2007 to £80m. The Burma Campaign UK is calling for an immediate doubling of DFID aid to Burma, and a review of funding levels for future years.

NOTE: Figures used in this report regarding DFID's funding of its work in Burma are based on the limited amount of information that DFID has made public, often only after questions in parliament. The Burma Campaign UK appreciates the difficulties posed by working in an environment such as that in Burma, but believes that DFID could and should be more transparent about its work in Burma. If any omissions have been made regarding projects funded by DFID, this is due to the lack of transparency about their operations.

The Humanitarian Crisis in Burma

Burma is one of the poorest countries in Asia. Four decades of military rule and economic mismanagement have resulted in widespread poverty, poor health care and low educational standards. It is estimated that 75% of the population live below the poverty line, although reliable figures are scarce.¹ By contrast to the 30-50% of the budget spent on the armed forces, the government allocates only 3% of its budget to health and 8% to education.² In terms of health care delivery, the World Health Organisation ranks Burma 190th out of 191 countries³. Public investment in education and healthcare combined is less than \$1 per person per year - one of the lowest levels of public investment in the world⁴. Burma's poorest and most vulnerable population groups lack adequate food supply. There is widespread malnutrition with one quarter of all infants born underweight, one in three children aged five being moderately to severely malnourished and one in ten dying before they reach the age of five.⁵ Maternal mortality is additionally amongst the highest in the region.⁶ Although dire across the country, the humanitarian situation for people in ethnic nationality areas along Burma's borders remains particularly severe.

The regime in Burma has no interest in providing basic services for the population. In 2003 (the last year for which figures are available) the regime claims it spent just \$23 million on malaria. This figure is dubious given that the entire health budget for that year was just \$18million.⁷ In 2002 it spent just \$22,000 on HIV/AIDS. Its TB budget was only \$312,000,⁸ despite approximately 40% of Burma's population reportedly infected with TB.⁹ Over 33% of patients with TB have some kind of drug resistance.¹⁰ Only 40% of children complete five years of primary education.¹¹

The root cause of this humanitarian crisis is the lack of an accountable democratic government. Better governance remains the only ultimate answer to Burma's humanitarian crisis. Any strategy for tackling poverty in Burma must take this into account.

1 Economist Country profile 2004

2 Economist, July 21, 2005, The mess that the army has made of Myanmar

3 Burma: Time for Change: Report of Independent Task Force, Council on Foreign Relations, June 2003

4 DFID Country Plan – Burma, October 2005

5 UNDP Human Development Report, 2005

6 DFID Country Plan – Burma, October 2005

7 Responding to AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, and emerging infectious diseases in Burma: Dilemma's of policy and practice, Page 2, Breyar et al, PLOS October 2006.

8 Responding to AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, and emerging infectious diseases in Burma: Dilemma's of policy and practice, Page 2, Breyar et al, PLOS October 2006.

9 Responding to AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, and emerging infectious diseases in Burma: Dilemma's of policy and practice, Page 3, Breyar et al, PLOS October 2006.

10 Responding to AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, and emerging infectious diseases in Burma: Dilemma's of policy and practice, Page 4, Breyar et al, PLOS October 2006.

11 Special Rapporteur Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, report to General Assembly 21 September 2006

The Human Rights Crisis in Burma

Burma is ruled by one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world. It gained independence from British colonial rule in 1948 and there followed a brief period of parliamentary democracy, which ended abruptly with an army coup in 1962. The dictatorship which followed lasted for 26 years until the country's current military rulers, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), formerly the State Law and Order Restoration Council, seized power in 1988.

The coup took place in the wake of nationwide peaceful uprisings aimed at bringing an end to authoritarian rule. The demonstrations were crushed by the military; thousands of people were killed and thousands more arrested in one of Southeast Asia's most bloody episodes in recent history. Worried that they could not hold onto power, the ruling generals held democratic elections in 1990. The National League for Democracy, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, won 82% of seats in parliament.

However, the regime refused to hand over power, and instead unleashed a new wave of oppression. That repression continues to this day. Democracy activists are treated as criminals, under constant surveillance, subjected to harassment, intimidation and arrest for peaceful activities.

There are at least 1,100 political prisoners in Burma, many of whom routinely face physical, mental and sexual torture. Across Burma thousands of men, women and children have been forced to work for the regime without pay and under threat of beatings, torture, rape and murder. Such systematic and widespread use of forced labour has been called a 'crime against humanity' by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The regime continues to wage war against ethnic minorities, such as the Karen, Karenni and Shan, driving hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. More than 3,000 villages have been destroyed, countless civilians killed and rape is systematically used as a weapon of war against ethnic women and children.

Chapter One

No Support for Democracy

Burma receives an estimated total of \$150m in humanitarian aid each year¹², but Burma Campaign UK estimates that less than \$10 million dollars a year is spent on projects promoting human rights and democracy in Burma.

In addition, the European Commission has more than halved funding for projects promoting human rights and democracy in Burma since 2004; from Euro 522,000 (£353,392) in 2004 to just Euro 200,000 (£134,411) in 2006.¹³ This is despite human rights and democracy being listed first in the list of areas to receive funding in the EU Common Position on Burma.

DFID's stated commitments and objectives regarding pro-democracy activities in relation to Burma (see 1-8 below) do suggest concern, on paper at least, that Burma's underlying problems be addressed and not just the symptoms. However, the reality leaves much to be desired.

Whilst DFID's evolving efforts to ensure that a pro-democracy element cross-cuts all of its other objectives in Burma is welcome, it is nowhere near sufficient. Despite pledges to actively seek out opportunities to support programmes that would assist Burma's transition (to a democratic society) and specifically to 'consider supporting programmes focused on this objective'¹⁴ DFID openly admits it 'does not fund any projects solely focused on promoting democracy'¹⁵ in Burma. Given this fact it is the Burma Campaign UK's view that DFID is failing to sufficiently meet its commitment 'to contribute to prospects for a successful transition'¹⁶ in Burma and by doing so short-changing the people of Burma.

When compared to the US position on pro-democracy support, the DFID position is even more ashamedly lacking. DFID for example, unlike the US, does not even provide scholarship funding. The British charity Prospect Burma, which provides scholarships to young Burmese, has had to turn to the US government for funding. It now receives an annual grant from the US government but continues to receive no funding from DFID. The funds from the US are, however, still not enough to meet demand for scholarships from Burmese students desperate for an education.

12 Page 4, Myanmar – New Threats To Humanitarian Aid, International Crisis Group, December 2006.

13 European Commission answer to parliamentary Question by Glenys Kinnock MEP, 27/9/2006.

14 DFID Country plan, Oct 2004, page 12

15 Written parliamentary answer Gareth Thomas, DFID Parliamentary Under-Secretary on 19 January 2006 - theyworkforyou.com

16 DFID Country Plan

Donors often need to justify their grants based on time-lined quantitative results. On paper, projects that 'increase prospects for a successful transition' may not always seem like good investments because there is often no immediate tangible change as a result of their efforts. The reality is that pro-democracy projects by their nature demand flexibility, vision and patience from genuinely committed donors. At this present juncture whilst the US position certainly represents the required commitment, flexibility, patience and vision, it remains BCUK's opinion that the DFID position regrettably does not.

DFID's stated commitments and objectives regarding pro-democracy activities

- 1) The EU Common Position sets the parameters for DFID's work. "Human rights, democracy, good governance, conflict prevention and building the capacity of civil society" are all highlighted under Article 5.17
- 2) "Progress towards a political settlement in Burma is an essential ingredient for significant pro-poor development and until such progress is made large-scale, sustainable poverty reduction will remain out of reach."¹⁸
- 3) "Political reform and development are vital to Burma's development. Until this takes place, sustainable economic, social and human development will remain difficult, limited and fragile."¹⁹
- 4) DFID recognises that its work in Burma should include: "supporting activities that may help strengthen prospects for pro-poor change" and "preparing for change" – "strengthening the preparedness of the Burmese people to take advantage of change, for example by building the capacity of civil society and supporting reconciliation initiatives".²⁰
- 5) DFID Objectives in Burma:
 - Reduced incidence of communicable and vaccine-preventable diseases particularly in vulnerable and marginalised populations.
 - Enhanced food security and productive assets for the poor.
 - Increased access to quality basic education for poor people.
 - **Increased prospects for successful transition to a democratic society.**

17 <http://europa.eu.int/>

18 DFID country plan, Oct 2004, page 2

19 DFID Country plan, Oct 2004, page 12

20 DFID country plan, Oct 2004, page 11

“The fourth is a crosscutting objective which we will seek to pursue throughout our work.”²¹

- 6) “It is difficult to overstate the enormity and complexity of the changes that will be needed to transform Burma into a modern, prosperous, democratic state capable of eliminating poverty. It will involve creation of new and strengthened institutions to promote faster development, greater accountability, reduced poverty and injustice as well as mediation of conflict. Changes to incentives, mindsets and attitudes that have prevailed for decades will be needed. These changes will take a long time, even with the full support of the leaders of Burma.

Within this process there are numerous challenges for civil society, weakened by decades of conflict and restrictions. Alongside our planned work to deliver services and improve livelihoods we will look for opportunities to support participatory decision-making, constructive dialogue, innovation and other work to build capacity and institutions that would assist Burma’s transition. As well as integrating such approaches into our activities focused on livelihoods, health and education, **we will consider supporting programmes focused on this objective.**”²²

- 7) “ A diverse, capable civil society will be essential to support a successful transition to a peaceful, prosperous, democratic nation. Through our work we will seek to strengthen the capacity of civil society to successfully facilitate efforts of poor people to help themselves and represent their best interests to local authorities. This could include community groups, religious-based groups, non-governmental organisations, trade unions (who are not currently able to operate) and other groups.”²³

8) Criteria to guide DFID’s work in Burma: 24

- 1) Priority for reducing poverty and promoting human rights of poor people
- 2) Fit with EU Common Position
- 3) Political space in Burma to operate and make progress
- 4) **Potential to contribute to prospects for successful transition to a democratic society**
- 5) Potential for sustained or broader impact on policies and institutions, scope to scale up
- 6) Viable partners to work with, added value of DFID, coherence with work of others
- 7) Benefits (financial and political) not able to be co-opted by SPDC
- 8) Opportunities for enhancing knowledge, learning and building networks in the development community
- 9) Contribution to reducing the risk of conflict

21 DFID Country Plan, Oct 2004, page 13

22 DFID Country Plan, Oct 2004, page 14

23 DFID Country Plan, Oct 2004, page 15/16

24 DFID Country Plan

- 10) Addressing problems now to prevent greater negative impact in the future (including inter-generational impact)
- 11) Contributing to delivery of global or regional public goods

Current DFID pro-democracy activities

“In Burma, DFID does not fund any projects solely focused on promoting democracy. DFID works with a range of partners including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the UN and international NGOs across health, education and livelihoods issues in a way that empowers civil society and communities. For example, DFID is providing £4 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) over four years to help improve livelihoods for poor rural people through participatory local-level decision making.²⁵

“Increased prospects for a successful transition to a democratic society is one of DFID’s four objectives in 2006-07 and all projects funded from DFID’s £7.5 million budget for 2006-07 include elements contributing to this outcome. **There are no current projects focused entirely on pro-democracy.”**

“During the last year DFID has commissioned two research projects that examine the role that aid can play in promoting democracy in Burma. Firstly the Burma Strategic Development Assessment (SDA), undertaken on behalf of a range of donors currently active in Burma, identifies barriers to the achievement of sustainable peace and a successful transition to democracy. The SDA concludes that international humanitarian assistance should both ensure that conflict is not exacerbated, and where possible, should contribute to the creation of the conditions necessary for a successful transition to democracy. Secondly the Kataya (Burma Change) programme has researched a number of change processes in Burma to better understand how change happens, and how change could be influenced through development assistance.

These two pieces of work suggest that there is an opportunity for donors to do more through their programmes to support peace-building and to help build the foundations of democracy in Burma. They suggest that donors should look to achieve humanitarian impact and to ensure that their programmes are conflict sensitive, but that they should also proactively seek opportunities to strengthen the key building blocks of democracy such as local accountability and local participation in decision making, through initiatives bringing together a range of Burmese partners (particularly from civil society, but also possibly the media, the private sector and local government). We are now considering how best this approach could be put into action.”²⁶

²⁵ Written parliamentary answer Gareth Thomas, DFID Parliamentary Under-Secretary on 19 January 2006 - theyworkforyou.com

²⁶ Written parliamentary answer Gareth Thomas, 26 June 2006

Neither of these reports is currently complete. SDA challenges identified are reported to include – poor leadership, poor management of differences, weak social institutions and civil society and non-accountability.

Pro-democracy work supported by DFID elsewhere

In **China**, DFID supports the promotion of grassroots democracy across its projects, through promoting the participation of poor people in decision-making. Such participation is institutionalised in some projects through the creation of community based organisations such as water user associations.

In the **Balkans**, DFID currently has a £900,000 programme of support to 'Standards for Kosovo'. About £150,000 is earmarked for support to functioning democratic institutions.

In **Kenya**, DFID has provided £5,140,000 over five years for the Political Empowerment Programme. The programme is meant to build demand to ensure a fair, inclusive, consultative and sustainable democratic process in the country. The support consists of: £900,000 to civic education, £150,000 to the Electoral Commission of Kenya, £250,000 to support a resource centre for Parliament, £300,000 for political parties to monitor the recent constitutional referendum, £450,000 spent on domestic observation of the 2002 elections and £500,000 reserved for the same in the 2007 elections. DFID has also provided £5,377,918 over six years to support participatory local governance and democratisation at the grassroots level.

In **Uganda**, DFID has provided £600,000 to the donor funded Election Support Programme, which is designed to improve the prospects for free and fair elections. It includes support for the Uganda Electoral Commission, domestic election observers, increasing women's participation in the political process and strengthening independent media coverage of the elections. DFID has also committed £400,000 to the national civic education programme, which aims to empower Ugandans to participate effectively in promoting accountability and transparency in national and local politics. A further £50,000 has been contributed to a donor basket fund supporting the Parliament of Uganda with the aim of improving democratic governance.

In **Pakistan**, DFID has provided £525,000 to build the capacity of parliamentarians at the federal and provincial levels; £326,000 to strengthen the capacity of local political party branches and £208,531 for election monitoring to develop an understanding of the processes and outcomes of the 2005 local elections. DFID is also supporting the promotion of grassroots democracy across its projects by providing: £2.8 million for a Gender Equality Project through the British Council to strengthen the capacity of local organisations to achieve access for women to political and economic decision making, protection from violence, and equal treatment in law; £18 million through the Asian Development Bank to strengthen the ability of civil society to demand improved delivery of services and access to justice and approximately £5 million for a Citizen Empowerment Initiative to strengthen

the capacity of civil society organisations to engage government on issues of social exclusion, human rights and poverty reduction.

In Russia, DFID has promoted democracy by addressing issues of community participation, voice and accountability across the technical cooperation programmes. The ongoing projects include: a £3,800,000 Public Administration and Civil Service Reform Project to ensure greater transparency of the civil service, to promote freedom of information and to encourage civilian participation in the public administration reform process; £4,980,000 Support to Poverty Reduction in Leningrad Region (Oblast) Programme to strengthen the capacity of the region and municipal authorities to develop community-based alternatives to service delivery and alternative approaches to income earning for young people of mixed abilities.²⁷

²⁷ Parliamentary answer, 19 January 2006

Pro-democracy projects that DFID could be supporting

“In the last 17 years, the majority of civil society groups specialised in issues like human rights, women rights, workers rights, rule of law, ethnic rights, environmental preservation, sustainable development, community organising and conflict resolution that has emerged are from out of the democratic forces who had fled to neighbouring countries. While these groups are more active in the work of international advocacy, they have also established links with activists inside and are able to transfer knowledge and skills to their colleagues inside the country. Empowerment of these groups, which can be said as the embryos of the future civil society, should be done through border based groups”. 28

DFID appears concerned at least to attempt to address some of Burma's underlying problems and not just the symptoms. Certainly their efforts to ensure that a pro-democracy element cross-cuts all other objectives is a positive one. However, it is nowhere near sufficient. Given the complete lack of focused pro-democracy funding by DFID (both inside and outside the country) DFID is not fulfilling its stated intention to **“consider supporting programmes focused on this objective”** and cannot in Burma Campaign UK's view be said to be fully meeting its commitment “to contribute to prospects for a successful transition to a democratic society in Burma”.

Donors often need to justify their grants based on a time-lined quantitative result. On paper, projects that "increase prospects" for democracy may not always seem like good 'investments' because there may not be an immediate tangible change as a result of their efforts. Pro-democracy projects though, by their nature, demand flexibility, vision and patience from genuinely committed donors. (See US position outlined below)

The Exile Myth

Some organisations and individuals have tried to justify lack of funding to exile Burmese organisations by saying they are out of touch or that the money is better spent inside Burma. The facts completely contradict this argument. So-called exile groups based in neighbouring countries and other countries may use these countries as a base, but many are operating inside the country through underground networks and risking their lives to cross into Burma. Much of what we know about the situation in Burma – the humanitarian crisis in eastern Burma, use of forced labour, use of rape as a weapon of war, torture in Burma's jails – comes not from the United Nations, aid agencies or diplomats, but instead from these so-called exile organisations that struggle for funding every day.

28 National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, Burma Situation Update, March-June 2006

Contrasting approaches UK vs US pro-democracy activities regarding Burma

US support for projects promoting democracy

Report on Activities to Support Democracy Activists in Burma as Required by the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, October 30, 2003

“The restoration of democracy in Burma is a priority U.S. policy objective in Southeast Asia. To achieve this objective, **the United States has consistently supported democracy activists and their efforts both inside and outside Burma**...Addressing these needs requires flexibility and creativity. Despite the challenges that have arisen, United States Embassies Rangoon and Bangkok as well as Consulate General Chiang Mai are fully engaged in pro-democracy efforts. The United States also supports organizations, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the Open Society Institute (nb no support given since 2004) and Internews, working inside and outside the region on a broad range of democracy promotion activities. U.S.-based broadcasters supply news and information to the Burmese people, who lack a free press. U.S. programs also fund scholarships for Burmese who represent the future of Burma.

The United States is committed to working for a democratic Burma and will continue to employ a variety of tools to assist democracy activists.

Funding for democracy work

The **National Endowment for Democracy** (NED – see Appendix 1, page 27) has been at the forefront of our program efforts to promote democracy and improved human rights in Burma since 1996. We are providing \$2,500,000 in FY 2003 funding from the Burma earmark in the Foreign Operations legislation. The NED will use these funds to support Burmese and ethnic minority democracy-promoting organizations through a sub-grant program. The projects funded are designed to disseminate information inside Burma supportive of Burma’s democratic development, to create democratic infrastructures and institutions, to improve the collection of information on human rights abuses by the Burmese military and to build capacity to support the restoration of democracy when the appropriate political openings occur and the exiles/refugees return.

Through sub-grants to approximately 30 Burmese pro-democracy groups, in 2003-2005, NED plans to concentrate in two core areas: media/information and institution building. Institution and capacity building will include transition planning initiatives, support for ethnic organizations, women’s projects, the development of democratic media content for dissemination and a humanitarian assistance project that targets political prisoners and their families. **NED support will target those organizations that have a**

demonstrated ability to reach audiences inside Burma as well as those that have an ability to grow and adapt as the situation evolves.

Past programs have strengthened significantly the Burmese democracy movement as it struggles for change in Burma. NED support to Burmese and ethnic human rights organizations has allowed them to increase dramatically the amount and the quality of information on the human rights abuses of the SPDC including forced labour, detention and treatment of political prisoners, and rape and forced dislocation of ethnic people. The reports generated by these groups have succeeded in raising international attention to these problems and rallying the support of the international community to bring an end to the abuses. In 2001-2002, when the space for political activities was increasing, NED sub-grantee groups were instrumental in resurrecting the organization and infrastructure of the democracy movement in Burma and provided information and material support for activists promoting democracy inside the country. The NED sub-grant program also has fostered the development of three well-known Burmese media organizations. The New Era Journal, the Irrawaddy, and the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) radio have become critical sources of independent news and information on the struggle for democracy in Burma. These organizations also serve as training ground for the development of professional Burmese journalists. Demand for all these publications and radio broadcasts has been steadily growing over the years and reaching a larger audience both inside and outside of the country.

Since 2000, with funding from the U.S. **Internews** has trained Burmese journalists in Thailand along the Thai-Burma border in four areas: 1) basic journalism (what is newsworthy, how to gather news, who is the audience, and how to write with accuracy, clarity, and credibility); 2) management (organizational systems, revenue generation, marketing, fundraising); 3) editorial processes (developing a news agenda, managing a newsroom); and 4) layout and design. In FY 2002 Internews established a school in Chiang Mai, Thailand, to train a new generation of Burmese journalists in investigative journalism, critical thinking, and basic journalism techniques. The first class of 15 students draws on a younger generation of Burmese who want to be professional journalists. The curriculum focuses on teaching basic journalistic skills, understanding the responsibilities of the media in a democratic society, and exposing the students to current international affairs.

RFA/VOA

In addition to programs supported by Burma earmark funding, the United States also continues to fund multimedia broadcasting services for the Burmese people independent of the influence of the military junta in Rangoon. Both **Voice of America** (VOA) and **Radio Free Asia** (RFA) have Burmese services. VOA broadcasts a 30-minute mix of international news and information three times a day. RFA broadcasts news and information about Burma two hours a day. VOA and RFA websites also contain audio and text material in Burmese and English. For example, VOA's October 10, 2003 editorial, "Release Aung San Suu Kyi" is prominently featured in the Burmese section of VOAnews.com. RFA's website makes available audio versions of

Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches from May 27 and 29, 2003. U.S. international broadcasting provides crucial information to a population denied the benefits of freedom of information by its government. Broadcasts reach a broad spectrum of society and a broad swathe of the country, influencing Burmese decision-makers and offering support to future democratic leaders. Anecdotal evidence indicates that government officials listen to these broadcasts frequently.

Scholarships

The Congressionally-mandated Burma Refugee Scholarship Program (BRSP) awards grants to Burmese refugees living outside of Burma. The program currently recruits from India and awards four scholarships per year that fund language training and approximately 18 months of undergraduate or graduate training at institutions of higher education in the United States. Grantees are selected for their leadership potential, participation in pro-democracy activities, and their ability to excel in fields of study relevant to the building of a democratic Burma. The grantees are generally granted asylum in the United States but are encouraged to remain active in the pro-democracy movement and to return to Burma to help build a democratic society when it is safe for them to do so. A number of grantees try to work with the refugee community in Thailand.

The State Department provided \$150,000 in FY 2001/02 funds to provide scholarships to young Burmese through **Prospect Burma**, a partner organization with close ties to Aung San Suu Kyi. With FY 2003/04 funds, we plan to support Prospect Burma's work given the organization's proven competence in managing scholarships for individuals denied educational opportunities by the continued repression of the military junta, but committed to a return to democracy in Burma. The demand for scholarships from Prospect Burma has risen dramatically from 330 in 2001 to 856 in 2003, a 42 percent increase. In 2002, Prospect Burma awarded 162 individual scholarships, 50 of which were to female students. They also continued their core support to an English language school in Delhi that trains mainly ethnic Chin Burmese.

Our assistance to the **Open Society Institute** (OSI) (until 2004) provides partial support for a program to grant scholarships to Burmese refugee students who have fled Burma and wish to continue their studies at the undergraduate, or post-graduate level. Students typically pursue degrees in social sciences, public health, medicine, anthropology, and political science. Priority is given to students who express a willingness to return to Burma or work in their refugee communities for the democratic and economic reform of the country. Since 1994, the program has helped over 1000 undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. Burmese students continue their schooling. In 2001, U.S. government funds supported 95 Burmese students in Asia and Australia and 50 Burmese students in Europe and North America. OSI also provides continuing high school education for the many promising Burmese students who are not yet qualified for college level studies.

Many former scholarship recipients have returned to work within the Burmese democracy movement. In an effort to track scholarship alumni and how they are using their studies to support democracy in Burma, we are supporting OSI with a small grant to develop a database and tracking system for former scholarship recipients from both the OSI and Prospect Burma programs. This program not only helps us stay in contact with former scholarship recipients but assists them in networking with one another. These kinds of networks will be critical to the rebuilding of Burma after a democratic transition occurs.

Last year the U.S. government began funding a new program of the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** to provide basic health services to Burmese migrants outside the official refugee camps in cooperation with the Thai Ministry of Public Health. This project has been supported by the Thai government and has received favorable coverage in the local press. Efforts such as this that endeavor to find positive ways to work with the Thai government in areas of common interest help build support for U.S.-funded programs that support Burmese pro-democracy groups.

The building of civil society in support of a future democratic Burma requires flexibility in developing and funding projects. Funding as provided in the Burma earmark in the Foreign Operations Appropriations legislation is limited. The Administration has requested \$6.5 million in FY-2004 to continue our efforts to support democracy inside and outside Burma. We also support maintaining flexible language in the granting of the earmark that will allow greater creativity in identifying projects that we can fund.

Conclusion

International pressure and support for the beleaguered Burmese democracy movement is essential for promoting change in Burma. It is now more important than ever that we continue to provide sustained, targeted support for those individuals and organizations, from both Burman and ethnic minority regions, that are actively promoting democracy in Burma.

The Administration continues its efforts in support of democracy in Burma on a number of fronts. **While working to the greatest extent possible behind the scenes in Burma, in a very constrained environment, we also support a wide variety of projects that have an impact on the work of democracy activists outside the country.** The United States is committed to working for a democratic Burma, one in which the government truly represents its people.”

UK support for projects promoting democracy

There are no projects funded by DFID focused on promoting democracy.²⁹

²⁹ Written parliamentary answer Gareth Thomas, 26 June 2006. "Increased prospects for a successful transition to a democratic society is one of DFID's four objectives in 2006-07 and all projects funded from DFID's £7.5 million budget for 2006-07 include elements contributing to this outcome. **There are no current projects focused entirely on pro-democracy.**"

Pro-democracy programmes

A broad sweep of a selection of pro-democracy projects conducted by exiled Burmese organisations is detailed below. Many more deserving projects both inside and outside Burma cannot be named publicly. All of the following deserve more than passing consideration for support from DFID.

Examples:

AAPP

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) was formed to document and disseminate information on the real situation of political prisoners in Burma and to provide assistance to the families of prisoners.

Democratic Voice of Burma

DVB covers a wide range of issues - empowerment of independent media, capacity building amongst the public as well as young journalists, civic education (Human Rights, Workers Rights, Gender Equality etc.), free flow of information and knowledge etc. Management and accountability of funds is transparent and effectiveness can easily be measured by the evaluation of programmes conducted. Radio and TV broadcasts into Burma.

Federation of Trade Unions, Burma (FTUB)

The FTUB is a trade union congress with member unions. FTUB works inside Burma to educate, organize, and strengthen Burmese workers and other pro-democracy groups to assert their rights and push the regime towards substantive tripartite negotiations with the National League for Democracy and the leaders of Burma's ethnic peoples. FTUB conducts outreach and coalition building with sympathetic organizations in the region and around the world, continuing to support the movement for democracy in Burma. It also provides education programs on democracy, human rights, and trade union principles in villages and towns throughout the country. The FTUB also seeks to organize democratic trade unions in ethnic areas and publish teaching materials, in a variety of languages, for the concepts of democracy and trade union rights.

Karen Youth Organization (KYO)

The Karen Youth Organization's main priority is to help young Karen develop their potential to work in and on behalf of the Karen community.

Members of Parliament Union (Burma)

The Members of Parliament Union (Burma) is responsible for electing the prime minister of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma. As an institution, its main focus is to raise international awareness on Burma and to garner the support of democratic political institutions.

National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma

The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma is a group of National League for Democracy MPs who work with all the democracy and the disenfranchised ethnic forces as well as with other exile and student groups to help bring about democratic change in Burma.

National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB)

The National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) is a network of pro-democracy and ethnic resistance groups that aim to support the struggle of the democratic movement inside the country with the assistance of the international community. Coordination of a Foreign Affairs Training Programme.

Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)

The Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) is a network of Shan women active in Thailand and along the Thai-Burma border, seeking to address the needs of Shan women.

Women's League of Burma

The Women's League of Burma unites various women's organizations to enhance cooperation, mutual understanding and trust among the women of Burma.

Chapter Two

No Cross-Border Aid

The humanitarian crisis in Eastern Burma is one of the worst in the world. In the past year, 82,000 people have been forced from their homes by conflict and human rights abuses.³⁰ Poverty is equivalent to the poorest conflict hit countries of Africa. A recent report found health threats such as HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria are most marked in Burma's border areas.³¹ In conflict zones in eastern Burma malaria accounted for 45 percent of adult and child deaths in 2003-2004.³² Yet virtually no UK aid reaches this area, most of which can only be reached by aid workers crossing over the border from Thailand. There are also areas in northern Burma which can only be reached by cross-border aid from neighbouring countries. DFID refuses to fund any cross-border projects.

Faced with criticism about this policy, including an Early Day Motion signed by 156 MPs, DFID has responded in a variety of ways, giving varying excuses for not providing such aid, and drawing attention to other projects it funds supporting IDPs and refugees.

Following recent public criticism about the lack of any DFID aid to people displaced by the military's offensive against civilians in Karen state, which forced more than 20,000 people from their homes, DFID stated in letters and answers to Parliamentary Questions that it was providing IDP support via the International Committee of the Red Cross. In this context these statements were misleading, as little of this aid reached these IDPs; the ICRC funding is largely for longer-term IDP support, not for those displaced by the recent military offensive.

The government has also cited its funding of Burmese refugees in Thailand through the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC). The 2006 Foreign Office Human Rights report gives a misleading impression that the government supports the IDP work of TBBC, when in fact TBBC is banned by DFID from using any DFID funds for its IDP work.³³

In a very welcome move, DFID has begun to increase its funding for the TBBC, from £535,500 in 2005, to £611,050 in 2006 and £672,155 in 2007. However, given that DFID funds just 4 percent of the TBBC budget,³⁴ the

30 Internal Displacement in Eastern Burma 2006 survey, Thailand Burma Border Consortium page 2.

31 Responding to AIDS, Tuberculosis, malaria, and emerging infectious diseases in Burma: Dilemma's of policy and practice, Page 6, Breyar et al, PLOS October 2006.

32 Responding to AIDS, Tuberculosis, malaria, and emerging infectious diseases in Burma: Dilemma's of policy and practice, Page 4, Breyar et al, PLOS October 2006.

33 "Bilaterally and via the European Commission, it helps fund the Thai-Burma Border Consortium, an NGO providing food and other support to Burmese refugees in Thailand and to internally displaced people in Burma." Page 43 Foreign Office Human Rights report 2006

34 Based on figures from TBBC annual accounts.

regular and high profile references to support given to TBBC could be seen as out of proportion to the levels of funding given. In addition, TBBC is mainly responsible for providing food and shelter in the camps, not health, education and other services. Health and education services in the camps are extremely limited, and more resources are also needed in this area.

Faced with mounting pressure regarding its IDP policy, in June 2006 DFID revealed another source of IDP support. In answer to a Parliamentary Question by John Bercow MP, DFID Minister Mr. Thomas stated: "In addition to the support which we have provided to the International Committee of the Red Cross over the past five years, in 2005-06 and 2006-07, we have funded some activities which are delivered through local community organisations and are focussed on directly benefiting internally displaced people (IDPs) hiding in conflict areas (US\$364,000 over two years)."³⁵ Based on these figures the amount of DFID aid targeted at what are generally agreed to be some of the most vulnerable people in Burma is only £92,000 a year, which equates to barely 1 percent of DFID's annual budget for Burma.

DFID sometimes seems to be moving the goalposts with regards to cross-border aid. For many years it claimed that the reason DFID did not provide cross-border aid was because of problems with accountability and monitoring. This was despite the fact that other governments with similar legal requirements were providing such aid. DFID is no longer making this claim and that is very welcome, but instead it has now started to give other reasons for not providing cross-border aid.

DFID has begun claiming that it has a comparative advantage by working inside Burma, and can reach people inside Burma that cross-border aid cannot reach. There could be a case for this which we would be happy to accept, if there were any evidence to support it.

In mid 2006 DFID announced it would hold a review of its policy on IDP funding. The review was due to be complete in October 2006, but has still not been published by December 2006. While DFID dithers, thousands of people are hiding in Burma's jungles with no food, shelter or medical support.

DFID is committed to helping the most vulnerable people, and we believe that people who have been forced to flee their homes and are living in the jungle without food, shelter or medical support fit into that category.

The recent crisis has exposed an urgent need for the international donor community to have a comprehensive look at the current IDP situation in Burma, and how this ongoing humanitarian crisis can be addressed in a co-ordinated manner.

There are estimated to be more than 500,000 IDPs in eastern Burma. More than 90,000 are in conflict areas where most can only be reached by cross border aid.

³⁵ Hansard: 26 Jun 2006: Column 4W

Aid can be delivered if financial resources are provided, and costs are relatively small. In 2005 the 70 backpack teams from the Backpack Healthworker Team provided healthcare to about 140,000 displaced people in Burma. Each team of two to five healthcare workers covers a population of approximately 2,000 people. There are 15 field-in-charges and 15 second-in-charges that supervise and monitor the activities. One backpack team working for six months costs just 50,000 baht (£720).³⁶

Will the 3 Diseases Fund Reach the Most Vulnerable?

On 10th August 2006 DFID announced it was giving £4 million a year, half of its total Burma budget, to the new Three Diseases Fund for Burma. DFID has played a key role in establishing the 3D fund, as it is known. The fund was created after the Global Fund was forced to withdraw from Burma because of restrictions placed on it by the regime. It is hoped the new fund will save a million lives in Burma, providing the regime allows it to operate effectively. However, it appears that many people in Burma in areas where malaria and HIV/AIDS are most prevalent will not benefit from this fund. For although DFID has stated that the 3D fund is committed to working on basis of need, it cannot give guarantees that it will be able to do so because of restrictions placed by the regime.³⁷ It seems bizarre to expect the regime to give permission for aid in eastern Burma for instance, while in the same areas the regime is engaged in ethnic cleansing against that very population. The effect of this approach will be that areas in eastern Burma, where malaria rates are consistently more than 10 percent of the population at any time, and can be as high as 22 percent in some areas, resulting in 45 percent of deaths caused by malaria, will receive no 3D assistance. Such omissions also seem likely to apply in much of Kachin State, which has some of the highest rates of malaria and HIV/AIDS. These areas could be reached by cross-border aid or direct funding to local NGOs, but it does not appear that any effort is being made by the 3D fund to explore the use of this method to bypass SPDC restrictions and ensure these vulnerable groups receive 3D fund aid. The United Nations has not made any approach to the Karen National Union (KNU) regarding projects in territory it holds, despite the KNU calling for the 3D fund to support projects in KNU areas.

The approach of the United Nations in delivering 3D aid is symptomatic of a broader problem with the United Nations approach to delivering aid in Burma. Around the world the United Nations is renowned for its ability to negotiate

³⁶ Backpack Health Worker Team

³⁷ Hansard answer to parliamentary Question: John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the Three Diseases Fund for Burma will be available to assist people with HIV/AIDS in areas of Burma not under the control of the military government. [102495]

Mr. Thomas: The Three Diseases Fund is committed to supporting work on the three diseases on the basis of need, irrespective of ethnic origin, social status, gender, nationality, political opinions, race or religion. The fund will target those most at risk from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, particularly those with limited or no access to public health services. We will maintain our dialogue with the Burmese authorities about improving access for the UN and international NGOs to areas not under the control of the military government. We will also seek to strengthen dialogues with community-based organisations, local non-governmental organisations and ceasefire groups about how they can contribute to the fund's efforts to deliver services in these areas. 28 Nov 2006 : Column 543W

with all sides in areas of political and military conflict in order to secure the delivery of aid. It is bizarre that when it comes to Burma few, if any, such efforts seem to be being made. The UN Resident Co-ordinator, and UN Envoy Ibrahim Gambari, have failed to reach out to all the key players in Burma, particularly from different ethnic nationalities, and instead attempt to work only with the SPDC, which has consistently blocked free access for humanitarian aid. In a letter referring to the role of the UN Resident Co-ordinator in any possible negotiations with the regime, the National League for Democracy has stated: "Our experience is that those who have served in this country for some time in any capacity have become conditioned to move within the framework of thought and action set up by the SPDC." Recent visits by senior United Nations Officials to the sham National Convention, seen as an apparent endorsement by many, reinforced the impression that the UN has a preference for working with the SPDC rather than all the key players in Burma. Aid should not be held hostage to such politics, and DFID and the British government should use their influence with the United Nations to ensure it works with all players in Burma to ensure aid reaches those people most in need, not just those that can be reached with the permission of the SPDC.

Chapter Three

Too Little Aid

The £8m a year budget for Burma is not proportionate to the needs of the country. Neighbouring Vietnam receives £50m a year.³⁸ Given that health, education, and other key indicators are as bad as in many of the poorest African countries, DFID's budget for Burma is woefully under-funded. If Burmese people were to get as much aid per head as people in Africa, DFID's Burma budget would need to increase from £8m in 2007 to £80m. The Burma Campaign UK is calling for an immediate doubling of DFID aid to Burma, and a review of funding levels for future years.

DFID's budget for Burma for 2007-8 has been frozen at £8m, effectively a reduction once inflation and increased costs are taken into account. Half of DFID's Burma budget will be spent on one single project, the 3 Diseases Fund for Burma, leaving just £4 million to address the many other challenges facing the country.³⁹

A recent report – '*Chronic Emergency, Health and Human Rights in Eastern Burma*', reveals levels of poverty and disease in Eastern Burma equivalent to that of conflict hit African countries. Reports from the United Nations and other organisations show increasing numbers of people living below the poverty line, and a decline in health and education standards that again are comparable to many African countries. Yet Africans get ten times DFID aid per head than people in Burma. Zimbabwe, which like Burma is a country where assistance cannot be channelled through the government, per head, receives 18 times what Burma receives.

Regional and African countries where DFID allocates annual budgets.

Country	Population ⁴⁰	DFID aid £ ⁴¹	Aid per head
Burma	49.5m	8m	16p
Cambodia	13.5m	12.8m	94p
Timor Leste	800,000	2.08m	£2.60
Indonesia	217m	30.34m	13p (22p inc Tsunami)
Vietnam	82m	50m	60p
Zimbabwe	12.9m	38m ⁴²	£2.94
Africa	752m ⁴³	1bn ⁴⁴	£1.32 (will increase to £1.66 in 2007-2008)

38 Hansard PQ answer 26 June 2006

39 Media Release, British Embassy, Rangoon, 10 August 2006

40 UNDP HDR 2005, 2003 figures

41 Hansard PQ answer 26 June 2006

42 2005-6 figures <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/zimbabwe.asp>

43 <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-03/2006-03-07-voa80.cfm>

44 <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/default.asp?ID=0>

Health expenditure per capita - purchasing power parity (PPP) regional and African countries.⁴⁵

Burma:	\$30
Cambodia	\$192
Vietnam	\$148
Timor Leste	\$195
Indonesia	\$110
Rwanda	\$48
Nigerian	\$43
Mali	\$33
Zambia	\$51
Mozambique	\$50
Zimbabwe	\$152

Despite the growing humanitarian crisis, levels of aid have not been increased commensurately, and this needs to be reviewed. Given the extreme and growing restrictions on the delivery of aid in Burma, it is unlikely that budgets equivalent to that of Africa would be able to be spent at this time. However, there are clearly opportunities for increasing humanitarian aid, both inside Burma, and via cross-border aid. There are also significant opportunities for funding projects promoting human rights in Burma. Where direct funding of projects inside Burma is very difficult, there are extensive opportunities to conduct this work through cross-border projects, and through other exiled Burmese organisations.

There are concerns that an increase of aid to Burma could result in the regime stealing aid, or using it for propaganda or other purposes. The Burma Campaign UK calls for aid to be delivered in line with the recommendations outlined in *Pro-Aid, Pro-Sanctions, Pro-Engagement*, published by the Burma Campaign UK in July 2006. Appendix 2 on page 34 includes the relevant excerpt from that document.

⁴⁵ UNDP HDR 2005 2002 figures

Appendix 1

National Endowment for Democracy on Burma Pro-democracy projects funded during 2005

Burma

A) Internal Organizing

\$15,000

To monitor the human rights situation in Burma and educate monks and Buddhist lay people about the nonviolent struggle for democracy in Burma. The organization will produce and distribute material, including pamphlets, stickers and calendars, on human rights and democracy, and support efforts to organize the Buddhist community inside Burma.

\$80,000

To support the human rights and democracy movement inside Burma. The organization will train party activists in effective techniques of nonviolent political action, produce and distribute literature about democracy, human rights and political organizing, and provide humanitarian support for party activists and others along the Thai-Burma border and inside Burma.

International Republican Institute

\$330,000

To support efforts to coordinate the strategic nonviolent activities of various democracy groups' activities inside Burma. The committee will expand its network of democracy activists in Burma and train more activists in nonviolent political action.

\$230,000

To promote democracy and nonviolent political action in Burma. The organization will support efforts to provide financial, logistical, and technical support to prodemocracy political activists inside Burma.

\$15,000

To empower ethnic nationality political parties and to promote their inclusion in the political process. The organization will support efforts to draft a federal constitution and democratic state constitutions within a federal framework, and support organizing efforts to promote ethnic nationality participation in resolving Burma's long-standing political and economic problems.

\$50,000

To strengthen civil society in Burma. The organization will work with partners inside Burma to establish two institutions that provide educational programs and an emergency medical support fund.

\$85,000

To support efforts to bring about political reform and national reconciliation in Burma. The coalition will work to increase contact, trust, and cooperation

between ethnic and pro-democracy forces, expand its activities inside Burma, and strengthen support among these groups to bring about political dialogue and national reconciliation in Burma.

\$30,000

To support and strengthen the ability of the Burmese people to participate in peaceful efforts to promote democracy and political reconciliation. The forum will conduct five community-organizing training courses and produce several Burmese-language reports on successful examples of democracy movements around the world.

B) Independent Media

\$18,000

To support the use of information and communication technology inside Burma to expand the ability of individuals to access and share information. The organization will provide technology training to Burmese journalists, introduce new information technology in Burma, distribute news and information, transcribe information into Burmese Unicode, and launch a secure website for users in Burma.

\$50,000

To support media freedom in Burma through the publication of a quarterly literary journal featuring the work of prominent Burmese writers. The journal will carry literary works such as articles, short stories, and cartoons that are banned or heavily censored by military authorities, and will include new works sent from writers and journalists inside Burma as well as well known writers in exile.

\$29,324

To encourage the exchange of ideas and information and to coordinate activities related to freedom of information and expression in Burma. The organization will organize and convene the third annual Burma media conference in fall 2005. The conference will bring together over 80 journalists who cover Burma to discuss issues, exchange ideas, and share information.

\$175,000

To promote access to independent media in Burma. The organization will launch the first independent, Burmese-language satellite television program to complement its long-running daily shortwave radio program.

\$175,000

To support Burmese- and ethnic-language radio broadcasting of independent news and opinion into Burma. The organization will continue to improve the quality of its programs, invest in advanced training and education for its staff, and maintain the regional infrastructure for its broadcasts.

\$35,000

To support independent media in Burma. The organization will upgrade its equipment to allow for more efficient and professional delivery of news and information through radio, television and the internet.

\$115,000

To support independent media in Burma and to provide independent news and information about Burma and events in Southeast Asia. The organization will produce a monthly English-language news magazine, distribute a daily electronic news bulletin, and maintain a Burmese- and English-language website.

\$25,000

To provide news and information in the Kachin language about Kachin State. The organization will publish a monthly Kachinlanguage newspaper, maintain a Kachin and English-language website, conduct a journalism training program in Kachin State, and maintain two news offices inside Burma and an editorial office in Canada.

\$12,500

To provide the Karen people with news and information about Karen State and Burma, and to expose them to basic principles of human rights and democracy. The organization will publish a 32-page newsletter in Burmese and Karen that provides an alternative news source for the Karen community in Burma, in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, and for ethnic and pro-democracy groups in exile.

\$40,000

To provide Burmese citizens, exiles and democracy and human rights activists with independent and accurate information about the state of the country and an open forum to discuss a wide range of issues. The news group will produce a daily electronic news and information service that covers developments in Burma, India, and the India-Burma border; maintain a Burmese and English-language webpage; publish a monthly Burmese-language newspaper; organize forums on India's Burma policy; publish in-depth reports; and run a journalism internship program.

\$12,000

To provide accurate and reliable information about political, social, and economic developments in Arakan State, Burma. The organization will operate a daily news service in English and Burmese concentrating on current events and human rights in Arakan State.

\$150,000

To support independent media in Burma. The organization will publish and distribute inside Burma an independent, monthly Burmese-language newspaper focusing on the struggle for human rights and democracy.

\$25,000

To provide accurate and reliable information about political, social, and economic developments in Shan State, Burma. The news agency will publish a tri-lingual monthly newspaper that provides accurate and reliable information to the Shan and wider Burmese communities as well as Thai and international audiences about political, social, and economic developments in Shan State and Burma.

C) Human Rights Education, Documentation, and Advocacy

\$50,000

To introduce a civic education curriculum and teaching methodology to teachers from Karen, Karenni, and Mon States in Burma. The organization will continue its training program, introduce a new civic education curriculum, and publish a small resource book containing material on human rights and democracy.

\$99,500

To research and document the situation of political prisoners inside Burma and to raise international awareness about the human rights crisis inside Burma. The organization will provide assistance to political prisoners, former political prisoners and their families; report on the treatment and condition of political prisoners in Burma; and advocate for the release of all political prisoners in Burma.

\$90,000

To promote respect for human rights and the rule of law in Burma. The organization will manage a legal research and education program, produce a quarterly journal on legal issues, organize an in-depth training program, and advocate for rule of law and democracy in Burma.

\$38,000

To publicize the human rights situation in Chin State, Burma. The organization will publish and distribute a human rights newsletter, advocate on human rights issues internationally, and organize a conference in Burma.

\$60,000

To educate the Burmese public about human rights and democracy. The institute will organize a training-of-trainers course and a refresher course for previously trained trainers, translate its "Human Rights Manual" into the Palaung and Chin languages, and publish a Burmese-language book on human rights.

\$57,288

To document and report on conditions in southern Burma and to promote human rights education in Mon state and among Mon refugees. The organization will run six core projects: human rights documentation; human rights and civic education; human rights defenders; civil society development; Mon-language press; and women's and children's rights.

\$45,000

To improve teacher training and curriculum development. The committee will coordinate health and education programs for refugee populations in Thailand and India and ethnic populations inside Burma, expand its teacher training courses, and work on a new school curriculum based on contemporary standards and methodologies.

\$15,000

To document and publicize the human rights situation in Shan State. The organization will publish and distribute monthly Shan- and English-language human rights newsletters to audiences in Shan State, the Shan exile community in Thailand, and the broader international community.

D) International Advocacy and Organizing

\$44,000

To increase international support for the Burmese democracy movement. The organization will link academics, activists, journalists, diplomats, and politicians in Burma, Thailand, and throughout Southeast Asia through advocacy campaigns, meetings, and other forums.

\$60,000

To support a campaign in Southeast Asia to secure the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and promote political reform in Burma. The network will organize public information programs in Southeast Asia, send delegations of parliamentarians to Europe and the United States, and organize a conference on good governance and democracy.

\$300,000

To support efforts to create a political environment in Burma and in the international community conducive to resolving Burma's long-standing political crisis. The organization will support the coordination of international and domestic political action, coalition building, transition planning, and institutional development.

\$50,000

To increase awareness about political developments in Burma and to strengthen international support for Burma's democracy movement. The organization will work to ensure that important research and reports produced in Thailand by Burmese democracy activists reach a targeted audience in the international community, keep the international media informed of important political initiatives and developments in Burma, and coordinate various initiatives to increase pressure on the regime for reform.

\$35,000

To develop a strong Asian constituency in support of political dialogue and national reconciliation in Burma through increased cooperation with NGOs, student groups, and regional bodies in Asia. The committee will meet regularly with foreign embassies and consulates, travel throughout South, Southeast, and East Asia to build international support for the democracy

movement in Burma, and coordinate with other international advocacy groups working to promote democracy in Burma.

\$40,000

To promote increased support for democracy in Burma and Thailand. The committee will engage in policy advocacy and public information campaigns, provide legal support to Burmese who suffer human rights violations in Thailand, and coordinate with Burma democracy groups in Thailand and other Thai civil society organizations.

E) Ethnic Nationalities

\$30,000

To increase the availability, sophistication, and quality of information about federalism and the draft Chin State constitution. The organization will support a series of training-of-trainers courses on federalism, constitutionalism, and the role of the Chin State in a future federal union of Burma.

\$26,500

To support the institutional capacity of the committee to distribute humanitarian aid and to document the plight of the internally displaced Karen population. The committee will publish a bi-monthly newsletter, upgrade its computer equipment, and provide training courses for its field staff.

\$20,000

To promote civic awareness and increase civic participation in Mon State, Burma. The organization will produce a Mon-language journal, hold computer training classes, and organize a civic education program designed to encourage increased cooperation and understanding among Mon youth.

\$25,000

To broaden the perspectives of Shan youth and promote cooperation among various communities in Shan State. The school will provide an intensive, nine-month program including English-language classes, computer courses, and social studies for students from Shan State.

F) Women's Participation and Empowerment

\$55,000

To promote understanding of human rights, women's rights, and democracy, and to support community organizing efforts among Burmese women. The organization will launch a campaign for nonviolent social change, manage a drop-in help center for migrant workers, publish a newsletter for distribution inside Burma and among women's groups along the Thai-Burma border, run lending libraries for displaced Burmese, organize a monthly discussion series, and convene a meeting of regional Burma support groups to develop a coordinated strategy to promote political reform in Burma.

\$7,400

To promote the rights of women and children in Kachin State and to encourage understanding and cooperation among Burman and ethnic-minority women. The organization will organize computer and English-language classes, a management training program, a women's rights training course, and an income-generation skills training school. The organization will also develop a leadership training program and internship program for its members; conduct workshops on office management skills, and communication strategies; and publish a newsletter.

\$15,500

To promote human rights and democracy among Karen youth. The organization will offer a year-long human rights and democracy course for Karen high school students and will integrate its course into the core curriculum of Karen high schools and work to introduce its core concepts to the broader Karen community.

\$25,000

To increase women's participation in Burma's democracy movement and provide Shan women with the necessary skills to assume decision-making positions in their communities and organizations. The network will organize women's empowerment and capacity building workshops, document and report on the situation of women in Shan State, advocate for women's rights in Shan State, and offer basic educational, health and social services for displaced Shan.

\$40,000

To promote increased understanding among Burmese women of human rights, women's rights and empowerment, democracy, federalism, peace-building, community development, and health issues. Projects will include a series of women's rights and empowerment training workshops for Burmese refugees; capacity building workshops for Burmese women in India, Thailand, and Bangladesh; and a peace-advocacy program.

\$10,000

To educate, train, and empower Burmese women in exile in India to take a more active role in the democracy struggle and to promote women's rights in Burma and among the exile community. The association will organize training courses on politics, democratic institutions, and organizational systems and organize a regular forum for ethnic and Burmese women to discuss common issues and concerns.

Appendix 2

Excerpt from Pro-Aid, Pro-Sanctions Pro-engagement, Burma Campaign UK July 2006. Available at <http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/pm/reports.php>

The right kind of aid

We urge all agencies to consider carefully the challenges of working in Burma and the underlying cause of Burma's humanitarian crisis. We accept that these challenges demand considerable rigour from agencies across all aspects of their operations. However, given the urgency of the humanitarian need we support them in redoubling their efforts to meet the challenges posed. It is our belief that any effective aid programme in Burma should abide by the following principles.

It is essential that:

- ***Agencies acknowledge the root cause of the crisis - poor governance.*** Humanitarian assistance must aim to complement progress towards national reconciliation not replace or undermine it. Both humanitarian assistance and political pressure are essential and must be pursued simultaneously. Although not always appropriate for the same actors to pursue both strategies (for the UN and Donor Governments this is essential), it is vital that all agencies recognise the political roots of the humanitarian crisis. We ask agencies to be vigilant in avoiding indirect and inadvertent contribution to the root of the problem and to be respectful to the perspectives of those working towards political solutions. Mutual respect for and support of both strategies is of paramount importance. We encourage all agencies to creatively explore opportunities for supporting the promotion of democracy both directly and across their projects. A democratic society in Burma is vital to ensuring truly effective humanitarian assistance that directly benefits all Burma's people.

- ***Programmes are transparent, accountable and independently monitored.*** In order to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, transparency, accountability and nondiscrimination in the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid, proper monitoring mechanisms have to be established. We encourage agencies to scale up from small to large scale funding of projects only once these mechanisms have been validated. Agencies' commitment to transparency and accountability has to be prioritised as it is the key means of ensuring that money does not benefit the authorities and that aid is distributed in an unbiased fashion. They must implement mechanisms that ensure all assistance reaches intended targeted beneficiaries and is not diverted by the government or any other party. They should be prepared to discontinue assistance if they become unable to ensure this. A clear exit strategy – setting out limits and conditions - should be formulated by all agencies on starting operations in Burma.

• **Agencies have unencumbered access to project beneficiaries.**

Agencies must have direct access to project beneficiaries and their communities to assess, evaluate and monitor projects. Access and provision of assistance to vulnerable communities, particularly internally displaced people, has to be a priority.

• **Agencies must be prepared to deliver assistance across national borders.**

Agencies should be prepared to explore flexible and innovative ways of delivering assistance. This should include cross border assistance whenever and wherever this proves the most effective means of delivery or if it is not possible to reach the most needy areas because of obstruction by the Burmese authorities.

• **Agencies insist on wide and democratic consultation with all stakeholders.**

Agencies - critically the UN and Donor Governments - must insist on wide and democratic consultation with and between stakeholders, including the NLD and ethnic nationality representatives. It is of vital importance in crafting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects that there is genuine and official consultation and cooperation not just with the NLD but also with other relevant political and ethnic nationality representatives, and local communities. For the UN and Donor Governments this consultation has to be essential.

• **Agencies maintain independence.** The Joint Principles of Operation of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) providing Humanitarian Assistance in Burma/Myanmar states that agencies should not “provide funds or materials directly or indirectly to government departments, or parastatal organizations for project implementation”³⁸. This must include Government organized NGOs (GONGOs) and the Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA). Programmes should be implemented and delivery of assistance made directly to project beneficiaries, through UN agencies and independent non-governmental organisations. Delivery of assistance through decentralized local civilian administrations (non-military, technical teams within local branches of health and education ministries) is supportable if this is the only means of delivery, and where there is no risk of diversion of funds or other benefits (financial or political) that might be co-opted by the authorities. Clearly, the principles of transparency, accountability and independent monitoring are of paramount importance in such an instance. Agencies must not allow themselves to be used to gather information of a political, military, or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those purposes that are strictly humanitarian

• **Agencies afford protection for Burmese staff.** National staff must be recruited on the basis of suitability and qualification for the job directly by the agency concerned. In addition, Burmese nationals must be afforded protection from any reprisals by the regime for working on assistance or development programmes. Organisations need to consider plans for the safe re-settlement of in-country staff if they should need to terminate activities in Burma.

- **Agencies support civil society.** Development of a decentralized and independent civil society is crucial for effective and accountable humanitarian and development assistance. Agencies should, despite constraints, operate in a way that supports civil society and builds the capacity for human resources in the country. International assistance must support and strengthen the development of independent partner groups. This should be an essential component of any sustainable programme.

- **Agencies promote respect for human rights.** As set out in the Joint Principles of Operation of International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) providing Humanitarian Assistance in Burma - Agencies must “promote an environment in which fundamental human rights are respected” and must “balance the importance of advocacy activities with the importance of operations”. Programmes should “take a constructive approach to advocate for rights of individuals as consistent with program objectives in the communities where (they) work”.

- **Agencies exercise care to avoid manipulation by the authorities.** Agencies should work to ensure the regime is unable to take credit for activities conducted, use their presence to counter charges of human rights violations or to convey an impression of international legitimacy.