

U Thein Sein
President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Nay Pyi Taw
Myanmar

1st March 2012

Dear President U Thein Sein,

The undersigned are writing to express our concern about the Shwe Gas and Trans-Burma Pipelines Project led by Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and the Chinese state-owned China National Petroleum Company. There are a number of serious social, economic and environmental impacts of this project, including human rights abuses. **We are calling for the government to postpone this project until rights are protected and negative impacts are prevented within a sustainable framework for national development.**

The project is exporting valuable natural resources and missing an opportunity to contribute to national development while at the same time causing destructive impacts to local communities and the environment, including ruining livelihoods and increasing militarization and abuses. Several civil society organizations including the Shwe Gas Movement have documented these impacts.

Thousands of acres of farm lands have been confiscated in Arakan and Shan States and Magwe and Mandalay divisions to clear the way for the pipeline corridor and related infrastructure. The livelihoods of local fishing families in Arakan State have been destroyed due to development of offshore infrastructure for the project.

Militarization has been heightened along the pipeline corridor, causing internal displacement and sparking new resentment against the Shwe Gas Project and other natural resource exploitation projects like it.

We believe that Burma's natural resources have the potential to spur the national economy without harming local communities. These projects should be based on a sustainable framework for development which includes meeting domestic energy needs instead of exporting valuable natural resources and protecting community rights to their lands and livelihoods through genuine consultation and free, prior and informed consent for projects that will directly affect their lives. In addition, any revenue from such projects must be used transparently for sustainable development of the country.

Your government recently announced the suspension of both the Irrawaddy Myitson Dam and the coal-fired power plant in Dawei due to the negative impacts of the projects and concerns from the people. **Due to the harmful impacts of the Shwe Gas and Trans-Burma Pipelines Project, we call for a consistent policy of social and environmental accountability, and an immediate postponement of the project.**

This project is risky business for all parties involved and has the potential to create and/or further inflame conflict in Burma. By acting now to postpone the Shwe Gas and Trans-Burma Pipelines Project and taking steps to deal with the problems listed above, the government will greatly improve its reputation among the citizens of Burma and internationally.

Sincerely,

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