



BURMA

Democracy, Human Rights, and Rule of Law

2013



USAID trainings for media professionals encourage the growth of a vibrant, free civil society. Credit: Internews.

OVERVIEW

The United States recognizes the ongoing reform efforts to build a modern, peaceful, and democratic country and welcomes the opportunity to deepen engagement with the people of Burma and their government.

In light of the transition underway in Burma, USAID sees a need and an opportunity to engage directly with Burmese organizations and institutions to support political reforms, foster ethnic reconciliation and strengthen the capacity of reform-minded individuals and institutions. USAID is committed to supporting and accelerating the democratic and economic reforms that have begun in Burma, promoting the rule of law and human rights, building transparent and accountable governance leading to credible elections and creating a vibrant civil society that reflects the country's great diversity. USAID is building on a long legacy of assistance to the people of Burma with a focus on new and expanded collaboration in the following priority areas:

- **Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law:** Supporting and accelerating the political and economic reform process through targeted assistance to promote the rule of law, respect for human rights, a robust civil society, a vibrant parliamentary system, independent media, effective measures to counter trafficking in persons, and preparations for a free and credible national election in 2015.
- **Transparent and Accountable Governance:** Supporting a transparent, accountable government that is responsive to the needs of the people of Burma and civil society, and committed to inclusive, equitable and transparent economic growth.

PROGRAMS

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

Elections and Political Processes: As the Government of Burma prepares for the 2015 elections, USAID will assist efforts to improve electoral administration to ensure free, fair and credible elections; strengthen local stakeholder and institutional capacity for voter education and non-partisan oversight of the electoral process; improve functioning of the parliament (with a focus on helping specific committees to perform their legislative, budgeting and oversight functions in an effective and transparent manner) and strengthen the capacities of democratic political parties, including their ability to better represent citizens' interests.

Rule of Law: USAID will support a comprehensive assessment of rule of law issues, and work with the Government of Burma and other stakeholders to strengthen the rule of law by encouraging reform in the



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justice sector, to include fostering the independence of the judiciary; increasing access to justice; and empowering ethnic communities and underserved men and women in remote areas to participate meaningfully in the policy reform process.

Countering Trafficking-in-Persons: USAID and the Government of Burma signed an agreement to work together to Counter Trafficking in Persons. Working with the Government, USAID will partner with local and international non-government organizations (NGOs) to play a positive role in the region in preventing trafficking in persons and protecting trafficking victims. In conjunction with MTV-EXIT, USAID sponsored the December 2012 “MTV Exit Live in Myanmar” Concert in Rangoon to increase awareness of trafficking in persons. USAID will also increase the capacity of local and international NGOs to partner with the Government of Burma on trafficking-in-persons victim identification and protection efforts, and will increase overall awareness of human trafficking within the Burmese population.

TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

USAID will support civil society, the Government of Burma, and other stakeholders to strengthen mechanisms that promote transparent and accountable governance. This may include supporting advocacy for freedom of access to information; asset disclosure among government officials; the passage of laws supporting freedom of speech and assembly; and the repeal of media and internet censorship laws. USAID will also support civil society advocacy efforts to establish a new NGO law that conforms to international standards. Finally, USAID will work with the Government of Burma to establish a commercial law framework that supports responsible, private investment and promote sound public financial management to increase transparency and reduce corruption.

USAID is collaborating with Cisco Systems to establish two networking academies in Burma that will provide information and communication technology (ICT) training to improve career and educational opportunities for students. By increasing connectivity and ICT skills for academics and the people of Burma, this Global Development Alliance serves as an enabler to support Government of Burma’s commitment to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which is a global effort to make governments more transparent, effective, and accountable.

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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