

---

# LIFT Forum 2019: Championing Equality: Women's Empowerment In Myanmar



**LIFT  
FORUM  
2019**



*May Sabe Phyu* • 13 June 2019

---

# Introduction

- 
- Growing Attention toward Gender Equality

But for Women in Myanmar many challenges remain:

- **Preferences in inheritance and education, employment and politics** – Men > Women
  - **Social, Traditional and Cultural Practices and Norms** – Deeply Rooted and Internalized by Both Men and Women
  - **Culture and Religion** – Used to legitimize different treatment of and opportunities available to men and women
- 



# Developments in Recent Years

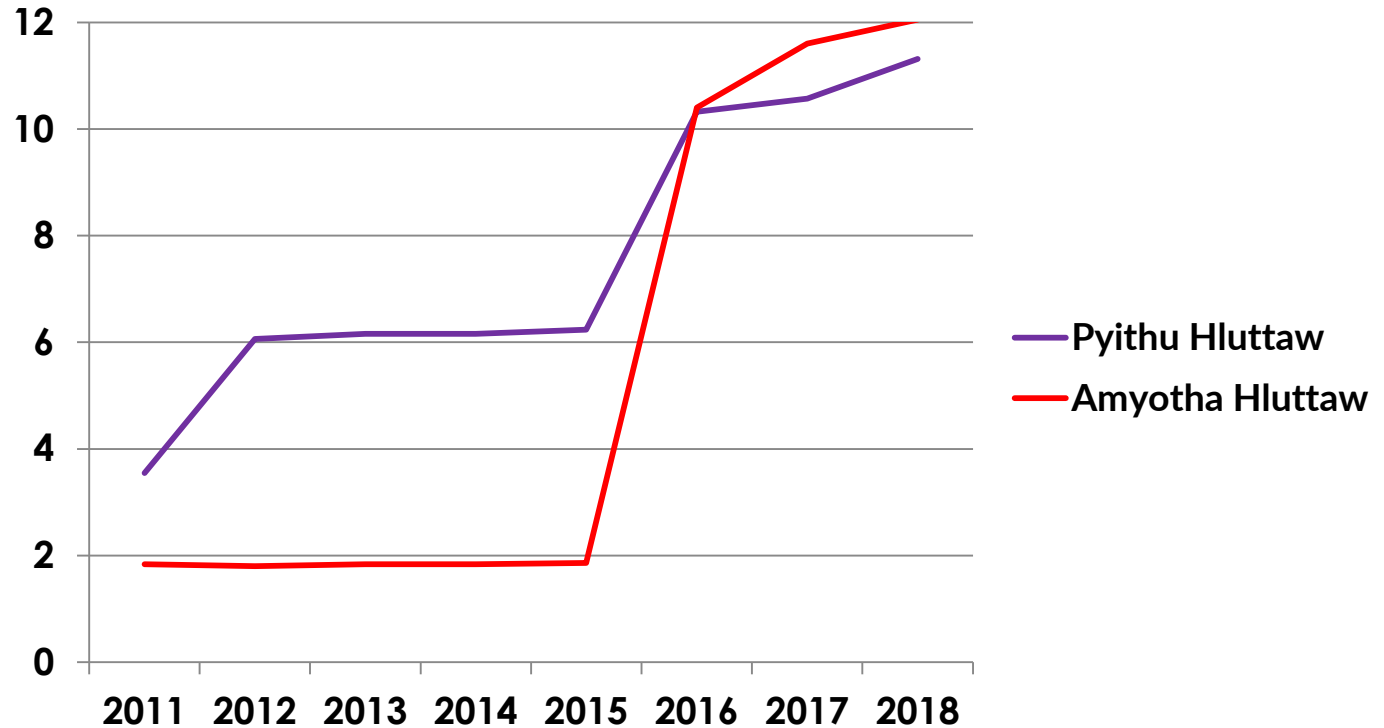


- 
- **National Strategic Plan for Advancement of Women (NSPAW)** (2013 – 2022)
  - **Myanmar National Committee on Women (MNCW) – Reformed** – 2016 → Four Technical Working Groups
  - **Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) (2018 – 2030)**
    - National Indicator Framework – Gender Indicators
  - **Draft – Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women Law** (2014 – Present)
-

## Recent Years



Percentage of Women Representation in Parliament (2011-2018)



Source: Central Statistical Organization (2019)

# Opportunities

- 
- Ratified **CEDAW** in 1997 – Concluding Observations
  - Universal Periodic Review – Recommendations
  - **Beijing Platform for Action +25**
  - **Sustainable Development Goals – Especially Goal 5**

As an ASEAN member

- ASEAN Commission on the **Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children**
  - The **ASEAN Committee on Women**
- 



# Opportunities

- 
- Public Dialogue about Gender Equality – attention toward the attainment of human rights and national development
  - Ministries – opening up – to a certain extent
  - Media – liberalization – partial (Opportunity Vs Challenge)
  - NSPAW
  - MNCW
  - MSDP – at least 30% participation in peace dialogue
- 



# Challenges

---

## Myanmar Constitution (2008)

- No sex discrimination in Myanmar citizens' constitutional or legal rights to run for elected office, or to vote
- Dedicated to equal opportunities:  
“The Union shall not discriminate any citizen of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, based on race, birth, religion, official position, status, culture, sex and wealth.”
- *However*, “...nothing in this Section shall prevent appointment of men to the positions that are suitable for men only”



# Challenges

- 
- Qualifications of the President and Vice Presidents are that they  
“...shall be well acquainted with the affairs of the Union such as political, administrative, economic and military;”
  - Misconceptions: Gender = Women
  - Entrenched Social and Traditional Norms
  - Political Will & Prioritization
  - Limited Resources – Technical, Human Resources & Financial
  - Scarcity of Gender Sensitive Policy, Laws and Procedures
- 





# How to Overcome



- 
- Need to reframe “Gender” – Gender ≠ Female
  - Institutional Mechanism for Gender Equality – needs strengthened
  - Gender Sensitive Policies, Procedures and Laws – Reform, Revise, Abolish and Adopt, etc.
  - Gender Responsive Budgeting
  - Donors Agencies, Partners in Development & NGO/INGO/CSO
    - Awareness Raising – Various Stakeholders
    - Advocacy (Evidence Based) & Lobby
    - Technical, Human Resources & Financial Support – Contextualized Locally
    - Promote Men’s Engagement
-

# Conclusions

- Increase attention towards Gender Equality
- Challenge discriminatory social and traditional norms and practices
- For women in Myanmar – still – many challenges, a long way to go
- Action – match with local needs and context
- Coordinated efforts between partners in development, donors, international and local organizations
- Effective institutional mechanism for Gender Equality – at all levels
- Gender Responsive Budgeting

LIFT  
FORUM  
2019



---

**Questions?**

**Thank You!**

---