

Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

Transcript of video message from

Aung San Suu Kyi

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFwUS36STjY&feature=mh_lolz&list=HL1318947240

I'm very appreciative of this opportunity to speak to you as it gives me a chance to discuss some of the concerns nearest to my heart: civil service organisations and development effectiveness.

We have been trying to promote civil society in Burma because we think that is the best way to ensure basic democratic values. Development effectiveness and civil society organisations are undoubtedly connected. For a long time, the National League for Democracy has been saying that what is necessary in Burma are programmes and projects that will promote the empowerment of the people that are based on accountability and transparency, which are necessary for any kind of good governance.

Civil service organisations have much to offer to balance the tendency towards authoritarianism, which still exist in so many parts of our world. Is it a basic human trait that pushes some people to grab all power for themselves and to keep it? Is it a basic human trait based on greed or perhaps on insecurity? Insecure people try to keep everything for themselves, whereas secure and strong people are happy, in fact eager to share, because they understand that by sharing, they increase their own freedom, their own security, their own happiness.

I think that civil society organisations play a very important role in making people understand that they have to be part of any kind of political, social or economic process in their country. It is they who will have to play a strong role in the development of any country.

I've complained about civil society organisations which refuse to recognize the very strong and really unbreakable link between development and politics. I would like to take the opportunity to say today that I do not believe that development policies and political principles can be separated. Those civil society organisations which think that they will be able to do their work better by ignoring politics, by keeping away from politics, are not really contributing to the long-term future of their society. Peoples have a right to participate in politics. Peoples, in fact, have a duty to participate in politics and I think that it is one of the duties of civil society organisations to make people understand that—that social and economic development cannot be separated from the political process.

So, I'd like to appeal to you today as you do everything you can to promote development aspects in our world; that you also try everything you can to make people understand that true changes in a society are not possible in the long run without political change. We would like our people to understand that civil society is not separated from political society. They are linked together; they overlap. They are so

linked together, that in places you cannot tell them apart—you cannot tell what is civil apart from what is political.

When we talk about civil rights, we are talking about the rights of citizens and the rights of citizens are strongly rooted in political rights. There is no getting away from it. So, let me appeal to all of you to promote civil society, by at the same time promoting the right kind of political process in a country, in a community. If we manage to achieve that, then I think we can say that we are on the right road to genuine development, which is human development, the development of all positive aspects of human beings.

Thank you.