

12th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues
Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities
Statement of Nbyen Dan Hkung Awng, Kachinland College
United Nations building, Palais des Nations, Room XX, Geneva
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Theme No. 3: Effective practices for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages

Thank you Madam Chair,

I am from the Kachin community of Myanmar.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Education in Myanmar had **never been centralised** by the Union level government until the 1960s. Many educated leaders, including **U Thant**, the third general-secretary of the United Nations, came out of the diverse education systems in Myanmar.

After five decades of banning the teaching of ethnic minority languages in schools, the Myanmar Government re-introduced minority language classes outside of school hour in 2014. However, textbooks are directly translated from Burmese text to local languages, and many contents are NOT RELEVANT to the local context and STILL EMPHASISING the greatness of Burmese kings, culture, literature, and Buddhism, the majority religion. It is indeed NOT helpful for the unity of diverse people in the country with prolonged Civil War. Since the education sector is controlled by the Union Government, State Level Governments do not even have the power to hire and fire a single teacher, let alone developing relevant curriculum for the peaceful community.

Here comes to the point that I strongly recommend this forum to encourage the Myanmar Government to **Decentralise Administrative Authority in Education Sector** from Union level to State and local levels:

1. To Develop **LOCALLY RELEVANT** textbooks in local languages - that are not merely a direct translation.
2. To Develop **INCLUSIVE HISTORY CURRICULUM** that Reflects the diversity of people regardless of their current citizenship.
3. To Create education programmes that help young students **EMBRACE DIVERSITY** by learning histories and culture of people other than their own.

I thank you Madam Chairpersons and Special Rapporteur. Chyēju kāba sai.