



Metta Development Foundation

PRESS RELEASE

Metta Development Foundation (Metta) is very happy to share the following wonderful news with our friends, colleagues and partners, who have long supported Metta's work: Daw Lahpai Seng Raw, founder and former Executive Director, has been awarded the 2013 Ramon Magsaysay Award.

Daw Seng Raw is being recognized for "her quietly inspiring and inclusive leadership – in the midst of deep ethnic divides and prolonged armed conflict – to regenerate and empower damaged communities and to strengthen local NGOs in promoting a non-violent culture of participation and dialogue as the foundation for Myanmar's peaceful future."¹

In a statement, Daw Seng Raw said, "I am deeply honoured by this award, but also humbled in the knowledge that I owe it all to the host of wonderful friends, colleagues and partners at home and abroad, who have sustained me in my work with their wise counsel, help and encouragement. So I accept this award not as a personal honour, but as a celebration of our collective achievement."²

Under Daw Seng Raw's leadership, Metta grew from an organization with six staff implementing small-scale community-managed development project to becoming a prominent Myanmar local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). Today, Metta has staff strength of over 500 and an annual budget of USD 9.4 million.³ Metta effectively responded to the needs of the Cyclone Nargis affected communities in Ayeyarwady Delta, including initial emergency relief response and post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation activities. Further, Metta is one of the leading local humanitarian organisations currently responding to the needs of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) affected by the conflict in Kachin and Northern Shan States. Metta is well-known for its commitment to empowering communities through community-based and community-managed projects and its dedication to meet the needs of the communities, regardless of ethnicity or religion, in remote areas of Myanmar where other organisations cannot easily reach or provide support.

Metta Board Member Daw Ja Bu noted, "Daw Seng Raw is an incredible and high-spirited woman of immense courage and will, who has dedicated her life to bring about positive changes for the most marginalised communities."

"Daw Seng Raw's selfless and humble leadership is an example for all of us to follow. She has always firmly believed that communities have the power and ability to overcome the challenges they face. Through her example, we have learned that if we all work together, we can overcome our differences to achieve our vision of creating peaceful and self-reliant societies," said U Sai Sam Kham, Metta's Executive Director.

Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's highest honour and is widely regarded as the region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine president, and is given every year to individuals or organizations in Asia who manifest the same sense of selfless service that ruled the life of the late and beloved Filipino leader.⁴

Metta heartily salutes Daw Seng Raw for her commitment to the peaceful reconciliation and development of Myanmar and warmly congratulates her on the receipt of this honour.

Yangon, Myanmar; 25 July 2013

¹ The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, Press Release, 25 July 2013.

² Lahpai Seng Raw, Press Release, 25 July 2013.

³ Metta's annual budget for the 2012-2013 financial year.

⁴ The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, Press Release, 25 July 2013.