Coronavirus Disease has become a pandemic, spreading extremely fast around the world; with a death rate near 4%, affecting all countries and peoples. The alarming situation has brought the attention of most governments around the world and the WHO has alerted repeatedly on the importance to take preventive radical measures now, before it becomes uncontrollable and health systems get blocked.

Officially, the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) of Myanmar has not yet declared any case in the country, despite the proximity to China makes the Myanmar population clearly exposed to the contagious disease. In this context KHCC and JST assume that COVID-19 is already in Myanmar, spreading fast and most probably having a big impact in IDP congested camps specially of those nearby China border.

In this regard KHCC and JST want to make a public statement on COVID-19 and its impact on Kachin and Northern Shan State IDPs and hosting communities.

1. KHCC and JST want to stress the importance of involvement of Civil Society Organizations together with medical institutions to stop the spread of COVID-19; as social awareness and social engagement are key components to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Myanmar.
2. It is crucial that MoHS strengthen its cooperation with WHO and Myanmar Civil Society and relevant stakeholders working for the development and dignified life of Myanmar citizens, so that the adequate measures could be taken on due time.
3. Intervention in the most vulnerable areas must be prioritized; this affects particularly IDPs near China border. All national and international actors are called to support people living in the most exposed conditions.
4. KHCC and JST call for effective and clear coordination and communication mechanisms for the response between health services in non-government controlled areas, and government services (MoHS); support by WHO should be provided.
5. Involvement of local and national NGOs, as well as CSOs working with the most vulnerable communities is essential to stop the spread of COVID-19. In this regard, they should be consulted and supported by MoHS and any other government related institution, as well as by international concerned actors.
6. The prevention of non-medical persons in frontlines such as CSOs who are working in the most vulnerable communities and IDPs camps should be reinforced and prioritised.
7. Return and resettlement programs must consider COVID-19 implications in order to avoid chaotic movements of people spreading the disease across the country.
8. As responsible civil society actors, KHCC and JST are implementing action plans to contribute to stop the spreading of the Coronavirus disease.

Myitkyina 12th March 2020