



Statement on the Establishment of the Thawthi Taw Oo Indigenous Park and Ratification of the Thawthi Taw Oo Indigenous Park Charter

December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

From December 10-12, 2024, 1,500 Karen tribes such as K'nyaw Wah, Geba, Maw Nay Pwa, Paku, Mo Pwa, Bwe, and other ethnic nationalities from Taw Oo District of Kawthoolei have gathered to proudly celebrate the declaration of the Thawthi Taw Oo Indigenous Park (TTIP). Covering 5,754 km<sup>2</sup> (1,421,967 Acres) of healthy forests, free flowing rivers, and towering mountains in Taw Oo District, the TTIP is home to more than 100,000 Indigenous Karen peoples, alongside a cornucopia of plant and animal species. Situated in the Indo-Burma Global Biodiversity Hotspot, and the Dawna Tenasserim Landscape, the TTIP will protect a globally important natural ecosystem, and our Indigenous Karen cultures that have stewarded this landscape for generations.

Resulting from years of hard work, discussion, and coordination between communities, Karen civil society, and the Karen National Union, the TTIP builds upon the unique Knowledge and relationship that local communities hold with their ancestral territories to reach for a peaceful and prosperous future for all of its inhabitants; plants, animals, spirits, and humans. Founded upon ideals of ground-up and equitable governance, the equal rights of women and men in decision making, and the active and continuous involvement of local communities in governance and leadership, the TTIP seeks to demonstrate the worth of Indigenous approaches to governance in a time marked by intensified conflict and climate crisis. Encompassing a broad variety of differing cultural backgrounds the TTIP embraces unity in diversity, gaining strength from the many different ways that communities practice their traditions and empowering them through interconnection, while ensuring the integrity of the TTIP's invaluable diverse and unique cultural landscape.

In accordance with the Thawthi Taw Oo Indigenous Park Charter - based upon the principles of democracy, peace and justice, environmental integrity, and cultural preservation – members of General Assembly will be elected by popular vote. The General Assembly members will bring together representatives from Indigenous Karen communities, civil society, and the KNU in a form of transparent and accountable hybrid governance.

On this day, we the Indigenous Karen communities of Taw Oo (a.k.a. Toungoo District) call on the peoples of Burma (a.k.a. Myanmar), the International Community, and the peoples of the world to be inspired. There are many paths to a peaceful and democratic future, and to ending the growing climate emergency. Today, through the TTIP, we have taken a step towards our vision of this future, where humans and nature can live in peace.

Contacts:

1. P'doh Saw Thaw Thi Bwe, +66 (0) 871958940 (Phone) (Karen and Burmese languages)
2. P'doh Saw Eh Wah, +95 (0) 945 892 4056 (Phone/Signal) (Karen and Burmese languages)
3. P'doh Saw Thaw Tu Htoo, +95 (0) 934 016 1403 (Phone), +95 989 148 3435 (Signal) (Karen and Burmese languages)
4. P'doh Naw SaLeh, +95 (0) 942 727 1089 (Phone/Signal), 95 934 618 2096 (Phone) (Karen and Burmese languages)
5. Saw Paul Sein Twa, +66 (0) 817 249 093 (Phone/Signal) (Karen and English languages)