



# စုစည်းအားလှင်းအောင်းဖွဲ့စည်း Shan Women's Action Network

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## **Statement on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Shan Women's Action Network**

Today, to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our founding, SWAN is launching a publication: "SWAN: A 10-Year Journey" as well as the Burmese, Shan and Thai versions of our website. We are also holding a community event on the Thai-Shan border, including an exhibition, cultural activities and the screening of a docudrama on SWAN's education program for displaced children.

Our new publication contains reflections on SWAN's experiences over the past ten years, and provides an insight into the complexities of developing a feminist movement within our cultural and political context.

SWAN was founded following the mass forced relocations by Burma's military regime in 1996-1998 that uprooted hundreds of thousands of villagers in central Shan State, forcing them to flee to Thailand. The urgent need to respond to this mass exodus was the impetus to bring together Shan women active in different communities and formalize our network. SWAN was thus born amidst a backdrop of horror and turmoil.

Ten years on, the situation in Shan State and the rest of Burma remains grim, but we feel we have created a space for women's activism, and catalyzed a movement for gender equality in and beyond our communities.

We have sought to uphold our feminist principles and commitment to equality, human rights and social justice throughout our work. Despite the many challenges, our experiences have reinforced our belief in these principles.

We wish to thank our friends and supporters who have stood with us over the past ten years. This support has increased our determination to challenge injustice and work for genuine political change and peace in Burma.

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SWAN is a network of Shan women active in Shan State and Thailand dedicated to gender equality and justice for women in Burma. It is a founding member of the Women's League of Burma (WLB), an umbrella women's organization comprising twelve women's groups from Burma.