



KWO message on  
International Women's Day (IWD)  
Theme: Inspire Inclusion  
March 8th, 2024

On this occasion of International Women's Day marks 113 years of IWD this year. IWD was first celebrated in 1911, and the UN adopted International Women's Day in 1977 on March 8th, and ever since then, women around the world have celebrated March 8th as IWD. Today, the theme for IWD is "Inspire Inclusion." KWO feels that this theme is very relevant not only for the Karen situation but also for the situation in Burma as a whole. KWO and the Women's League of Burma, and other women's groups in Burma have been actively working on the inclusion of women at decision-making and leadership levels across our societies. Although we have made some progress, we are still in our struggle to see women included at all levels of decision-making that impact women's lives.

One of KWO's goals is to empower Karen women to actively take part in decision-making at all levels, not just at the community but also at a wider political level. To achieve this, we have been running empowerment programs for women while putting policies in place and advocating for women's participation in leadership from the community to political levels. We have seen some progress, with more women in community and political leadership positions, but there is still a long way to go. There are now some women in national political leadership and at the community level. We celebrate this progress, recognizing our efforts, while continuing to work and call for more inclusion of women at all levels to inspire girls, women, and communities to see that women can lead at the national and community level.

Since the attempted coup in Burma in 2021, women have not only suffered disproportionately at the hands of the brutal regime but have also contributed enormously to the revolution to bring down this dictatorship and bring peace to the country. We need to give women recognition for this courage and celebrate their participation in resisting an illegal military junta. We continue to call on everyone to make every effort, put policies into practice, and include women at all decision-making levels.

As we celebrate this IWD with the progress we have seen, let us remind ourselves that we still have thousands of women who are living their lives in constant fear of being killed and abused by the military dictatorship in Burma. We should continue to help them, engage them, and support them in ways that empower them, not undermine them. Let's ensure that the drafting of the future Constitution of Burma fully includes women and our perspectives. The new interim government that will come must have women leaders, and the Constitution itself should be a tool to guarantee women's inclusion and gender equality.

Let us work together to bring down this brutal regime and create a new country where we can inspire the inclusion of women and all marginalized people in Burma.

Happy International Women's Day to you all.

Central Executive Committee  
Karen Women's Organization (KWO)