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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2017

World Learning's iPACE Releases New Conference Report: *Civil Society in Myanmar's New Democracy*

On Monday, December 18, 2017 World Learning's Institute for Political and Civic Engagement (iPACE) released a report on the conference entitled, **"Civil Society in Myanmar's New Democracy"** (held Wednesday, September 20, 2017 at the Novotel Hotel in Yangon, Myanmar.) During this time of democratic and economic transition, the conference brought civil society leaders, government representatives, journalists, academics, and donors together to examine the biggest questions concerning civil society in Myanmar and its role in Myanmar's reforms. The full report can be found here:

<https://www.worldlearning.org/worldlearning/assets/File/Civil%20Society%20Report.pdf>

"A vibrant civil society is an absolutely critical component of a healthy democracy, and developing and growing it takes time. . . Just look around this room -- that energy and dedication is already so strong in Myanmar. The Institute for Political and Civic Engagement (iPACE) is here to support that commitment, for the civil society and people of Myanmar to build the future of their country," said Gretchen Kunze, World Learning Country Representative for Myanmar and Director of iPACE.

"In making important decisions, civil society should be a driving force to ensure that leaders are reflecting the will of the people," said 88 Generation leader U Min Ko Naing during a discussion on civil society's role in Myanmar. Daw Zin Mar Aung, MP, Pyithu Hluttaw, Yankin Township emphasized the need for better collaboration between civil society and elected officials. *"Without a strong relationship with civil society, there can be misunderstandings on both sides. . . Since last year, the relationship between civil society and parliament is starting to warm. We just aren't there yet,"* she said.

In addition to **U Min Ko Naing** and **Daw Zin Mar Aung**, distinguished speakers included:

George Silbey, United States Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission

U Kyaw Win, Former Editor-in-Chief of *The Waves*

Daw Khin Ma Ma Myo, Executive Director of Myanmar Institute of Peace and Security Studies

U Myint Kyaw, Member of Press Council

U Nay Phone Latt, MP, Yangon Region Hluttaw, Thingangyun Township

Dr. Sai Khaing Myo Tun, President of Myanmar Teachers Federation

Teresa McGhie, Mission Director, USAID

Gail Marzetti, Head of DFID

Kavi Chongkittavorn, Editor-in-Chief and Executive Director of *Myanmar Times*

The Institute for Political and Civic Engagement (iPACE) is an educational resource for Myanmar's emerging democratic leaders to develop and increase their knowledge and practical application of fundamental democratic principles while promoting civic engagement to foster more representative and accountable governance. Since its founding in 2012, iPACE has trained over 2,200 participants from 800 civil society organizations and 39 political parties throughout the country. iPACE is made possible through a generous grant from the United States Embassy, Myanmar and is a program of World Learning. World Learning is a global nonprofit working to empower people and strengthen institutions through global education, sustainable development, and exchange programs in more than 100 countries.

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