



Having retired from the post as senior advisor at the UNDP Myanmar in February this year, she has launched her own TV programme "Weekends with Susu Thatun" on ONE News Channel, as an initiative to further strengthen the ties with international community. Every week, Susu san invites leading figures from various fields including politics and economy, etc., featuring her face-to-face interview, enjoying a high audience rating.

Susu san acquired her PhD while raising a young daughter in Japan, where she first lived. While she was offered quite favourable conditions to work abroad including in London after her graduation, she has chosen to return home and work for the United Nations as it was her long-held will to devote herself to her country. In the UN system such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF, she has tackled with various humanitarian issues e.g. trafficked children, etc.

About the programme

A. I began my television programme from March 2020 as the first bilingual talk show in Myanmar. One of the objectives of the programme has been to create greater understanding between Myanmar and the international community through providing a safe platform for decision makers such as Ministers, top diplomats and heads of international and national agencies to share their views. At the same time, the programme also brings on board civil society actors, academicians and practitioners to discuss issues of concern such as democratic elections, education reforms, violence against women, hate speech, social cohesion amongst others.



▲ Interview with Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Ichiro Maruyama



(L) Programme official website
(R) YouTube channel
Show from both you can see.

Programme response

Do you feel that this initiative is gradually achieving the expected impact on opening of the window of your country to more global perspective more than your efforts in UN?

A. The initiative is gaining ground opening up the space for exchange of knowledge and perspectives. Feedback received from the international community as well as officials and the public has been very encouraging.

The programme has allowed for me to approach decision makers in my own capacity and not on behalf of someone else. I am therefore able to more raise questions and issues of direct relevance to the strengthening of Myanmar's democratic journey and its relations with the international community without institutional confines.

The UN remains an important institution to contribute to Myanmar's journey from conflict to peace; from dictatorship to democracy. Given my experience with the UN on the one hand and my knowledge of the situation of Myanmar on the other, and the trust that I have built across both the national and international communities, I am in a more independent position to contribute more succinctly.

To all scholarship students

A. I am always filled with warmth, joy and hopefulness whenever I recall my time as a recipient of Sakaguchi Scholarship. The support received from the scholarship eased my financial burden as a working student with a child care responsibilities. The Foundation brought a sense of warmth to a cold and struggling student's life as it treated its recipients more as an extended family with love and care. The Foundation brought us from different countries together on a journey not just for a better future but to be part of making the future better.

I have always been single-minded in my desire to contribute to Myanmar's multifaceted struggle to free itself from the binds of poverty, narrow nationalism; and lift people denied the space to

grow under a series of undemocratic regimes that have left the country on the sidelines of the global community.

Sakaguchi made it possible to realise my aspirations; to put to actions what for many, was a dream to contribute to fight injustice; inequality and towards building peace no matter how small the steps. For that I will always be grateful.

It is indeed an honour to reach out to all the recipients of Sakaguchi Scholarship and say I know you know how lucky each of you are just as I do as its alumni. I wish you all the very best for the future ahead and on this auspicious occasion of the dawn of a new year.