

My name is Nang Yon. I have five children. Opium farming is the main income source to raise my family.

Shan is a mountainous and high elevation region; we cannot grow other crops. So opium is the main crop for us to solve livelihood, health and education problems.

There were fighting (between Myanmar army and ethnic armed organizations) villagers had to run away.

When we ran away from fighting, we could not bring our rice, maize and animals. Opium is compact easy to carry and we could exchange for money wherever we go.

We also use opium in cultural rituals, and as traditional medicine to cure many illnesses such as dysentery, chronic pain and high fever etc.

There were big fighting in our area last 15 years ago, and all the villages were forced to relocate. Villagers came back to their villages when the fighting reduced and there were nothing left to restart their livelihood activities.

It was too difficult for villagers to survive and they decided to grow opium for quick income.

We have many difficulties in growing opium. Many armed organizations demand money from us from the time we broadcasting the seed, and we have to pay them.

In some years, government carried out forced eradication and destroy all our opium fields. We lost all our investment and efforts.

As an opium farmer, I want to request the government not to criminalize opium farmers.

Don't eradicate our opium fields until we can find sustainable and viable alternative livelihood.

Provide effective and efficient public services and alternative development supports for us.

Recognize the cultural use and tradition medicine value of opium.

Give us the opportunity to have a meaningful participation in drug control policy development process.

Thanks for having a chance to express the problem and feeling of opium farmers.

Thanks again to who are listening.

Elevation