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Resilient nations.*



United Nations Development Programme in Myanmar Annual Report 2012



Foreword

In 2012, Myanmar expanded political, economic and social reforms, improving relations with the international community and ending years of isolation.

The government created more space for the opposition to participate in the political process and in the parliament, enacted amnesties of political prisoners, abolished media censorship, allowed freedom of demonstration and assembly, cut the blacklists of people not allowed into the country and reached ceasefire agreements with ten of eleven non-state armed groups. In Rakhine State, however, inter-communal conflict has created a displacement of a large number of people.

In September 2012, the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar H.E. U Thein Sein addressed the UN General Assembly with a landmark speech in which he stated that Myanmar “was leaving behind the system of authoritarian government”. He described the changes taking place in the country as “tangible and irreversible” and spoke of a country where citizen’s rights are protected, the environment is preserved, international labour

standards are respected, and investments in energy and the extractive sector are transparent.

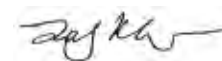
Following the reform measures put in place, the UNDP Executive Board in 2012 agreed to the development and implementation of a ‘normal’ country programme for Myanmar in 2013-2015. Much of 2012 was taken up by the transition from the 19-year old Human Development Initiative (HDI) and developing the new country programme for a ‘New Myanmar’.

We thank all government ministries, development partners, local authorities, local communities, local and international NGOs and UNDP staff throughout the country for your commitment, collaboration and support.

In line with the Nay Pyi Taw Accord adopted at the first Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum, UNDP will continue to support Myanmar in the attainment of national development priorities and in the country’s multiple transition to a modern, democratic, peaceful and prosperous Union.



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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMDA	Association for Medical Doctors of Asia
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDRT	Community Development for Remote Townships
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
DFID	Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	European Union
FESR	Framework for Economic and Social Reform
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRET	Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques
HDI	Human Development Initiative
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAM	Independent Assessment Mission
ICDP	Integrated Community Development Project
IHLCA	Integrated Households Living Condition Assessment
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
LDC	Least Developed Country
LIFT	Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund
MAPDRR	Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction
MF	Microfinance
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MNPED	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPWN	Myanmar Positive Women Network
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SRG	Self Reliance Group
TCG	Tripartite Core Group
TRIPS	Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Properties Rights
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSF	United Nations Strategic Framework
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme

I. CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT CHANGE



Photo © Tom Cheatham

UNDP activities in 2012 continued under the Human Development Initiative (HDI), covering a total of 8,000 villages in 63 townships across Myanmar. HDI directly addressed basic needs of poor communities by supporting sustainable livelihoods, improving access to social services, small village infrastructure, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS prevention. With a history of 19 years of engagement, HDI established robust mechanisms which throughout 2012 continued to support rural development and improve livelihoods of poor and vulnerable households.

HDI contributed to improved food security for 85,000 households and 427,000 people from poor rural and remote communities. Approximately 162,000 people supported by HDI achieved 10% yield increase in paddy and oil seeds, about 97,000 people achieved 25% income increase from livestock raising and over 142,000 people had at least 3 additional food secure months from food banks. Microfinance activities continued to perform strongly on both credit and micro-insurance to the poor and vulnerable. Throughout 2012, HDI continued to increase access to financial services by reaching an estimated 570,000 clients, with an outstanding portfolio of US\$ 62 million.

In addition, in 2012 more than 2,900 SRGs and CBOs took initiatives on their own to draw funds from their savings and interest earned, to expand development activities within their villages (small infrastructure, village-based education and schooling or cash or in-kind support for the poorest). Through the Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA), UNDP examined the extent, nature and causes of poverty in Myanmar, and established the baseline to track progress on MDGs, thus making interventions from policymakers and development partners more effective. The HIV-related advocacy and technical assistance guided the government's health strategy, enabled the review of current laws affecting HIV positive persons and supported civil society organizations. The Independent Assessment Mission of 2012 found that HDI was "well on track to fulfilling its goal of providing assistance to the poor and vulnerable through various complementary livelihood initiatives, as well as through the provision of access to credit loans and improved skills and social capital."



External Constraints on UNDP Programme and Operations in Myanmar

The biggest constraints in 2012 as well as in previous years were the mandate restrictions under which UNDP has been operating in Myanmar. Since 1993, UNDP in Myanmar was required by the Executive Board to specifically focus on activities which are having grassroots impact in a sustainable manner in the areas of primary health care, the environment, HIV/AIDS, training and education, and food security." (Decision 93/21)

Therefore, the range of programmatic investment options for UNDP Myanmar has been limited and involved careful trade-off. For example, not being able to build local government's capacity impacted on the sustainability of interventions.

Another constraining factor was limited geography of interventions, as certain areas (especially ethnic border areas) in the country were not accessible to the UNDP because of fighting or heightened risk.

In January 2013, the Executive Board of UNDP endorsed country programme for Myanmar (2013-2015) formally lifting mandate restrictions.

II. REFLECTING PROGRAMMATIC CHOICES



UNDP continuously sought to adjust its programmatic and operational approach in Myanmar and to optimize HDI's operations. To this end, UNDP put more emphasis on livelihoods assistance and capacity building activities in poor communities that could not be reached by other partners.

In retrospect, a more refined targeting of villages and households within the selected townships could have made its impact even more effective. This was difficult to begin with, given the severe lack of data and the fact that IHLCA data were available only at the township level. But near the end of its life HDI managed to overcome this constraint by introducing the concept of "poverty scorecards" which will be very useful to development activities in the future.

Approach to Programmatic Focus and Coherence

In 2012, UNDP developed integrated work plan and fostered operational coherence of its projects in order to increase value for money. For example:

- the community development projects were closely linked with the microfinance services
- HIV support was linked to the community organization and mobilization efforts of the community development projects and
- IHLCA project assisted other projects with data for targeting, baselines, assessments, monitoring and evaluation.

The Independent Assessment Mission of 2012 noted "stronger complement of efforts between the projects and the further refinement of the collaborative work plan and integrated evaluation tool."

Exit Strategies based on Grassroots Results

In the last 5 years, UNDP Myanmar exited the following programmatic areas:

1. Provision of infrastructure grants at the grass-roots level (i.e. small bridges, irrigation canals, etc.). The exit was due to substantive support through such grants in the previous 15 years, the changing needs of the communities and recommendations of IAMs. Due to the mandate limitation, UNDP was not able to build the capacities of the relevant government entities, including at the local level, on the provision of public services, including infrastructure. However, as an alternative, UNDP focused on capacity building investments for community based organizations (organizational, financial and technical support) to enable them to provide services to communities.
2. Direct care and support for HIV affected persons/households. The exit was based on considerations related to a more effective division of labor among UN agencies and a redefinition of UNDP's comparative advantage on HIV related activities. For reasons mentioned above, UNDP's HIV project could not interact directly and build the capacities of national government counterparts. However, the project focused on building the capacities of NGOs and research organizations at the national level, and in particular strengthening the capacities of community-based organizations on the provision of care and support activities.

III. PROGRAMME OUTCOMES



Photo © Tom Cheatham

Outcome I

Targeted poor and vulnerable communities have improved food security and capacity to meet their basic social needs

Myanmar made some progress towards the eradication of poverty in the last few years, although it remains far from the accomplishment of targets under MDG-1. According to the Human Development Reports of 2010 and 2011, the Human Development Index value of Myanmar increased from 0.451 to 0.483, but it is still the last position in South East Asia. The Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar (June 2011) reported a decrease of the national poverty incidence from 31.1% in 2005 to 25.6% in 2010. IHLCA further reported a fall of food poverty incidence from 10% to 5% between 2005 and 2010. Poverty incidence was twice as high in rural areas than urban areas and are highest in states such as Chin and Rakhine.

Other indicators of human development are also low compared to South East Asian countries. For example, life expectancy is only 62.7 years and the mean years of schooling for adults is only 4 years. UNDP, through its HDI interventions at the grassroots level, provided its contribution to the poverty reduction efforts in the country. In certain areas, HDI has had significant impact, especially in light of the large number of people it has reached (e.g. more than 75,000 members of Self Reliance Groups, more than half a million microfinance clients). The 2012 HDI Impact Assessment Study highlighted the areas where HDI has made substantive contributions, as well as areas where results were mixed. For example, it reported a decrease of the poverty headcount among HDI beneficiaries between 2008 and 2012 from 42.7% to 38.8%, against a target of 38.5%. The impact assessment further observed improvement in perceived quality of life (24 % higher in project-covered villages compared to non-covered villages), and job opportunities 13 % higher in project-covered villages).

Through its poverty reduction activities, HDI enhanced food security of poor rural households through increased food production from various agricultural interventions and increased income of landless households. UNDP also promoted nutrition through production of various vegetable crops and raising of livestock.

However, extreme poverty and hunger are still affecting a large portion of people, and continued and concerted efforts from the government and other development actors. The government set the goal of poverty reduction at the core of its transformation agenda and formulated a Framework for Economic and Social Reforms that lays out an ambitious reform agenda for next three years. The government has also been working closely with development partners to better coordinate efforts and improve development effectiveness in the country.

UNDP's Contribution to Outcome-I Level Change

HDI addressed the basic needs of the poor in the selected communities, by providing livelihood support, capacity building of community groups and support to village social infrastructure, such as water and sanitation. HDI also promoted income generating activities for poor households through SRGs/CBOs, which are now managing their own revolving funds enabling members to access credit and undertake activities to meet basic social and food security needs.

In 2012, UNDP continuously engaged with Village Disaster Management Committees and trained community volunteers to further support the initiatives on disaster risk reduction (DRR) to build resilient communities, and protect lives and livelihood assets.



Sustainability of Results, including Capacity Development and Institutional Arrangement

UNDP's interventions were focused on strengthening the institutional capacities of the community-based groups with a view to turning them into viable and self-reliant structures. In 2012, HDI placed emphasis on building the capacity of 8,269 community-based groups (5,473 SRGs and 2,796 CBOs) on organizational and financial management capacity and ability to manage group-owned revolving funds.

UNDP estimates that the number of SRGs reaching self-reliance and functioning status has now reached 4,580 or 84% of the total and the number of CBOs reaching self-reliance and functioning status has now reached 1,917 or 69% of the total. In 931 villages, village development committees (VDCs) were formed and drew membership from the various village groups. They interacted with other formal and informal institutions and leadership structures at the village level and served as a forum and mechanism for village development, project identification and implementation. Through its HDI transition strategy UNDP will seek to convert SRGs into CBOs or cooperatives with legal status so as to achieve greater participation in the planning and decision making processes at the local levels.

Sharing Knowledge: Building Capacity

Through UNDP's sustained knowledge sharing of community-based methodology and processes (e.g. village planning, wealth ranking, SRG/CBO concept, livelihood strategy, and poverty scorecard), the government's departments for Rural Development and Border Affairs enhanced knowledge on participatory community approaches. The Department of Agriculture started providing technical support and advice to community volunteers in improving crop production for utilization of improved crop production and farming techniques. Finally, the Livestock Breeding and Vaccination Department

provided community volunteers and project beneficiaries with technical assistance and training for vaccination, quality breeding and control of disease outbreak resulting in less disease outbreak.

Mainstreaming Gender in Outcome I

HDI's two community-based development projects (ICDP and CDRT) have had a strong impact on gender by addressing women's inequality and reducing their vulnerability through the SRGs. Within these, groups of women and men, including very poor and marginalised women, were supported in tackling poverty, gaining access to credit and participating in local community based activities that affect their lives.

ICDP and CDRT supported the formation and strengthening of 5,473 SRGs where 98% of their members were women as of December 2012. Through involvement in SRGs, women from poor households gained increased financial and livelihood assets, acquired greater decision making roles in both family and village affairs, became more aware of health and social concerns thereby enabling them to advance economically and find solutions to their problems.

The Independent Assessment Mission 2012 (IAM) noted that "each of the operational HDI projects incorporate gender issues into their working plans, as well as having gender articulated in their respective objectives and targeted outcomes. In the core HDI projects (ICDP/CDRT) this is evident in support to women through revolving funds and micro-credit lending mechanisms. Overall, the IAM sees overall integration of gender issues as well defined attributes of the HDI, with its emphasis encouraging women's participation and empowerment by promoting gender equality in rural communities. This is evident in increased participation on decision-making, increased knowledge, social mobility and social status."

Outcome II

Poor and vulnerable households have increased income and improvement in living conditions through sustainable access to affordable financial services

Microfinance penetration ratio in Myanmar is very low, with only 6% of demand met by microfinance institutions (MFIs). A key restricting factor until recently was the lack of official recognition with no specific legislation. The NGOs conducting microfinance programmes had to do so through MOUs with line Ministries, with permission granted on a case by case basis (i.e. the UNDP microfinance project operated through a MoU with the Ministry of Cooperatives).

With recent changes across a number of areas, the government has taken steps to create a more conducive environment for the banking sector and broader financial inclusion. Recent regulatory reforms were initiated with the November 2011 Microfinance Law which placed MFIs under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance & Revenue. As of December 2012, there were 130 licensed institutions in the country, including 6 INGOs, 12 NGOs, 62 cooperatives, and 50 local companies. About half of them had deposit-taking licenses.

The UNDP microfinance programme covers around 500,000 active clients and has a net loan portfolio of about US\$62 million. The UNDP programme is the only MFI in Myanmar listed among the 2,000 or so in MixMarket, the global website for microfinance.

In 2012, LIFT, a livelihoods support donor trust fund funded by AusAid, DFID, and the EU, provided funding to several MFIs. LIFT also cooperated with the World Bank and the UNDP/UNCDF on microfinance-related issues. PACT launched a training program funded by LIFT for five local NGOs to build their capacity in microfinance provision.

During the year, ACLEDA, the leading MFI from Cambodia, entered the market and planned to start

MF operations in Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, and Ayeyarwady Divisions. Moreover, two technical support providers, CARD and Planet Finance, also entered the market. CARD, in collaboration with the German Savings Bank SBFIC, has plans to provide capacity building to two emerging MFIs - Mingalar Myanmar and Myanmar Egress. There are still no formal microfinance associations in the country yet. As a substitute, a microfinance working group, made up primarily of INGOs active in microfinance, including World Vision, PACT, Save the Children, AMDA, and GRET, was established.

UNDP developed a new three-year microfinance strategy for 2013–2015 which will be jointly implemented with UNCDF and establish a diagnostic and programmatic framework to support the expansion of access to financial services for individuals and micro and small businesses. The framework creates the space to convene a wide range of stakeholders around evidence-based country diagnostics and dialogue and is intended to lead to the development of a national financial inclusion roadmap. A microfinance assessment will cover the demand side, supply side, policy, legal, regulatory and supervisory, financial infrastructure, and client capability and protection.

The MF project provided its clients with a diverse range of financial services including savings, loans and some insurance products, which they used to increase their income through investment in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, trading and services. The total loan disbursement in 2012 comprised agricultural loans (50.6%), livestock (23.8%), trading (20.2%), service (2.5%), production (1.5%) and others (1.4%). During 2012, 73,203 new clients joined and the project extended wholesale loans to Self-Reliant Groups (SRGs). The impact assessment study (2012) reported that the annual growth rate of clients' assets was 8.2% and found significant improvements in food quality, household durables and transportation. It also found that higher incomes allowed families to keep their children in school longer to obtain better education.

Sustainability of Results, including Capacity Development and Institutional Arrangement

UNDP Myanmar has implemented its microfinance activities based on the project documents (and MoUs) signed with the government. In light of the completion of HDI and based on its new country programme document approved by the Executive Board, UNDP will exit retail microfinance and focus on policy support for the authorities and MF players. In 2012, UNDP started preparations for the transfer of its microfinance operations and its assets (including loan fund and retained earnings) based on consensus among the relevant stakeholders, in line with the provisions of the project documents and in line with the legal framework of the country. To guide the transition process, UNDP has laid out key principles for an effective and sustainable transfer of the MF operations.



Sharing Knowledge: Building Capacity

In 2012 capacity of SRGs in Delta Zone and Shan State was strengthened for fund management and bookkeeping, business planning, democratic governance, and women empowerment. This change was verified through the capacity assessment done by UNDP.

The capacity of the Micro Finance Centre Committees was strengthened in financial management, supervision, business planning. This change was identified by personal interviews, reviewing client and portfolio growth rate together with portfolio at risk indicators.

Mainstreaming Gender in Outcome II

As of December 2012, the MF project had provided financial services, including savings, loans and some insurance products, in 6,076 villages and urban wards in 25 townships, reaching 583,828 poor people, of which 98% women.

Doing so, the project has directly addressed basic issues of income inequality and women's limited participation in decision making process. The strategy of the project was to focus its operations on women and make them the epicenter of the lending operations. This was achieved with great success as more than 90% of the microfinance clients and about 98% of members of the Self Reliance Groups are women. They were empowered to take a more proactive role in the decision making process and be more economically active by engaging in income generating activities and having access to loans from groups' revolving/common fund.



Outcome III

Trends, disparities and gaps in achieving the MDGs identified and knowledge produced for policy dialogue with government on key Socio-economic issues

Access to poverty related data has been and remains limited in Myanmar. UNDP provided a significant contribution to address the gap by conducting first round of an Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA) and subsequent analyse of select poverty and social indicators in 2005. IHLCA-1 was implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Myanmar, UNICEF, SIDA and the World Bank.

The success of the first poverty assessment led to the next survey (IHLCA-2) in 2009-2010, which included almost 20,000 households country-wide. IHLCA-2 improved the amount and quality of data available in the country on key development indicators. The subsequent poverty analysis report focused on the multiple aspects of poverty, including defining the poverty line, the food poverty line, poverty incidence and intensity based on consumption, and social indicators. As a result, the regional level planners and development partners are using the set of data for poverty reduction, social protection and area development programming. At present, UNDP is conducting five thematic studies based on the IHLCA data: 1) Regional Development: Socio-economic Situation and Development Potentials; 2) Access to Finance; 3) The Role of Remittance on Poor and Non Poor Rural and Urban Households in Myanmar; 4) Infrastructure and the Impact of Trade ; and 5) Poverty Environment Linkage. The studies will be available in mid-2013.

UNDP provided technical assistance on the measurement of poverty related data to the Planning Department staff of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development. In collaboration with Statistics Sweden and WB, UNDP trained 240 staff from the Planning Department on data collection and processing. The measurement of the

MDGs indicators increased from 16 to 23 and the data set now allows to conduct trend analyse on poverty and living conditions across the regional and national levels. The new Government is actively using the IHLCA data for their regional and national development programming and as their base line for poverty reduction strategies at state, regional and national levels. As updated by IAM 2012 "Overall in the review of the IHLCA reports, their various technical documents, as well as the data collection methodology, collation and analysis it is evident that the IHLCA respects quality standards. Overall the quality and integrity of the IHLCA data remains within accepted international standards."

Sustainability of Results, including Capacity Development and Institutional Arrangement

The project provided trainings to the MNPED's Planning Department with the aim to enable and to capable them to plan and monitor the socio-economic conditions of states and regions. The government is now planning to conduct another round of the living conditions assessment before 2015. The IHLCA-2 data set will be used as a base line and the Planning Department and project staff will implement the data collection, processing and analysis work based on past experiences and with less support from foreign experts.

Sharing Knowledge: Building Capacity

After a series of trainings, the Planning Department staff are capable to formulate the questionnaire for the collection of socio-economic data, and to ana-

lyze and process the data for large scale surveys. The project conducted the performance evaluation of the Government staff at the end of the project period. The result showed that 100% of counterpart staff (240 counterpart staff) are capable in socio-economic data collection, data processing and data analysis.

Mainstreaming Gender in Outcome III

IHLCA-1 provided sex disaggregated data for the following MDGs: MDG 1, MDG 2, MDG 3 and MDG 8. IHLCA-2 captured the same indicators and expanded to also provide data for MDG 5 and MDG 6. Since the IHLCA has been conducted twice, it is also possible to see changes over time, for example movement of working women and men from agri-

cultural to factory and service occupations, changes in wage rates – and in wage differentials between women and men. Researchers can trace changes in the size of farmers' land holdings, road access and the availability of public services (such as all-weather roads, safe water and sanitation, schools, clinics and financial services).

Such analyses can help assess the factors that push and pull women (as well as men) to change industries and location. The IHLCA sex disaggregated data is being used widely by various government departments, UN agencies, development partners and NGOs for their policy development, planning and programming purposes.



Outcome IV

Improved quality of life and enhanced access to services for persons with disabilities and people living with HIV

More people living with HIV and those most at risk of HIV (including sex workers and men who have sex with men), had access to prevention, treatment, care and support services in 2012 than in the previous years. In 2012, the total number of people living with HIV who received anti-retroviral treatment increased to 40,128 (22,496 male, 17,632 female) from 29,825 in 2010. Furthermore, the total number of sex workers who had access to prevention services increased to 55,000 from 46,395 in 2010 while the total number of men who have sex with men who had access to prevention service increased to 65,000 from 54,863 in 2010.

The Country Coordination Mechanism of the Three Diseases Fund (HIV, Malaria and TB), which is established and chaired by the Ministry of Health to coordinate policy on the three diseases, became more accessible and transparent. With the new government, firmly engaged in the reform process, work on legal review and the improvement of punitive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices relating to HIV and AIDS is underway. Finally in 2012, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was appointed by UNAIDS as Global Advocate for Zero discrimination for HIV and AIDS. Given her popularity, this increased the profile of the issue in Myanmar.

UNDP had an impact on the increase of access to prevention, care and support services by people living with HIV and those most at risk of HIV. By conducting assessments of most at risk groups (men who have sex with men and transgender persons) in five cities, UNDP contributed to the development and implementation of community-based prevention strategies and the provision of advice to the government which led to the scaling up of policies for increased access to services. Moreover, the assessments also led to changes in the legal framework to sustain access and quality of HIV prevention, treatment and care services among men who have sex with men and transgender people. Finally,

UNDP conducted a base line study on the effect of HIV and AIDS on the socioeconomic situation of HIV affected households and provided recommendations to the authorities and community groups for HIV impact mitigation.

Sustainability of Results, including Capacity Development and Institutional Arrangement

UNDP interventions were designed to ensure their sustainability by developing the skills of the partner networks and institutions to enable them to continue and expand these activities independently upon the termination of UNDP support.

Particularly, UNDP support focused on a) strengthening organizations focused right based responses to HIV among key affected populations including men who have sex with men, TG and sex workers, b) strengthening the capacity of community organizations targeting people living with HIV, especially women living with HIV; c) enhancing the capabilities of institutions providing social protection and mitigation of the impact of HIV on positive women and their families and d) promoting among national stakeholders partnership building, networking and learning to improve a coordinated HIV response.

Sharing Knowledge: Building Capacity

UNDP strengthened the capacity of the implementing partners (NGOs - Burnet, PSI, and Alliance) and the members of the community based groups (Myanmar Positive Group, Myanmar Positive Women Network, Myanmar Sex Workers' Network and Myanmar Men Who Have Sex With Men Network). Capacity improvement focused on research capa-

bilities, assessments and reviews, planning, financial management, development of methodologies for research, data collection, and reporting. Furthermore, UNDP supported the concerned public institutions (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Information and Ministry of Commerce) to achieve better knowledge on trade related aspects of intellectual properties rights (TRIPS), their impact on access to generic Anti-Retro viral drugs and other essential medicines, and opportunities and strategies for promoting/enabling the use of TRIPS flexibilities.

Mainstreaming Gender in Outcome IV

UNDP focused its activities in particular to support women living with or affected by HIV. UNDP directly

supported the Myanmar Positive Women Network (MPWN), the second biggest HIV network in the country, composed exclusively of women living with HIV.

At the beginning of 2008 MPWN had 30 members, whereas in 2012 its membership reached around 4000 from across the country. MPWN is now recognized as a key stakeholder and invited to national level meetings (e.g. global fund meeting, annual review of national AIDS programme), which provide them with good opportunities to raise their issues, whereas women living with HIV are more engaged now in advocacy and policy discussions.



Outcome V

Strengthened national capacities, to prevent, reduce and cope with the impact of crisis situations

The national institutional framework on DRR has been in place since 2008. However, a coordinated and coherent system on disaster risk reduction across different sectors and between central and local governments is not fully developed yet. Institutional arrangements and policy for disaster risk reduction tend to be anchored on disaster response. During 2012, the government endorsed the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAP-DRR) which was developed by an inter-ministerial task force led by Relief and Resettlement Department in 2009 and was pending approval.

The Disaster Management Bill was also prepared in 2012, shared with the public and submitted to Parliament for review. The Bill covers disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response and establishes a disaster risk management fund at national and region/state levels. The Government, supported by UNDP and UN-HABITAT has started the process for establishing Disaster Loss and Damage Database, which will contribute to availability of hazard and vulnerability information critical for formulation of disaster management policy and strategy.

UNDP contributed to strengthening institutional arrangements and inter-agency coordination on DRR and to enhancing policy advocacy. In its capacity as the Chair of DRR Working Group, UNDP organized consultations at the national and regional level on strengthening disaster resilience of communities. Capacity building efforts focused on integrating DRR in recovery programmes and building capability of relevant government organisations for DRR programme delivery, in developing Township Disaster Management Planning guidelines.

According to the Independent Assessment Mission (2012) "UNDP is taking initiative in documenting DRR good practices and is attempting to share these good practices from other countries in South-east Asia. UNDP also provided training and capac-

ity building to local communities in the preparation of local disaster preparedness plans, as well as early warning systems, first aid training and search and rescue. Accompanying this was a plethora of related material, including various awareness and response materials, manuals, and guidelines to relevant stakeholders. Small-scale mitigation efforts focused on the construction of cyclone shelters, repair and construction of jetties and bridges and retrofitting of community buildings. UNDP also provided support on updating the Curriculum on Disaster Management Courses (DMC) and rolling out the Training of Teachers' and DMCs. UNDP also supported the establishment of the national Disaster Loss and Damage Database and also supported the government in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), as well as in the on-going process of developing Disaster Management Law.

Sustainability of Results, including Capacity Development and Institutional Arrangement

UNDP endeavored to enhance systems, institutions and capacity of local actors on DRR. This is a long-term process that involves strong advocacy to the government through multi-stakeholder engagement. UNDP interventions in 2012 focused on strengthening the Disaster Risk Reduction coordination mechanism (DRR Working Group), to support government in policy advocacy, strengthening of DRR institutions and capacity building. During 2012, UNDP as the lead agency of DRR Working Group, organized two national workshops on the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action, as well as one national and one regional level consultation on strengthening disaster risk reduction. UNDP and the DRR Working Group also supported the development of curriculum for Disaster Management Courses (DMC) at the township level and trained a pool of trainers for the DMCs. Based on consultations and engagement with various stakeholders,

UNDP supported the development of the Capacity Assessment on Disaster Risk Reduction which is used by local institutions as key reference document.

Sharing Knowledge: Building Capacity

UNDP, along with DRR Working Group, strengthened the capacity of the following institutions: the Relief and Resettlement Department (focal government agency on Disaster Risk Reduction), Planning Department, Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, General Administration Department, Agriculture Department, Irrigation Department, Education Department, etc.

Concerned government departments at the national, regional and township levels have come to strongly appreciate disaster resilience as a development issue that should be mainstreamed in development projects of different sectors. The knowledge and capacity gained will benefit the Government and the country as a whole in the development planning process. Monthly DRR Working Group Meetings also provided a space for agencies to share information and good practices contributing to transparency, greater coordination and shared learning.

As a result of the DRR Working Group's support

through development of curriculum and Trainings of Trainers, the Disaster Management Courses at the township level are now facilitated by government staff, instead of external facilitators. DRR Working Group is still engaging in the process for mentoring and monitoring the progress in capacity development of the facilitators.

Mainstreaming Gender in Outcome V

During the consultations on developing the "Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAP-DRR)", UNDP and the DRR Working Group agreed that gender issues should be considered in the MAPDRR. The government accepted the feedback of the DRR Working Group and the MAPDRR incorporated the special needs of vulnerable groups, including gender issues, in the context of Disaster Risk Reduction.

Through the national commemoration of International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, the theme message of "Women and girls, the (in)visible force of resilience" was disseminated nation-wide through national television programmes, broadcasting of a theme song in the local language. UNDP organised essay and poster contests for students to highlight and raise awareness of the capabilities of women in the context of disaster risk reduction.



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IV. LESSONS LEARNED

(I) Target-setting and results management will have inherent limitations when developed exclusively top-down. From 2010 onwards HDI implementation was guided by the integrated log frame which was developed jointly with a group of like-minded donors (DFID, SIDA, DANIDA) and subsequently introduced for application at the local level. Such centralized, top-down approach to results management had some benefits as it forged a degree of coherence for HDI livelihoods support interventions across the country. Yet, with hindsight, the integrated log frame could have been made more flexible, allowing for modulation or adjustment for at least certain indicators depending on local conditions and context. An alternative – less time and cost efficient, but arguably more effective and participatory – approach could have been to develop results frameworks at the community or township level, and then aggregate key targets and indicators in an integrated log frame. In the latter scenario, development partners could have been invited to join the process at the phase of aggregating community/township inputs in order to ensure that the integrated log frame provides sufficient assurances of the value for money.

(II) Nation-wide community interventions should have comprehensive exit strategy and clear milestones. During the reporting period HDI facilitated establishment of more than 1700 community groups in more than 5000 villages. While the scope of engagement was changing (eg. HDI ceased work on water and sanitation) UNDP did not have a clearly articulated exit strategy from community-level interventions. As result, over time HDI came to be perceived by some stakeholders as an open-ended commitment to community presence from the part of UNDP. On the other hand, while helping to forge vibrant village groups, except during very last months of HDI, under the resources available UNDP could not plan for their gradual transition into more formal and robust community-based or civil society organizations. The lack of exit strategy may be in part due to the power of inertia, and in part due to inability to predict rapid democratic transformation in the country which created conditions for handing over community-based work to other actors. It may be useful to conduct a "post-mortem" independent assessment of the sustainability of community groups forged by UNDP in 2-3 years after the HDI closing.

(III) In the absence of an overall gender strategy, for HDI results through community-based interventions are not scalable. By supporting livelihoods needs and skills and by encouraging women participation in decision making the HDI helped women to meet their basic needs and contributed to social cohesion between men and women. Yet, UNDP did not seek to exploit opportunities to facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience related to gender mainstreaming among the communities and, on that basis, try to foster national gender policy formulation in the context of mandate restriction. As result, UNDP's achievements in the area of gender mainstreaming remain under-utilized and their sustainability is yet to be proven. Through the new country programme UNDP should seek to leverage downstream (community-level) and upstream (policy-level) linkages of its gender mainstreaming interventions and, to the extent possible, encourage "horizontal" knowledge sharing of relevant knowledge and lessons across communities, states and regions of the country.

(IV) HDI's focus on community needs and its impartiality allowed UNDP to maintain credibility with both government and development partners. Given the difficult political environment in the country HDI was the only effective response by UNDP and from the part of the international community to help meet basic needs and uphold rights of Myanmar citizens. The approach has worked not least due to the fact that UNDP advocated for human rights and yet sought to encourage community-based, Myanmar-specific forms of social mobilization, rather than imposing solutions from the outside. This was further supported by HDI's explicit focus on livelihoods support which made sure that results of UNDP's interventions were tangible and appreciated by the stakeholders.

V. TRANSITIONING FROM HDI TO NEW COUNTRY PROGRAMME



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In 2012, UNDP program took leadership role in contributing to developing effective coordination. UNDP in close collaboration with development partners and other UN agencies supported the Union Government in a number of development cooperation initiatives. Moreover, UNDP participated and established a number of coordinating mechanisms on a programmatic and sectoral basis.

In addition, UNDP provided direct technical support to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development (MNPED) in the areas of development, coordination and policy planning.

Similarly, in anticipation of the full fledged country programme, UNDP also provided advice to national counterparts contributing to Myanmar's reform efforts in areas of local governance, rule of law and access to justice, and legislative strengthening.

Finally, UNDP took lead role in engaging and facilitating the multi-stakeholder Working Group on DRR. The Working Group was useful in equipping the government with advice and technical inputs on disaster management built and Myanmar Action Plan on DRR.

These reform initiatives have drawn the interests of numerous international development partners.

VI. MAKING UNDP'S COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRONGER INSTRUCTMENT FOR UN



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UNDP's new Country Program will support the Government of Myanmar in its objective to achieve democratic transformation and poverty reduction in the country. This programme is consistent with the United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF) 2012-2015 and is designed to take into account the expanding engagement of the UN system and individual UN agencies with the country and authorities and increased opportunities for inter-agency cooperation.

As the institutional nature and pace of reforms and their implementation cannot be predicted, the programme is meant to be flexible and responsive to risks and opportunities. In line with the principle of national ownership of development cooperation, the Government, UN agencies and other national stakeholders play a central role in guiding implementation and attainment of programme priorities.

The programme aims to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development that are rights-based, gender sensitive, inclusive and equitable by strengthening institutional capacity of national and local governments and non-state actors. Based on the UNDP comparative advantage and strengths, community-level actions are intended to show what works in achieving the above goals in the Myanmar context and at the same time engage in policy advocacy based on these experiences and lessons

from other countries. Joint programming with other United Nations agencies is prioritized and will be guided by the UN Strategic Framework's monitoring and evaluation system. UNDP will seek synergies with other UN partners and work closely with development partners and sector coordination groups to optimize development effectiveness. In the new country program (2013-2015), UNDP will seek to achieve stronger coordination and cooperation with the sister organizations of the UN system. The areas in which such coordination and cooperation will take place correspond to the three pillar of the new program.

Joint activities with other UN organizations will be promoted so as to leverage the breadth and depth of UN's intellectual and technical expertise, and in order to reduce transaction costs for national counterparts. Effective partnerships and coherence will be sought with UN agencies and other UN funds and programmes where this will help to address joint capacity building priorities at sub-national level, as well as with specialized UN agencies to facilitate provision of technical assistance through UNDP's programmes. Finally, UNDP programme activities in ceasefire areas will be coordinated with and embedded in UN system's response to special development situations.

Promising Areas in Achieving Stronger Coherence

Partnerships will be sought with UNCDF, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and UNOPS for Pillar 1; UNEP, UNESCAP and OCHA Pillar 2; UNICEF, ILO, UNODC, UNCTAD and UNESCAP for Pillar 3.

The areas with potential for strong substantive coherence within the UN system include but are not limited to:

- Disaster Risk Reduction –a high-risk disaster prone country, Myanmar needs support from the international community. Given UN's previous involvement, there is a good tradition and basis of cooperation in this area and UNDP's planned activities for the new program could add to that coherence and enrich UN's joint contribution. UNDP's collaboration with OCHA, UNOPS, WFP, UNICEF and WHO in this area is based on solid institutional arrangements which have been laid out through the DDR Working Group.

- Rule of Law and Access to Justice is a new area of work for the UNDP in Myanmar, with potential for strong UN response. In the formulation phase of its new program, UNDP paid particular attention to this issue, closely consulting with other UN agencies and crafting a well-defined role for UNDP in synergy with the efforts of other UN partners operated in this area in Myanmar for many years (UNICEF, ILO) or one planning to do so in future (OHCHR).

- Local governance: UNDP will work through a joint programme with UNCDF in the area of capacity building of local governance and expanding access of the poor to microfinance services. In addition, to support a wide range of activities under Pillar 1, UNDP will seek to work in partnership with UNICEF, OCHA, UNOPS, WFP, UNHCR and UNESCO.





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