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Democratic Governance Programme in Myanmar (2013-2017) Overview

UNDP promotes democratic governance, rule of law and human rights in Myanmar, a country in the midst of a democratic transition. Credible elections, with the participation of all political parties, in November 2015 marked a significant moment in Myanmar's history, and were made possible by several years of incremental progress in democratic reforms.

The state will have a crucial role in addressing the country's challenges and taking forward sustainable human development together with other actors. Myanmar's institutions, emerging from decades of isolation and military rule, face the challenge of reshaping institutional culture, and policies and procedures, in order to rebuild public trust and drive democratic reforms.

UNDP supports more open and responsive governance so that the state will be better able to improve the lives of Myanmar's poorest and most vulnerable people, and overturn a legacy of conflict and mistrust in favour of sustainable development and inclusive growth. UNDP works in all three branches of government- the executive, the parliaments and the courts, and at the Union and State/Region level- and with civil society, the private sector and other actors towards that goal

UNDP supports partners to establish and implement visions for reform, and to strengthen the use of data and consultations in public decision making. As part of this, UNDP supports the development of skills and raises awareness of democratic governance, gender equality and human rights principles, of both public servants and the public. This will help Myanmar develop and implement plans, policies and laws which will enable the country to define and achieve its development goals. The programme has four outputs:

Development Effectiveness: building capacities of the government to collect, analyse and use poverty and development data, and strengthening effective development cooperation to define and achieve Myanmar's development goals.

Parliamentary Strengthening: strengthening the Union, and Region/State Parliaments' capacity to drive reforms, engage with the public and perform core functions in legislation, oversight and representation.

Rule of Law and Access to Justice: promoting rule of law and increasing people's access to justice, building capacities for coordinated justice sector reform and increasing legal awareness.

Public Administration Responsiveness: improving the capacity of the administration to be accountable and

responsive to the needs of the people, and strengthen service provision and build trust.



Member of Parliament during the induction of MPs in Myanmar's second Parliament, 2016 (UNDP/Pedro Ramirez).

Development Effectiveness

Myanmar is receiving increasing amounts of international development assistance and foreign direct investment, and would need to channel it effectively to ensure development gains reach the people. UNDP aims to ensure that public needs can be reflected in nationally owned development plans; and that all development actors can work better together so that joint efforts see the achievement of these development goals. UNDP partners with the Ministry of Planning/Finance, the private sector, international partners and civil society to enhance development effectiveness. This work focuses on:

- **Strengthening socio-economic data to inform evidence-based planning and policy making:** improving capacity of national institutions to collect, analyse, and share socio-economic data according to international standards
- **Strengthening capacities to develop and monitor development policies and plans,** including reviewing processes and providing training to make planning more efficient, evidence based, and consultative

Our Partners

Government partners: Ministry of Planning/Finance; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; Union Civil Service Board; Ministry of Home Affairs; Office of the Union Attorney General; Office of the Supreme Court of the Union; Constitutional Tribunal; and Parliaments (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw, State and Region Hluttaws).
Other partners: Inter-Parliamentary Union, IDLO, BABSEA CLE, and Universities in Myanmar. **Funding:** UNDP's democratic governance programme is supported by the governments of Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Former donors include the governments of Australia,

- **Facilitating effective development cooperation**, promoting the inclusion of civil society and the private sector in discussions

Parliamentary Strengthening

In 2011 the Union Parliament began its term following the establishment of a new Constitution in 2008. It was the third time a parliament system had been established since independence in 1948. Region and State Parliaments were also established at the same time, for the first time in Myanmar's history. UNDP helps these young institutions drive institutional capacity development, which supports the Members of Parliament (MPs) to fulfil their legislative, oversight and representative functions in line with parliamentary procedures, taking advantage of access to key services. This work focuses on:

- **Driving institutional reforms through Strategic Planning and leadership training:** enabling the Parliament to better determine and achieve its capacity development goals.
- **Establishing and strengthening parliament services** through development of a Learning Centre; library, research and information services; and strong ICT systems
- **Improving legislative development, oversight and outreach:** strengthening procedures, processes and technical knowledge within parliamentary committees, and improving consultation and outreach.
- **Enhancing State and Regional Parliaments:** supporting them to determine their needs and coordinate to resolve common issues, and building capacity of MPs and committees to perform their core functions.



Gender trainer pool team member facilitating Gender and GBV quiz session (Ye, Mon State)

Gender training recipient talks about gender based violence to officials in Mon State, 2015 (UNDP/Shobhna Decloitre)

Rule of Law and Access to Justice

Decades of military rule have eroded judicial independence and public trust in the justice system, although the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar formally separates the judiciary from the legislature and the executive. Recognizing that an independent judiciary, enhanced rule of law and accessible and fair justice for all are basic foundations for the country's stability and

economic development, UNDP will support justice sector reform in Myanmar by focusing on:

- **Promoting coordinated justice sector reform:** enhancing ability of justice institutions to plan reforms, encouraging the development of a single justice sector reform strategy promoting access to justice.
- **Ensuring that laws respond to public needs, especially of the most vulnerable:** improving Myanmar's legislative framework by providing technical advice on laws and participatory legal drafting.
- **Building institutional capacity in the justice sector:** equipping judicial officials and law officers with the skills and tools they need to administer justice in accordance with international human rights standards.
- **Building the capacity of law teachers and students in Myanmar universities** through which build practical legal skills and raise awareness of social justice issues
- **Increasing awareness of the rule of law and respect for human rights** within the justice institutions and with the public

Public Administration Responsiveness

Administrative and civil service reforms have the potential to make Myanmar institutions more responsive and accountable to the people, contributing to more inclusive policy-making and promoting better access to services. This is particularly important in a country where there is low public trust, high corruption, and where there are numerous challenges to providing equitable access to basic services. UNDP supports government to identify and implement potential reforms which can promote democratic governance, more efficient use of resources and improved service delivery. Civil service reforms enhance meritocracy, integrity and inclusion in the civil service, to make government more democratic and representative in the long term. This work includes:

- **Identifying reform goals and how to achieve them:** supporting the government to identify potential reforms, promoting feedback from outside government, and enhancing coordination amongst government institutions in defining reform strategies and plans
- **Improving responsiveness of service delivery and accountability:** supporting pilot reforms such as institutional performance management systems to develop and track targets for service delivery, or reviewing grievance mechanisms.
- **Making the civil service more meritocratic, transparent and representative:** gathering evidence about the civil service, and providing recommendations on how to improve civil service management and training, such as reviewing regulations, systems and procedures. Promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the public sector.
- **Enhancing capacities to lead reforms and promote democratic governance:** through leadership schemes, training, mentoring, and exchanges with other countries.

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For more information, visit:
www.mm.undp.org or contact

Emma Morley
Team Leader Democratic Governance
Emma.morley@undp.org



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