



Maintaining delivery of support in uncertain times in COVID-19 crisis

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Dear Readers,

It is with pleasure that we share this third edition of our newsletter with you, which provides information about our work in Myanmar. With a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Myanmar, the government has since re-introduced measures to monitor and contain the virus's spread. Since mid-August stay at home measures are in force in parts of Rakhine State, the administrative capital Nay Pyi Taw, including the commercial capital Yangon.

FAO Myanmar remains actively engaged with the government, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture,

Livestock, and Irrigation, and all development partners in monitoring containment measures on agriculture, food security, and nutrition, livestock, and fisheries. With many sectors impacted and the loss of livelihoods, this may likely trigger increased food insecurity.

The full extent of the COVID-19 impact on food systems remains to be seen, but in the meantime, FAO has taken steps to review and adjust project activities to prioritize the response to the pandemic.

Within the the United Nations framework and building on work from the previous quarter, the GEF/FishAdapt project assessment results contribute to the pool of evidence-based data to inform policymaking. The EU/FIRST Policy unit embedded at the Ministry of Agriculture provides technical assistance for improving food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

The summary of the above actions demonstrates our commitment to strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts across all humanitarian and development actors to respond to changes in the operating environment. These concerted efforts of all stakeholders will support the government's recovery efforts outlined in the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), thus contributing to a more equal, inclusive, and sustainable economy and a stronger and more resilient economy.

Enjoy reading our Newsletter! Stay Safe, Stay Healthy!

Xiaojie Fan
FAO Representative in Myanmar

COVID-19 Myanmar Resources:

1. [FAO Myanmar COVID-19 Policy Options Bulletin for Agriculture Sector](#)
2. [Risk communication in animal disease outbreaks and emergencies](#)
3. [Strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of fisheries and aquaculture-dependent livelihoods in Myanmar](#)
4. [Identifying immediate barriers and challenges facing rural farmers in the Central Dry Zone and Delta/Coastal Region in Myanmar](#)

Five highlights from the Thirty-fifth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific



FAMEWS data collection using Pheromones traps and mobile

The Thirty-fifth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC 35) held in a virtual format, from 1 to 4 September 2020, provided a forum for delegates to discuss current country and regional priorities and pressing issues in the region such as the impact of COVID-19, the state of agriculture, natural resources management and food security and nutrition. It was also an opportunity for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to highlight examples of partnerships, innovation, and digital technologies that are helping to improve food security and nutrition across the region and regional and global policy and regulatory matters. Held in a virtual format, 40 member countries of the FAO participated in this year's four-day regional conference.

In this article, we share key highlights from the APRC 35 conference:

1. The FAO Director General champions innovation to tackle COVID-19 impacts

The Delegates heard from the FAO Director-General QU Dongyu, who spoke about the need for innovation to help countries recover and plan for a better recovery. The Director-General said that "To transform food systems for

sustainable healthy diets we must have coherence, partnerships, and solidarity to reduce the costs of production," "Big data, a digital economy and mobile technology will help producers achieve that." Today, mobile technology is leading innovation, and a smartphone in the hands of a smallholder farmer is his new farming tool," the Director-General added. "Leveraging data, innovation, and technology has shown that, here in Asia and the Pacific, we have brilliant minds, scientists and an entrepreneurial spirit that will lead us through the challenges presented by COVID-19 and help us conquer malnutrition and poverty," the Director-General said.

2. Establishment of the FAO Office of Innovation

The Conference learned more about the establishing of a FAO Office of Innovation and the creation of an **International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture** that will work to promote digital technologies for sustainable agriculture and food security.

3. Innovative tools in use to promote the fight to end hunger

At the conference, FAO highlighted the **Hand in Hand Initiative** that aims to enable matchmaking, bringing the right partners together at the right time to help countries accelerate agriculture transformation and sustainable rural development to contribute to poverty reduction and end hunger. Under this Initiative, examples of state-of-the-art tools such as the **Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform** and the **FAO Data Lab** were discussed.

4. Myanmar calls for greater collaboration to address COVID-19's impacts on Agriculture

U Kyaw Swe Lin, Director General, Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) in his remarks noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on food systems in countries in Asia and the Pacific, including Myanmar. He added that Myanmar released a COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), prioritizing support to agriculture food systems including livestock, fisheries and aquaculture. He called for strengthened collaboration and comprehensive solutions for food and agriculture systems to recover better in a post COVID-19 era.

FAO's response to COVID-19 in Myanmar

With the aim of providing the Government of Myanmar with sound information FAO has produced a **brief with policy options for the Agriculture sector**. In addition, FAO has conducted two assessments on the pandemic's impacts on livelihoods, food and agriculture in select regions of Myanmar, namely **Strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of fisheries and aquaculture-dependent livelihoods in Myanmar** and **Assessing the**

Impact of COVID-19 on the Fishing and Aquaculture Sectors in Myanmar

5. Areas of action in the fight against hunger and malnutrition in Myanmar

FAO is providing technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) in the development of coherent and evidence-based policies and programmes with a stronger focus on food security and nutrition. With regards agriculture, forestry and fisheries production systems, FAO provides support in strengthening integrated approaches towards more productive and sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries, taking into account the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Lastly, FAO is working with MoALI to increase the resilience of agricultural livelihoods at risk of disasters and crises.

COVID-19 livelihoods impact on fishing communities in select regions of Myanmar

The COVID-19 pandemic is a human health crisis and a continuing threat to the livelihood of Myanmar's small scale fishing and aquaculture communities. The FAO/GEF Project on Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Fisheries and Aquaculture-dependent Livelihoods in Myanmar (FishAdapt) conducted an assessment in its targeted townships in Yangon South and Yangon North in the Yangon Region; in Pyapon, Labutta, and Patheingyi in the Ayeyarwady Region; and in Kyaukpadaung, Mrauk-U, Sittwe, and Thandwe in Rakhine State.



Shrimp paste processing in Ayeyarwady Region

FishAdapt's assessment sought to understand the extent and nature of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on fishing communities in selected regions for three intervals between April and August 2020.

Overall, the **assessment's key findings** show an increased awareness of COVID-19 amongst community members. By the end of August 2020, however, the lack of available resources and compliance fatigue had reduced

compliance. Market prices for fishing and aquaculture products have mainly dropped down together with the demand due to market closures over the survey period. Community representatives identified job opportunities and job diversification as the most pressing priorities for a COVID-19 recovery. Early food relief packages from the government were gratefully received, but the distribution of assistance has been sporadic and geographically limited, and the criteria for receiving assistance has been confusing. Servicing financial loans has challenged many community members since the COVID-19 pandemic began and will continue to be difficult over the next year, mainly for the inflexible reimbursement schemes strictly applied by the lenders. Lastly, vulnerable community members still shoulder the burden of a slowing economy, decreased incomes, increased unemployment, and a lack of sufficient resources for basic needs.

As part of the government's CERP, FAO recommends supporting aquaculture farmers with inputs for freshwater farming, cold storage facilities, and training for both aquaculture and fishery workers.

With regards, the FishAdapt project's interventions have identified specific vulnerabilities related to natural resources, their management, and the impact of climate change and related disasters at the community level. These will be all specifically addressed via integrated community-based plans. The integrated community-based plans incorporate current good practices related to natural resource management and critical adaptive methodologies for climate change that have been identified and implemented by community members. Community members' innovations and ideas in the planning stage will be analysed and implemented. The outcomes of FishAdapt's community-level assessments done as part of the current research regarding the COVID-19 pandemic will be holistically integrated on above referred community plans.

Looking ahead, the **FishAdapt report highlights** that fishing and the aquaculture sector will continue experiencing uncertain market demand and lower prices. The FAO's support and that of national authorities are required to build the resilience of communities impacted by job loss and unstable incomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A closer look: the food and nutrition security impact, resilience, sustainability and transformation programme

In the last 70 years, our food systems have been transformed to reduce undernourishment and food insecurity. These changes have indeed contributed to a substantial decrease in the global hunger. However, despite the efforts, almost 690 million people are still

undernourished today. Those transformations prompted progress, but it is also true that they came with a price tag on both the planet and global health and nutrition. Natural resources depletion, loss of biodiversity and climate change have come along with a surge in obesity and non-communicable diseases worldwide.

There is a common ground to face all these challenges: agriculture. Agriculture and food systems, which represent how our food is produced and consumed, could be transformed to work for nutrition, health and the environment, but also for job creation, economic growth, stability and welfare. To make it happen, it is more important than ever to create a policy and institutional environment that attracts both public and private investments.



Rural family farmer from Sagaing Region

What is the Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation programme (FIRST)?

The Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation programme (FIRST) represents a strategic partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Union (EU) that seeks to improve food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

Through the partnership, the EU and FAO are working hand in hand with governments in setting the right conditions to promote both public and private investments in sustainable agriculture and creating an enabling environment for these investments to contribute to achieving food security and nutrition. In Myanmar, the policy facility is composed of two policy advisors, on nutrition and land, who are based in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation's (MoALI) Department of Planning.

To learn more about the work of the FIRST policy programme in Myanmar in this detailed report **Myanmar sowing the seeds for more diverse diets**

FAO concludes consultations to promote nutrition in the Central Dry Zone of Myanmar

Nutrition has risen to the top of the development agenda in Myanmar. Therefore, it requires intensive multi-sectoral coordination and engagement to ensure the scaling-up of effective interventions, leveraging impact through complementary activities where possible.

Representatives from the Township General Administrative Department, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI), the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement participated in advocacy workshops organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under its Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) in Mandalay, Magway and Sagaing regions (Central Dry Zone) in Myanmar.

During the workshops, the project team oriented the township administration and concerned line departments with multi-sectoral overview and nutrition approach to ensure ownership of nutrition as innately linked with their respective works and ultimately institutionalize nutrition into township-level planning and implementation.

The team also explored opportunities for the efficient promotion of nutrition-sensitive activities by mapping the departments' existing initiatives, contributions, coordination mechanisms and potential for increased synergies, complementation, capitalization and integration of nutrition-sensitive activities at the township level.



Presentation on CFAVC Project Overview by DoA

In addition, the project team identified relevant nutrition-sensitive packages as a means to realize nutrition recommendations based on the suggestions and recommendations of various stakeholders. The suggested packages varied depending on the feasibility and context of local communities. Moreover, sector-wide group works were carried out to assess their implementation capacity on nutrition in terms of human resources, financial

resources, technical resources, material resources as well as their coordination capacity.

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) is a global partnership dedicated to fighting hunger, malnutrition, and poverty by supporting resilient and sustainable agriculture in developing countries that benefits and empowers poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers, particularly women.

In Myanmar, FAO, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and MoALI are jointly implementing interventions within the framework of GAFSP to create an enabling environment that reduces the incidence of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition among the rural poor in the Central Dry Zone of Myanmar.

Communities in Ayeyarwady Delta participate in efforts to restore mangrove forests

Approximately three-quarters of Myanmar's population dwells in rural area and relies on forest resources for daily socio-economic subsistence. Rural communities in the Ayeyarwady Delta region on Myanmar's southwestern coast are no exception.

The Ayeyarwady Delta region has a high concentration of mangrove trees and shrubs growing at the intersection of land and sea. These mangroves are important for many reasons. For example, mangroves exist among the most productive terrestrial ecosystems and are a natural, renewable resource.

The mangroves provide feeding, breeding and nursing grounds for numerous fish, and the majority of the community earns a living from fishing in the region.



Mangrove restoration in Ayeyarwady Region

Over the past few decades, however, over 60% of mangroves in the Delta have been destroyed. The main reason is converting land to use for planting rice or for human settlements.

Consequently, destroying and clearing mangroves will likely negatively impact fisheries in the region, thus leading to a loss of livelihoods. "We (the villagers) cannot catch fish and crabs as easily as in the past due to rapid disappearance mangrove forests in our area," noted U Kyaw Soe, the Chairman of Community Forest User Group from Mya Yar Gone Village.

Also, the environmental stability the mangroves provide will diminish, increasing local communities' exposure to climate and natural disasters.

The rapid yearly loss of mangrove forests has drawn attention to conserving and restoring them via forest restoration projects and policies.

The sustainable cropland and forest management in Myanmar's priority agroecosystems, a five-year project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), promotes sustainable forest management by establishing community forest user groups. In collaboration with the Forest Department, six Community Forest User Groups (CFUG) have been established to facilitate the reforestation of mangroves.

The SLM project provided cash grants to the six CFUGs to compensate for lost income due to efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in communities. With the grants, six CFUGs have established mangrove nurseries.

"We would like to thank Forest Department for showing us how to build this nursery and the SLM project for providing cash support. This field can be reused to produce mangrove plants in coming years. Besides, this collective effort will help restore mangrove forests that have been lost over the past decades due to overcutting for both subsistence and commercial uses," remarked U Kyaw Soe.

For adapting to the rapidly evolving situation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the cash assistance to local communities was indeed timely. "We responded to emerging needs, such as the loss of income, and simultaneously worked with communities to understand how to establish mangrove nurseries," noted Xavier Bouan, the Senior Technical Adviser of the Sustainable Land Management Project.

This key milestone contributes to restoring lost and degraded mangrove ecosystems—a fundamental step to reducing the impact of climate change and to restoring a major long-term source of forest and fishery products and ecosystem services.

The successfully grown mangrove plantlets will be transplanted in a community forest area approved by the Forest Department this year and for years to come.

FAO provides cash support along with agricultural inputs to vulnerable farmers

The implications of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) among vulnerable farming communities in central and northern Rakhine State, Myanmar are distressing enough without adding the impacts of the protracted conflict, which have severely disrupted agricultural production, reduced access to food due to insecurity, and have resulted in substantial displacement. These factors have led to an increase in poverty levels.

Communities are particularly at risk, as they continue to live in an environment with ongoing hostilities. Further, disruptions to supply chains due to COVID-19 restrictions and a decrease in access to items of first necessity could result in increased competition over limited resources. Movement restrictions implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 could derail agricultural input supply chains, reduce informal daily labourers' access to farmland (particularly for vulnerable people who have weak resilience, which will impact both their wages and the area of land cultivated), and constrain transport of goods to processing facilities and/or markets, noted Reda Lebtahi, Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

According to a United Nations policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on Southeast Asia, the pandemic has inflicted real suffering, with a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable. The brief also highlighted prevailing inequalities, concerns over governance, and the unsustainability of the current development pathway.



Fertilizer distribution in Maungdaw Township

Under its flagship three-year project funded by the European Union, FAO is working to increase the resilience of livelihoods to natural hazards and conflicts in Rakhine State. The aim of project is to restore and protect the agricultural livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw and Rathedaung townships. To address the immediate needs of vulnerable farmers amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, FAO has reprogrammed project activities, including the provision of cash grants and agricultural inputs.

Cash grants: FAO has concluded its first round of cash transfers in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw and Rathedaung townships in Rakhine State. This FAO Emergency project has reorganized its programming to ensure continued delivery of assistance where there are already high levels of need, while also meeting new needs emerging from the effects of COVID-19. The provision of cash grants aims to address communities' immediate food needs and essential household expenses, which have increased as a result of the surge in armed conflict and impact of COVID-19, Reda Lebtahi stressed. Cash assistance totalling USD 619 341 was provided to about 5 892 vulnerable farming families in northern and central Rakhine State.

Agricultural inputs: According to the findings of FAO's Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis in Rakhine State, which is based on twelve-month recall, interviewed households have been affected mainly by economic shocks, such as high food prices (45 percent) and high costs of agricultural inputs (31). Consequently, during these uncertain times, FAO has provided farmers with agriculture inputs to enhance the food security, nutrition and resilience of communities. FAO has provided 5 096 bags of fertilizer to vulnerable farmers has complemented other activities, including the provision of rice seeds, cash grants, farming tools, a basic nutrition guide and training on good farming practices.

Ensuring safety in the context of COVID-19: Ensuring the safety of staff and families receiving assistance is a priority for FAO, especially as COVID-19 remains a threat. COVID-19 prevention measures have been streamlined into operations, as they are vital to protect staff and community members. The addition of distribution sites, the installation of handwashing points, and temperature checks for families are examples of measures that are critical and instil confidence. Moreover, FAO has provided COVID-19 informational materials to communities in 115 villages and provided soap and masks to 5 892 vulnerable farmers at distribution sites.

FAO supports Myanmar veterinary services with virtual capacity building for a lumpy skin disease risk assessment

In December 2019, after monitoring the development of a lumpy skin disease (LSD) event in South Asia, FAO's Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health (EMCAH) activated a specific Incident Coordination Group (ICG) that would focus on LSD. LSD is a disease that affects domestic cattle and Asian water buffalo, with animals presenting noticeable skin nodules as the disease's name suggests. The economic impact of an LSD outbreak can be substantial, with small-scale farmers suffering the greatest losses.

The disease affects cattle production, milk yields, and the overall health of the animal, and control measures may include restrictions on cattle movements and trade, which in turn can have a detrimental effect on the economy of a country. Successful efforts to limit the spread of the disease include large-scale vaccination, which is widely seen as the best approach. Effective vaccines against the disease do exist, and the earlier the intervention, the more minimal the impact of the outbreak.

The LSD ICG serves as a coordination platform through which FAO colleagues and international partners can share updates, provide information and request support relating to this particular animal health disease. EMC-AH holds weekly ICG calls, with a rotating agenda of specific animal health diseases, one of which is LSD.

The LSD ICG has been successful in maintaining regular communication with the FAO representation in affected countries, with up-to-date information on countries' preparedness and response activities being shared with the group by in-country animal health experts.

Information about specific countries in Asia responding to LSD outbreaks was shared with participants of the LSD ICG during regular calls, information which, in turn, kept the FAO Representative in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar up to date on LSD-related activities in the region. In light of the developing outbreak in the region, where Bangladesh and India have become infected with the disease, the Director General of the country's Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI) officially requested support from FAO to increase the country's capacity to assess the risk of a potential LSD outbreak, particularly since it shares borders with Bangladesh and India.



ECTAD support to Myanmar to develop its LSD preparedness

The EMC-AH team quickly took action, working closely with the FAO ECTAD Myanmar team and LBVD veterinary staff. Subject specialists contributed from the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and animal health colleagues at FAO headquarters, to develop a custom approach that would

guarantee optimal results in a virtual setting. This was a new challenge for EMC-AH, as the Centre typically deploys emergency missions following an official request, with support delivered in country and in person. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, however, the team needed to explore ways to deliver similar support remotely, ensuring active participation by LBVD staff and guarantee effective results. The objectives of the LSD remote intervention were to: Prepare and carry out a remote qualitative risk assessment workshop to support preparedness efforts towards the threat of LSD incursion.

Remotely support veterinary services in assessing the risk-based measures needed to be implemented with the aim of enhancing LSD preparedness and response capacities. The support was delivered over a three-week period, beginning on 24 June 2020, with five intensive interactive sessions followed remotely by veterinarians from LBVD. EMC-AH emergency management experts covered LSD preparedness, prevention and detection. For this type of virtual support, it was essential to pique the interest of the audience and keep them engaged, which was achieved through lively presentations, guided discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. This continued interaction enabled participants to work together to build their own LSD risk assessment.

Key outcomes of the event include the development of a country-specific LSD qualitative risk assessment report by participants, and a mission report drafted by the LSD ICG managers of EMC-AH. The latter, which was written in collaboration with LBVD veterinarians and the FAO country office representatives, lays out reflections on the qualitative risk assessment methodology produced, as well as a clear and concrete plan outlining preparedness actions for Myanmar to implement to avoid disease incursion in the country.

Encouraged by the success of this virtual event, EMC-AH will continue to explore various options for providing remote preparedness support to countries in a collaborative effort to adapt to the limitations imposed by the ongoing global pandemic.

Strengthening early warning early action capacity

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) hosted a series of training sessions aimed at strengthening the capacity of technical staff from the Department of Agriculture on Early Warning Early Action interventions to prevent and reduce the impact of climate driven disaster. In addition, FAO provided equipment used to monitor weather patterns in the following locations: Hpa-an and Kyainseikgyi townships, Kayin State; Kyite Ma Yaw and Paung townships, Mon State; and Tanintharyi township in Tanintharyi Region.



Weather sensor provided in Hpa-an township, Kayin State

The training sessions focused on the use and maintenance of weather sensors to monitor forecasts. The technical staff had the opportunity to review key aspects of data collection, weather data interpretation, and other relevant information that farmers can benefit from to improve their productivity. This training is in line with one of three priority areas of FAO's in Myanmar, which is to enhance the resilience of local communities and farming households to natural disasters.

According to Emergency Program Coordinator Reda Lebtahi, monitoring weather patterns is important for smallholder farmers, as it helps farmers mitigate the effect of adverse weather conditions. "Weather sensors can detect maximum and minimum temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity, heat index, and rainfall, among others. With a better understanding of weather conditions, smallholder farmers are able to make informed decisions related to their crop agriculture cycle," he explained.

Extreme weather events have impacted Myanmar in the past. For example, heavy monsoon rains in August 2019 resulted in overflowing rivers, which triggered seasonal floods in many states and regions in Myanmar. According to government data from Department of Agriculture and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, approximately 83 000 people were displaced in the states and regions of Chin, Kachin, Magway, Mandalay Sagaing, and Rakhine. Reportedly, more than 600 000 acres of paddy fields were flooded, out of which 130 000 acres were damaged. Farmers also lost tools, fertilizer, irrigation systems, fishing nets, traps and boats. Anticipatory action implemented before an extreme weather event occurs can mitigate these damaging effects.

This project is strengthening Early Warning Early Action capacity with the support of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom. The project also aims to promote the sustainable recovery of communities in flood-affected regions in Myanmar. Early warning systems are critical, as they provide timely and reliable weather information, which smallholder farmers can use to effectively plan for a planting season,

thus contributing to the restoration of agricultural production and livelihoods.

Myanmar national forest inventory: a present, not a future!

Myanmar has a long history and experiences in tropical forest inventory since 1856 but mainly for operational forest management purposes at the district level. The first national scale forest inventory was implemented from 1981/82 to 1992/93 with the financial support from UNDP/FAO, but for many reasons, it was never fully finished.

The updated information on forest conditions is very important not only for national purposes of forest policy and strategic decision making and planning but also for the fulfilment of international reporting and monitoring requirements of the country's signed conventions (e.g., UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC or the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD). These data will support the implementation of sustainable forest management and the conservation of forest resources together with all relevant stakeholders.

In order to fulfil those requirements, Myanmar became partner country of the UN-REDD Programme in 2011 and the National REDD+ Programme has started in 2017 in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. The National Forest Monitoring System Action Plan had been developed in 2016 and based on this action plan, the new National Forest Inventory has been planned.

In line with the indicators of 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, Myanmar has received the financial support from the Government of Finland in developing a globally relevant approach to National Forest Inventory (NFI) and National Forest Monitoring and Information Systems (NFMIS) explicitly within the framework of a Human-Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and conflict sensitivity.



Project agreement signed by Forest Department and FAO

The virtual signing ceremony among the Forest Department, Government of Finland and FAO for the project of “Myanmar National Forest Inventory (NFI)/ National Forest Monitoring Information System (NFMIS) with a Human Rights Based Approach” was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 June 2020.

This project will establish the capacity in Myanmar to develop updated reports on the state of the forests and this will contribute to evidence based strategy and policy planning in forestry sector.

The result of the NFI will support in fulfilling the national and sub-national level reporting and international reporting. Another important outcome of the NFI will be to help the capacity development of permanent trained and skilled personnel for reliable data collection and analysis.

A package of safeguard instruments will be established with the consultation of different stakeholders and institutionalized into country level actions through an open access based data sharing policy development of a stakeholder engagement and communication plan that includes how to communicate grievances and approaches for their resolution.

The project is expected to contribute to “benefits for all people of Myanmar from improved climate resilience through sustainable forest management” and to a certain extent, also indirectly to “improving democratic governance”.

The reliable data and information through the participatory and inclusive planning approaches will be used for the natural resource related governance system, and additionally, the transparent policies for information and data-sharing will be developed in the framework of the NFI-NFMI.

Reflection from FAO Myanmar Team



Thinn Thitsar Kyaw, Programme Specialist, FAO Myanmar

I started my career with FAO in May 2015 as a Project Assistant with the UN-REDD Programme in Myanmar. In September 2019, I joined the FAO Country Office Programme team as Programme Specialist. It has been a great opportunity to learn more broadly about how FAO is supporting and working closely with the Government of Myanmar in the sectors of Forest, Land and Climate Change; Agriculture and Nutrition; Livestock, Fishery and Veterinary; and Emergency response actions in accordance with the FAO Country Programming Framework for Myanmar (2017-2022). Despite the current COVID-19 situation, FAO does not stop its support to the Country and quite a number of COVID-19 Response Plans and policy recommendations in the agriculture sector together with the ground survey in pilot townships/ cities on the status of COVID-19 affected communities in the areas of agriculture, livestock, aquaculture and emergency supports have been provided. With the current situation of the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar, like many institutions around the country we are adapting to new ways of work. The traditional working environment is difficult to practice given the measures introduced to control and stop the spread of the virus. I do believe that working as a team we can continue to can deliver timely actions needed to support the people of Myanmar in these uncertain times.



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