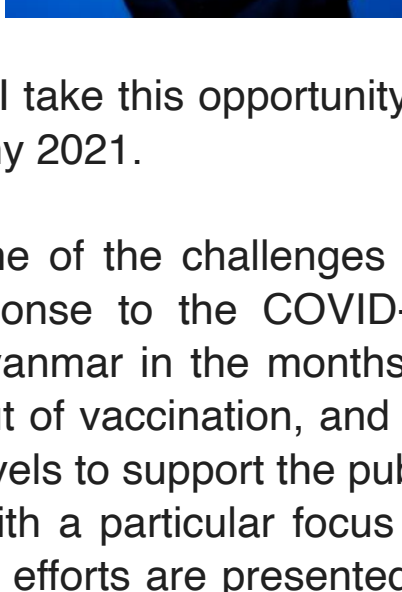


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From the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator,
Ola Almgren



13 January 2021

Dear reader,

Together with the United Nations Country Team in Myanmar I take this opportunity to wish all readers a Happy New Year, a successful and a healthy 2021.

While I am sure many are glad to leave 2020 behind, some of the challenges we faced then are expected to continue in 2021. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be a top priority for the UN in Myanmar in the months to come. We will be gearing preparations to support the roll-out of vaccination, and we are continuing our collaboration with the Government at all levels to support the public health response and mitigate the socio-economic impact, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable and those furthest behind. Some of our efforts are presented in more detail in this newsletter and I look forward to working with the broader set of partner organizations in Myanmar to mobilize the necessary resources for and ensure coherent support of Government efforts to make the fight against COVID-19 in all its aspects a successful venture during 2021.

A new year provides new opportunities and I look forward to continuing and deepening our engagement with our Government counterparts across all areas of our work in support of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, including COVID-19 Recovery, looking towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Thanks to a number of successful reforms over past years, Myanmar is now on the brink of graduation from the category of Least Developed Countries (LDC). This provides us in the UN with the opportunity to look at how we can best support this transition as we begin the roll-out of our next UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2023-27 this year. The UNSDCF, or in short the Cooperation Framework, is the main compact between us and the Government defining our contribution towards national development objectives and the 2030 Agenda. I look forward to reporting more on this process as it gets underway in earnest.

I would like to end by referring to the message of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, who's New Year's resolution is to make 2021 a year of healing. I hope we will find common ground to heal from the impact of a deadly virus, to heal broken economies and societies, heal divisions among us and starting to heal the planet.

Ola Almgren

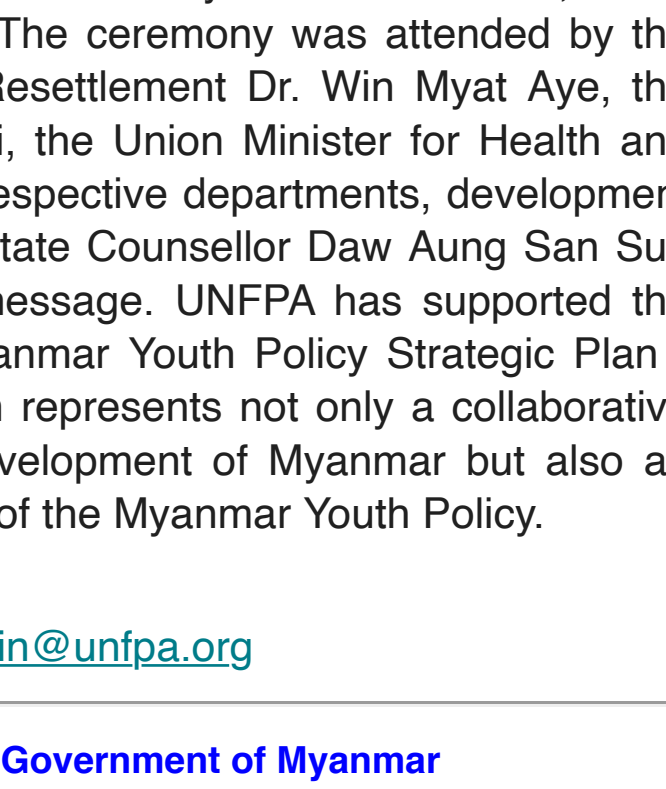
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Myanmar on the brink of graduating from the category of Least Developed Countries (LDC)

On January 6, the Government of Myanmar and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office organized a joint meeting to discuss Myanmar's graduation from the LDC category. The decision on a country's LDC status is taken by the UN's General Assembly based on a recommendation from the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) of UNDESA. Myanmar met the graduation criteria for the first time in 2018 and will again meet them at the triennial review in February 2021. This means that Myanmar will be eligible to be recommended for LDC graduation and could leave the LDC category after a transition period of three to five years. The meeting addressed topics such as the graduation process, the impact of graduation and COVID-19, lessons learned on how to ensure a smooth transition and areas where support is required. The meeting was chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and attended by H.E. U Soe Win, Minister of Planning, Finance and Industry, three deputy ministers and the Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York and Geneva. The UN was represented by UNDESA, UNCTAD, OHRLS, ESCAP and members of the UN Country Team.



For more information: Ms. Elin Bergman, elin.bergman@un.org

Myanmar launches the National Youth Policy Strategic Plan (2020-2024) with UN support



Myanmar's National Strategic Plan for Youth Policy (2020-2024) was launched on 5 January 2021 at a virtual ceremony organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, with the support of UNFPA. The ceremony was attended by the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, the Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, high level officials from respective departments, development partners, youth-led organizations and UNFPA. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addressed the audience through a video message. UNFPA has supported the Government of Myanmar in formulating the Myanmar Youth Policy Strategic Plan - through a youth-led process. The Strategic Plan represents not only a collaborative effort of thousands of young people for the development of Myanmar but also an important step that will guide the implementation of the Myanmar Youth Policy.

[Full story](#)

For more information: Mr. Thein Zaw Win, theinwin@unfpa.org

UNFPA delivers 40,000 COVID-19 Ag Test Kits to the Government of Myanmar

40,000 COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits were delivered by UNFPA to the Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS) to support the Government of Myanmar's effort to prevent transmission and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic efficiently while ensuring continuity of life-saving sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls. The test kits were officially handed over on 24 December 2020 to Dr. Hlaing Myat Thu, Deputy Director General of the Department of Medical Research by Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Country Representative for Myanmar. At the ceremony Dr. Hlaing Myat Thu said, "Early detection and containment of COVID-19 positive cases is still an essential and extremely important process in order to cut the chain of transmission and effectively control the spread of disease."



[Full story](#)

For more information: Mr. Thein Zaw Win, theinwin@unfpa.org

UNICEF partners with Rakuten Viber to amplify voices of youth in Myanmar



Report Myanmar in December 2020 forged a partnership with the popular calling and messaging app Viber that is envisaged to further boost the ability of young people to express their opinions and advocate for positive changes in their communities. Launched in 2016 in Myanmar, U-Report is a UNICEF innovative social messaging tool that allows adolescents and young people to speak out on what matters to them, respond to polls, support child rights, and act as agents of change. Through the partnership, users of Viber will now be able to connect with U-Report, joining the youth-led community of U-Reporters who are already on Facebook, Messenger, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. Currently, more than 50,000 U-Reporters have registered in Myanmar. The U-Report platform provides decision-makers with an avenue to listen to many voices across the country, giving them a unique insight into the challenges that affect young people.

[More details](#)

For more information: Mr. Guy Taylor, gutaylor@unicef.org

UNICEF joins hands with Government of Japan to build resilience to crisis in Myanmar

UNICEF Myanmar and the Government of Japan on 22 December launched a US\$4.71 million project in a virtual signing ceremony to build the resilience of approximately 400,000 people in Myanmar against shocks from conflict, climate change and other crises. The 24-month project will build the resilience of people in three states – Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan – against shocks and stresses associated with conflict, climate change and other complex crises. These three states are among the worst affected by conflict and other forms of crisis in Myanmar.

[Full story](#)

For more information: Mr. Guy Taylor, gutaylor@unicef.org

Investing in Community Engagement can help Transform Lives



UNDP supports township authorities and communities to build a vital four-mile-long community road, connecting Aung Kan Thar, Htain Pin and Thone Eain Su villages with Thahton, Mon State. For years, the lack of a good road between Thahton and outlying villages to the west caused numerous tragedies. Family members were lost, livelihood restricted, basic infrastructure services such as schools and health centres were difficult to access. The lack of a good road left our village underdeveloped. We lived in a sort of secluded world, wishing we had a good road to nearby villages and Thahton. While we were quite near in distance, we were left behind," said a village woman. The recently completed community road enables villages to improve their livelihood. The accomplishment is an example of UNDP's support for the effective decentralization of decision making at township level in which communities could participate.

[Full story](#)

For more information: Ms. Mir Nadia Nivin, nadia.nivin@undp.org

UNDP handed over teleconferencing equipment to the Kachin State Government

UNDP Myanmar handed over communications equipment to the Kachin State Government (KSG) on 24 November 2020. The equipment will enable KSG to conduct efficient teleconferencing and adapt to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The KSG appreciated the assistance while UNDP stressed the need for the governments to adapt to the digital platforms for business continuity. Since March 2020, UNDP has been providing e-learning and e-engagement platforms to ensure business continuity for many of its government counterparts and organizations. In addition, UNDP has handed over health supplies to regional governments to assist vulnerable communities, and reached out to the grass roots level, coordinating with regional authorities to conduct COVID-19 awareness raising campaigns.

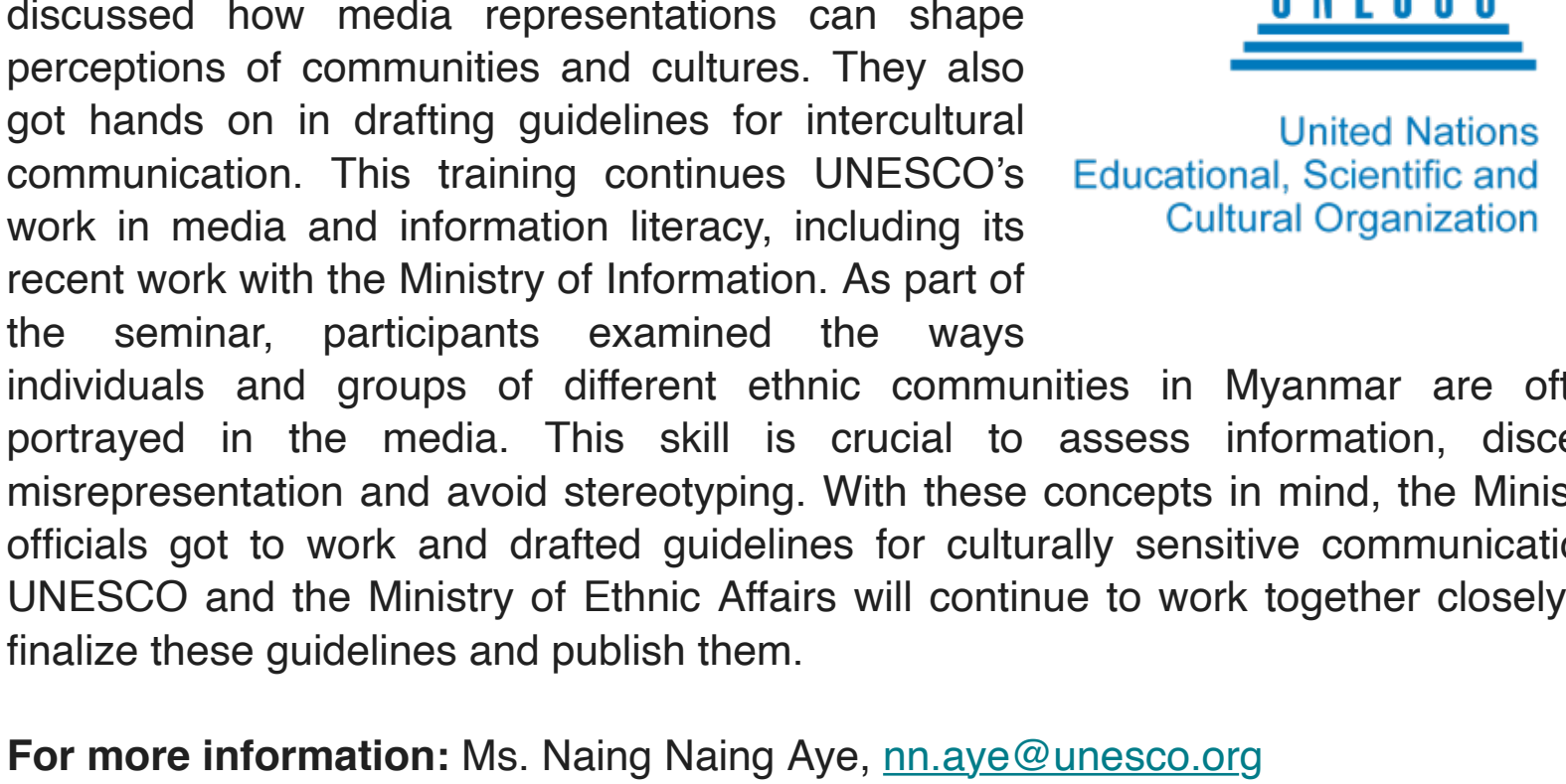


[More details](#)

For more information: Ms. Mir Nadia Nivin, nadia.nivin@undp.org

How the pandemic gave rise to an unlikely dream for an internally displaced woman in Kachin

The work of Htoi Gender and Development Foundation, an implementing partner of UN Women, has been crucial in sustaining the livelihoods of the women in camps of internationally displaced people in Kachin State and supporting the economic empowerment of the most vulnerable women during the COVID-19 pandemic. This work has been made possible by supplementary funding from the Government of Japan for the regional programme 'Women and Girls at the Centre of COVID-19 Prevention' which aims to contribute to the goal of leaving no one behind, even during the pandemic.

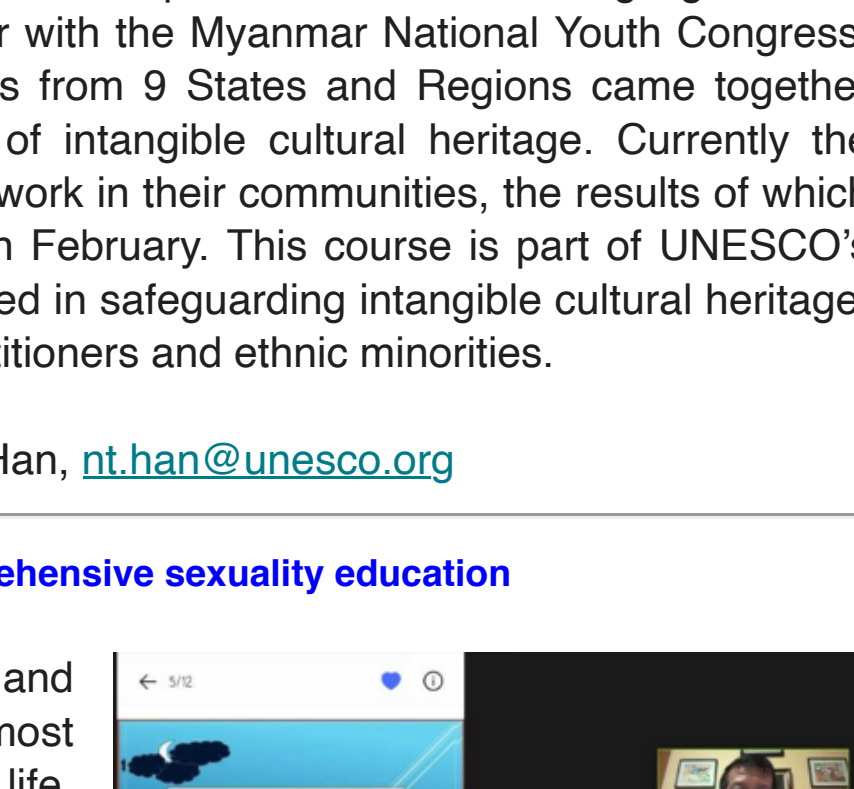


[More details](#)

For more information: Ms. Lesly Latha, lesly.latha@unwomen.org

Youth integrity empowerment: building integrity and ethics among the leaders of tomorrow

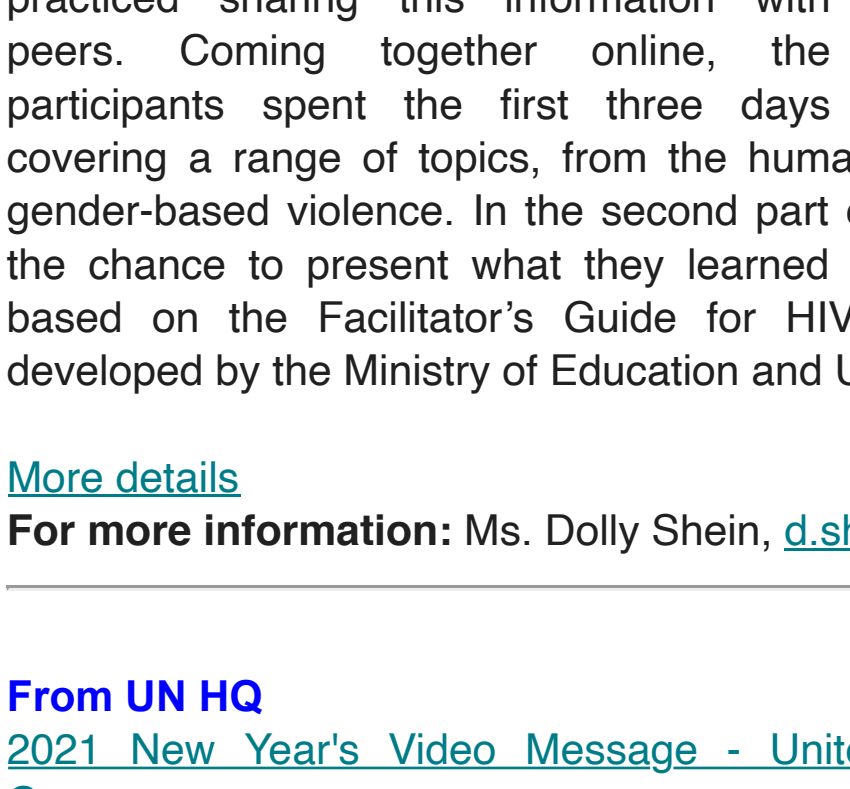
Youth are the foundation of any country's future; their attitude will have a defining impact on the lives of coming generations. Values around integrity and ethics will have a strong influence on the direction of this impact. Based on this fundamental notion, UNODC in 2019 worked with the Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission and Ministry of Education to organise two Youth Integrity Camps, which focused on increasing awareness and instilling the values of integrity within 250 universities students. Additionally, at the end of 2020 UNODC conducted an online impact assessment to measure the longer-term impact that the camps had on the life of the participants. The assessment has shown that the camp has been a major support for participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.



[Full story](#)

For more information: Ms. Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois, cauchois@un.org

Panel discussion on gender and corruption



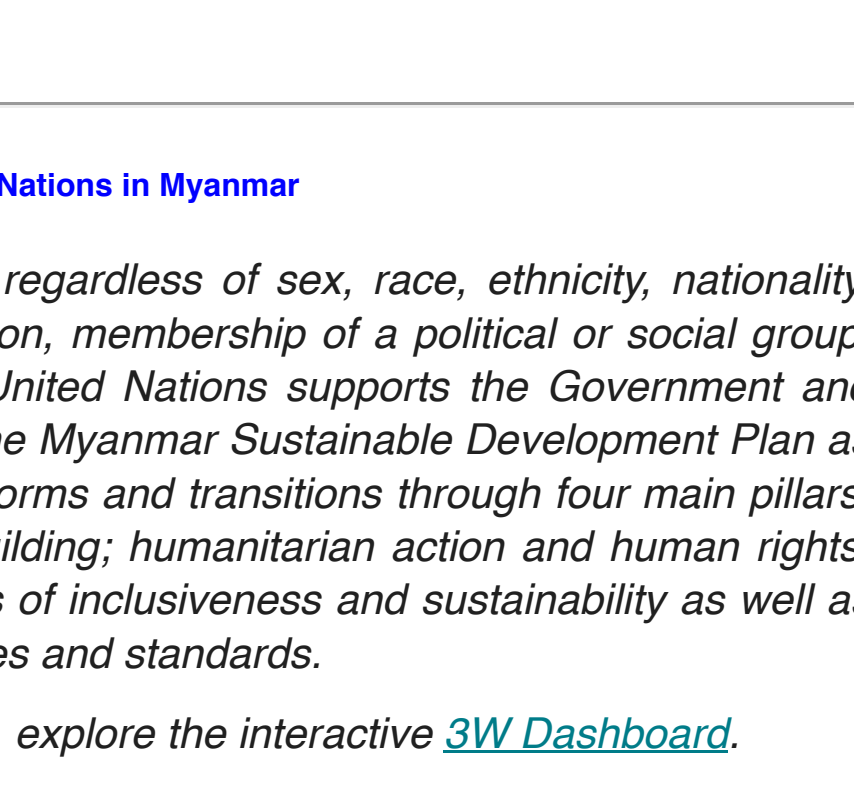
Women are affected more by corruption than men, with women for example paying more bribes than men to obtain public services. These and other findings are at the heart of a Thematic Brief on Gender and Corruption in Myanmar, presented by UNODC on 16 December 2020 as part of a panel discussion around the topic. Based on a series of focus group discussions organized across Myanmar in 2019, the Brief explores gender as a factor in how corruption is perceived and experienced. Noting the need for cross-cutting responses addressing both gender and corruption and their linkages, rather than viewing them in silos, the Thematic Brief offers a set of short-, medium- and long-term recommendations around raising awareness and improving frameworks and capacities of Government and civil society to contribute to more gender-sensitive responses to corruption. The document and the panel discussion are a call for further exploration and systematic research in a matter that is still not very well understood in Myanmar and beyond.

[Thematic brief](#)

For more information: Ms. Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois, cauchois@un.org

Takeda Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. supports Myanmar's Health Sector with JPY 1.1 billion to the UNOPS-managed Access to Health Fund

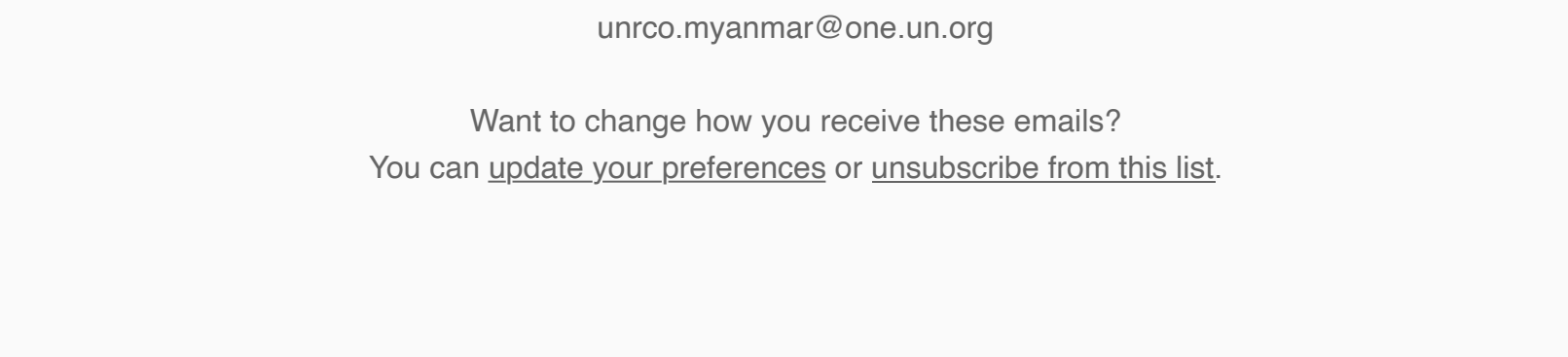
A JPY 1.1 billion (approximately US\$10 million) donation from Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Ltd for the UNOPS-managed Access to Health Fund offers promise for healthcare workers and vulnerable populations in ethnic areas in Shan State in Myanmar. The new project, called Improving Ethnic Health Organizations' capacity to launch Health Services to Vulnerable Populations in Shan State, Myanmar, was launched on 1 January 2021. With a focus on sustainability, the project aims to strengthen Myanmar's systems by improving the healthcare infrastructure, providing training and support for healthcare workers, and implementing a strategic purchasing system to improve maternal-, newborn-, and child healthcare access and quality. This investment will be an addition to the Access to Health Fund, a US\$230 million fund with four institutional donors - the United Kingdom, Sweden, United States and Switzerland. Takeda's investment will allow the Fund to work with most vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas in close partnership with ethnic health organizations and implementing partners in six townships of Shan State.



[Full story](#)

For more information: Ms. Helene Thor, helenet@unops.org

When no one is left behind: A coordinated migration response during Covid-19



Myanmar migrants have faced job and income losses, violations of labour laws and increased stress since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) managed by UNOPS provided the largest programmatic response to the crisis for migrants in Myanmar, engaging ten partners in crucial humanitarian assistance, information and livelihood support. Migrant workers in peri-urban Yangon, especially women migrants, have been at the heart of LIFT's COVID-19 response. LIFT has received funding from 16 international donors.

[Full story](#)

For more information: Ms. Helene Thor, helenet@unops.org

UNESCO puts culturally sensitive communication on the map in Myanmar

In early December, UNESCO organized an online seminar on media and information literacy for intercultural communication. Over the course of three days, 58 officials from the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs discussed how media representations can shape perceptions of communities and cultures. They also got hands on in drafting guidelines for intercultural communication. This training continues UNESCO's work in media and information literacy, including its recent work with the Ministry of Information. As part of the seminar, participants examined the ways individuals and groups of different ethnic communities in Myanmar are often portrayed in the media. This skill is crucial to assess information, discern misrepresentation and avoid stereotyping. With these concepts in mind, the Ministry officials got to work and drafted guidelines for culturally sensitive communication. UNESCO and the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs will continue to work together closely to finalize these guidelines and publish them.

For more information: Ms. Naing Naing Aye, nn.aye@unesco.org

Myanmar Youth take on active role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

While everyone knows the famous World Cultural Heritage site in Bagan, knowledge about intangible cultural heritage in Myanmar is harder to come by. A training course for young people from different corners of Myanmar seeks to change that. From December 2020 until February 2021, 40 young participants will not only learn how to identify, inventory and safeguard intangible cultural heritage, but also practice these skills in their communities. A three-day workshop constituted the first highlight of this course organized by UNESCO together with the Myanmar National Youth Congress. From December 21-23, the participants from 9 States and Regions came together online to deepen their understanding of intangible cultural heritage. Currently the course participants are conducting fieldwork in their communities, the results of which will be presented in a public webinar in February. This course is part of UNESCO's efforts to target key stakeholders involved in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, including young people, traditional practitioners and ethnic minorities.

For more information: Ms. Naw Thiri Han, nt.han@unesco.org

Songs and peer education to teach comprehensive sexuality education

Decisions on reproductive health and sexuality are among the most consequential decisions one makes in life. To enable Myanmar's students of tomorrow to make the right choice, UNESCO is mainstreaming HIV/AIDS & comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) into teacher education. During a five-day training in December, 50 student teachers from 25 Education Degree Colleges learned about topics related to reproductive health and practiced sharing this information with peers. Coming together online, the participants spent the first three days covering a range of topics, from the human reproductive system, to HIV/AIDS, to gender-based violence. In the second part of the training, the student teachers had the chance to present what they learned to fellow participants. The training was based on the Facilitator's Guide for HIV/AIDS and Sexuality Education jointly developed by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO.

[More details](#)

For more information: Ms. Dolly Sheldon, d.sheld@unesco.org

From UN HQ

[2021 New Year's Video Message - United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres](#)

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- [Making migration safe and fair for women workers](#)
- [The critical value of PPE in Myanmar's Mon State](#)
- [New Year's Babies: Over 2.688 children will be born in Myanmar on New Year's Day according to UNICEF](#)

The United Nations in Myanmar

The United Nations serves all people regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, membership of a political or social group, political opinion or other status. The United Nations supports the Government and civil society partners in the context of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan as they strive to implement Myanmar's reforms and transitions through four main pillars: socio-economic development; peacebuilding; humanitarian action and human rights. This support is guided by the principles of inclusiveness and sustainability as well as rooted in internationally agreed principles and standards.

For more on the UN's work in Myanmar, explore the [Interactive 3W Dashboard](#).

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