



United Nations **Strategic Framework** **2012-2015**

United Nations Country Team in Myanmar



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Foreword

Myanmar is at a crossroad: with the first elections in twenty years held in 2010 and the inauguration of the new civilian Government in March 2011, there is now a new window of opportunity to strengthen the collaboration between the UN, the Government and other partners to promote socio-economic progress in Myanmar. This UN Strategic Framework (2012-2015) is a testament to the commitment of the UN Country Team in Myanmar to work together with the Government and partners to help address the priority development needs and challenges that the country face.

UN Country Team is focused on supporting the people of Myanmar, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, in partnership with the Government at all levels, non-governmental organizations, private sector, members of the donor/diplomatic community and other stakeholders. We believe that our collective efforts will contribute to Myanmar achieve its MDG targets and promote democracy and human rights in the country.

Over the past three years as the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, I have witnessed the country undergo changes, and these changes combined with the great socio-economic needs of the people of Myanmar have encouraged me and the UN Country Team to undertake a joint strategic planning process such as this to address development priorities in Myanmar. Like most plans, this is a flexible document that needs to be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, based on continued consultations with all stakeholders. What

is set in stone, however, is our commitment as the UN System in Myanmar to work on joint initiatives under the four Strategic Priorities identified in this document, and our collective accountability to the people of Myanmar. In addition to these joint activities, each Agency will continue with agency-specific activities that can now be referenced to the common framework when supporting its outcomes.

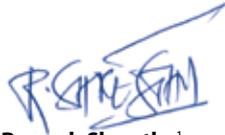
I take this opportunity to thank colleagues within the UN System both inside and outside Myanmar and colleagues from various government ministries, in particular H.E. U Tin Naing Thein, Minister of National Planning & Economic Development, and Daw Myat Myat So, Director-General, Foreign Economic Relations Department, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, and focal points in other ministries for their time, energy, wisdom and enthusiasm over the past year in supporting the development of the UN Strategic Framework for 2012-2015. I call for further cooperation in operationalizing the Strategic Framework, and we look forward to continued partnership, collaboration and support from all stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bishow Parajuli'.

Bishow Parajuli

UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar
from May 2008 to June 2011

Signatories: October 2011



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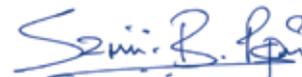
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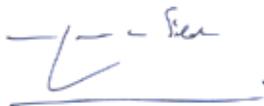
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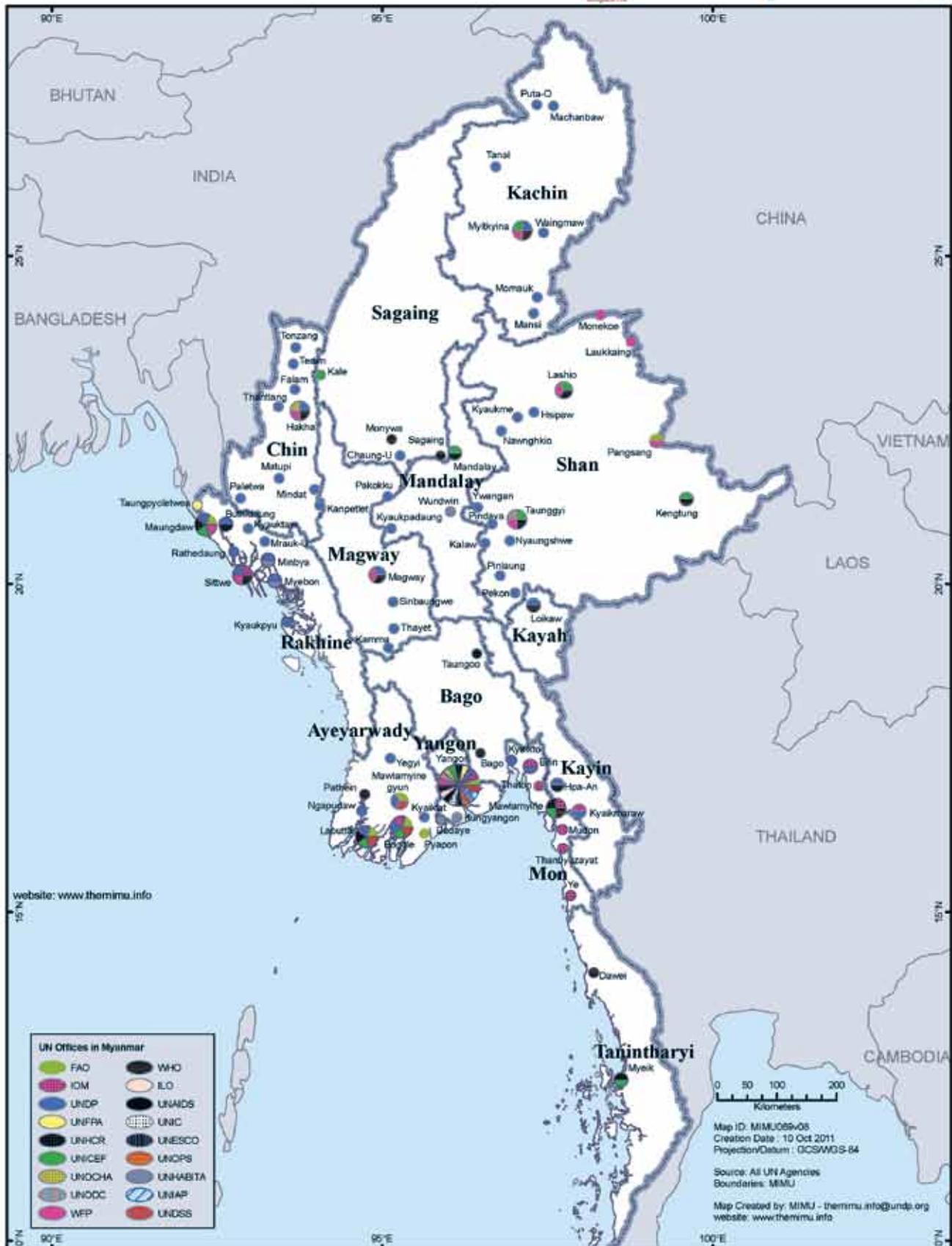
¹ Tasked with representing and ensuring the interests of the UN System in Myanmar, the UN RC a.i. also signs the Strategic Framework on behalf of the Non-Resident UN Agencies.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AADMER ASEAN	Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCM	Country Coordination Mechanism
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CTFMR	Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HFA	Hyogo Framework of Actions
IFI	International Financial Institution
IHLCA	Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment
ILO	International Labour Organization
INC	Initial National Communication on Climate Change
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LDC	Least Developed Country
MAPDRR	Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MD	Millennium Declaration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MHPG	Myanmar Humanitarian Partnership Group
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NAPA	National Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
NRA	Non-Resident Agency
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RC/HC	UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator
RS	Remote Sensing
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

MYANMAR : UN Offices

As of October 2011



Disclaimer: The names shown and the boundaries used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Section I: Development Context

Myanmar, the largest country in Southeast Asia with an estimated population of 58.38 million, has maintained GDP growth at around 5 percent annually in recent years and has seen improving trends in poverty-related indicators. The country has further growth potential, with its rich variety of natural resources, a rich and diversified agricultural base and open access to sea. Favorably located between South and East Asia, Myanmar has access to the fast growing economies of China and India, together with access to ASEAN countries.

Yet Myanmar's development has been characterized by uneven growth. The country continues to be an LDC that has not been able to reach its full potential, and equity issues remain a key concern. According to the latest Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHHLCA) 2009/10, there continues to be a rural-urban gap, with rural poverty at 29% and urban poverty at 16%. The same study shows that rural areas account for almost 85% of total poverty. In addition, there are noticeable sub-national disparities in poverty and other human development indicators between the 14 States and Regions, suggesting that poverty reduction has been limited in physically remote areas with low levels of access to basic social services.

Myanmar is prone to natural disasters and vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which affects socio-economic progress. The coastal regions are exposed to cyclones, tropical storms and tsunamis, while the hilly regions are exposed to landslides. Rainfall-induced flooding is a recurring phenomenon across the country, and- except for Tanintharyi Region- the whole country is at risk from earthquakes. Cyclone Nargis, which hit Ayeyarwady Delta in May 2008 and left 138,373 dead and affected further 2.4 million people, was by far the largest natural disaster in the recent history of Myanmar. There have since been frequent small to medium scale natural hazards including floods, landslides, rat infestations, heat waves and earthquakes. Cyclone Giri that hit Rakhine State in October 2010 destroyed 21,242 houses and affected at least 224,212 people. Response to Cyclone Giri, as well as response to the Shan State Earthquake (March 2011), have reflected the many lessons learned from the experience of Cyclone Nargis and are a testament to the capacities developed in the areas of early warning, emergency preparedness and response at

both the central and regional levels. The Government is placing high priority on further strengthening disaster risk reduction efforts, including in finalizing the Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR).

The Government is working to fulfill its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as its obligations under international instruments to which Myanmar is signatory including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). On the issue of Children and Armed Conflict, there is a country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) and a Plan of Action being prepared, and the joint UN-NGO Gender Theme Group and Women's Protection Technical Working Group have supported the Government to develop a draft National strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2012-2015) in line with CEDAW.

On 7 November 2010, Myanmar had its first elections in twenty years, which was the fifth step in the seven-step "Roadmap to a New Democratic State" announced in 2003. Following the elections, the new civilian government was sworn in on 30 March 2011. In his inaugural speech, the new President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, U Thein Sein, invited international organizations including the UN to work together to "promote the nation's education standard to the international level" and to "improve quality of hospitals ... [and] the quality of rural health centers and medical staff."

On 20 June 2011, President U Thein Sein convened the Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Central Committee meeting, following the "National Level Workshop on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation" on 20-22 May 2011. The President reaffirmed the following eight development priorities for the Government, with a target to reduce the overall poverty rate to 16% by 2014/15:

- i. Agricultural production
- ii. Livestock and fishery
- iii. Rural productivity and cottage industries
- iv. Micro-saving and credit enterprises
- v. Rural cooperatives

¹ Official figure according to the Statistical Year Book published by the Myanmar Statistics Office (CSO) in 2009. UN estimates the population of Myanmar to be 47.96 million in 2010.

² "Background Paper for the Myanmar Development Policy Options," UNCT Myanmar 2011.

³ UNCT recalls the recent remarks by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki moon at the opening of the 4th UN Conference on LDCs: "Instead of seeing LDCs as poor and weak, let us recognize [them] as vast reservoirs of untapped potential. Investing in LDCs is an opportunity for all... Success for the LDCs is ultimately success for all." (http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/speeches/statments_full.asp?statID=1173).

- vi. Rural socio-economy
- vii. Rural energy
- viii. Environmental conservation

The UN Country Team (UNCT) in Myanmar stands ready to jointly support the new Government both at the central and regional levels in building a democratic nation for the benefit of all people in Myanmar. It is expected that there will be an increased space for dialogue on issues such as development priorities, good governance, budgets and allocation of resources, as well as on reforms in key socio-economic sectors. Reforms must focus not only on immediate economic growth, because in order to be sustainable such growth needs to be inclusive and accompanied by the deepening of rights and the sustainable management of natural resources. The UNCT therefore welcomes the President's inaugural speech, declaring that the new Government "will promulgate all necessary policies and laws so that the fruits [of development] will go down to the grassroots level and the entire people enjoy better socio-economic status." The Government recognizes that it is now a priority to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy in order to translate this vision into pro-poor and equitable growth.

The timing of the UN Strategic Framework coincides with the 2015 deadline for MDG achievement. Through this framework the UNCT aims to help accelerate progress towards the MDGs by prioritizing and focusing on off-track and slow progress areas, as identified in the background Thematic Analysis document. Efforts will also be made to minimize the risks of reversals in on-track areas.

Human Development and the MDGs

The Human Development Index (HDI) for Myanmar was 0.451 in 2010, which ranks it 132nd out of 169 countries with comparative data. Myanmar is in the low human development category, well below the regional average of 0.650.

According to the Human Development Report 2010, between 2005 and 2010, Myanmar's HDI value increased from 0.406 to 0.451, an increase of 11%. During this time, Myanmar's life expectancy at birth increased by about 2 years (from 60.6 to 62.7), while there were increases in both mean years of schooling (from 3.5 years to 4.0 years) and expected years of schooling (from 8.9 years to 9.2 years). Official statistics show that Myanmar's GNI per capita increased by 45% during the same period. The multidimensional poverty headcount based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which identifies multiple

deprivations in the same household in education, health and standard of living, is 14.2%, with an additional 17.6% vulnerable to multiple deprivations. This is significantly lower than in "HDI neighbors" of Cambodia (53.9%) and Lao PDR (47.3%). However, when examining the breath of deprivation (intensity) or the average percentage of deprivation experienced by people in multidimensional poverty, Myanmar's 62% is higher than both Cambodia (48.9%) and Lao PDR (56.5%). This means that the large proportion of the poor is very poor and that there are great disparities between the poor and the non-poor. Many of the poor seek livelihoods solutions through internal or external migration, and about 3 million, mostly in irregular situations, are thought to be in nearby countries.

Myanmar's MDG indicators at the national level compare favorably to other LDCs, considering the level of economic development. Particularly on cross-cutting issues such as gender (MDG 3) and environment (MDG 7), more targets are on-track.

In MDG 1, the IHLCA-2 indicates that poverty incidence decreased from 32% in 2005 to 26% in 2010 and that food poverty incidence decreased from 10% to 5% over the same period. Sub-national disparities, however, continue to exist in both poverty and food insecurity, and disparities have widened between better and worse-off States and Regions.

Myanmar has been making progress in MDG 2, the education sector. Official data shows net enrollment in primary schools at 84.6% in 2010 (Ministry of Education, Education For All in Myanmar, October 2010) and the gender gap between girls and boys in school enrollment has mostly been removed. However, the dropout rate remains a concern with 74.4% of enrolled students reaching only Grade 5 (although greatly improved from 24.4% in 1990). There are substantial disparities in access to educational services and in the quality of services, especially for those in hard to reach areas. Net enrollment rates in secondary and tertiary education are very low, raising serious concerns about the availability of skilled manpower in the years to come. The quality of education at all levels remains a serious concern.

In the health sector, Myanmar has made progress in increasing life expectancy. However, nearly one-third of pregnant women do not have access to ante-natal care, and the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is high at 240 per 100,000 live births, making achieving MDG 5 of reducing MMR to 105 a major challenge in the face of health financing and human resources difficulties. An estimated five percent of all pregnancies end up with abortion, and unmet needs for family planning is estimated at 24% in 2010 (complications of abortion is a major cause of maternal death). Although the overall HIV prevalence in Myanmar was 0.6% for

⁴ At the first regular session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (parliament), on 30 March 2011.

adults in 2010, it was 0.9% among pregnant women. Furthermore, among the most at-risk groups HIV prevalence is high at 28% among injecting drug users, 11% among men who have sex with men and 11.4% among female sex workers (the HIV incidence appears especially high among the younger cohorts in these groups). There is an acute shortage of maternal health, birth spacing and HIV prevention commodities. The under-5 mortality rate is 71 per 1,000 live births, and 30% of children are underweight (The State of the World's Children 2011). There is evidence of growing disparities in access to health services and in the quality of services, especially for vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas. Public spending in the health sector is extremely low compared to neighboring countries, resulting in out-of-pocket payments accounting to more than 80% of total health spending. While Myanmar has made progress in improving access to safe water and sanitation, there is still a large unmet service gap, which combined with poor condition of many WASH facilities, affects the health of the population and in particular child mortality.

Much of the social protection in Myanmar is provided informally. For example, monasteries provide a de facto social security system that is not seen in many other countries, providing minimum shelter, food and education, thus helping to fill gaps; the official system of social security benefits only 1% of the total population. For most of the population there are no other forms of social insurance for health, unemployment or pensions. The lack of safety net coverage leaves a large percentage of the population extremely vulnerable in the face of natural disasters, illness and other socio-economic shocks. The government budget for the fiscal year 2011/12 allocates 1.3% to health and 4.1% to education. Given the needs and gaps in basic social services, there needs to be increased public spending in these sectors if the Government commitment to ensure better socio-economic conditions for all people is to be met.

Taking account of the status of Human Development and progress made in achieving the MDGs to date, seven key development challenges have been jointly identified. These are the:

- i. Need for pro-poor growth, for rural development, and to address growing disparities;

- ii. Need for strengthened social services through improved economic and social policies and programmes;
- iii. Negative impact of climate change, including in creasing vulnerability to natural disasters;
- iv. Need for good governance;
- v. Need for capacity development at all levels;
- vi. Need for timely, accurate and relevant socio-economic data and strengthened information management;
- vii. Need for investment in infra structure;

UN in Myanmar

The UN System has been providing assistance to Myanmar since its independence in 1948 and is the largest provider of international humanitarian and development aid in the country, with a total in-country programme of around USD 150 million per annum. As at May 2011, 15 UN Agencies, Funds, Programmes and Offices are present in-country. Each UN agency has its own specific mandate and programme for Myanmar which is implemented in cooperation with the Government, in particular with the respective line Ministries and authorities at the local level.

The UN Strategic Framework (2012-2015) provides a framework for coordinated UN assistance in line with UN Reform processes and the commitments of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action. The UN Strategic Framework aims to address some of the key development challenges identified by the UNCT and the Government, with inputs from other stakeholders.

The timing broadly coincides with the first five years of the new Government, which the new Government recognizes as “the most important in building a modern, developed democratic nation.”

The UN Strategic Framework also takes note of the changing aid environment over the past years. The number of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in-country has increased in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, as have the number and capacity of the civil society actors. At the time of writing, there are 60 international NGOs and an estimated 455 community based organizations in Myanmar. The UN agencies work in partnership with Myanmar and international NGOs, particularly at the field implementation level, which inter alia adds value through capacity development and knowledge transfer to many local organizations.

⁵ Prepared by the UNCT Myanmar and finalized in June 2011.

⁶ About one-third of deliveries are not attended by skilled health personnel, and 76% of deliveries take place at home, where nearly 90% of maternal deaths occur.

⁷ This began with an internal UNCT half-day Strategic Planning Brainstorming Meeting on 25 August 2010, on the key development challenges for the UN in Myanmar in order to develop a number of key development challenges to be taken up with other stakeholders.

Because the number of international aid agencies, IFIs and donors are still limited, the UN has a number of comparative advantages:

- i. It provides an enabling environment for implementation of standards and commitments, including in respect of international norms, and the provision of international expertise and impartial policy advice based on international experience and good practice.
- ii. It can support the development of effective public administration and quality public services, particularly in emphasizing capacity development, participatory approaches, broad national ownership, and gender equality.
- iii. Its support can help address inequalities and disparities, including a focus on vulnerable groups, combined with sectoral and cross-sectoral technical expertise.
- iv. It can support the capacities of civil society, empowering it through knowledge sharing and training.

The UN Strategic Framework has been developed through a consultative process which began in 2008. Consultation with the Government started with several meetings held between the RC/HC and Secretary of State 1 and key Ministers (Planning; Foreign Affairs; Agriculture; Education; Forestry; Health) to advocate for a UN Strategic Framework. Subsequently, twelve ministries appointed focal points to engage with the UNCT in the strategic planning process, a number of them at the Director-General level. There have been a number of consultations with the Government focal points at important junctures of the process, including Government-UNCT Joint Strategic Planning Meetings on 14 October 2010, 25 February 2011 and 25 May 2011. Consultations with other partners and stakeholders, including donors, members of the diplomatic community and local and international NGOs, have been taking place using existing fora such as the Myanmar Humanitarian Partnership Group (MHPG) and Humanitarian Country Team Forum/Core Group.

Section II: The Strategic Framework

The UN Strategic Framework (2012-2015) has thirteen Outcome-level results, grouped under four Strategic Priorities agreed with the Government. Non-resident UN agencies (NRAs) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) are encouraged to align with and operate within this Framework, and indeed some have been involved in its elaboration. These Outcomes broadly capture the results expected from the joint efforts of two or more UN agencies, alongside actions of the Government and other partners.

The UN Country Team is committed to working together and to give priority to the following during the period of 2012 to 2015 :

Strategic Priority 1

Encourage inclusive growth (both rural and urban), including agricultural development and enhancement of employment opportunities (contributing to MDG 1, and with repercussions on MDGs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

Strategic Priority 2

Increase equitable access to quality social services (contributing to MDGs 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, with repercussions on MDG 1)

Strategic Priority 3

Reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change (contributing to MDG 7)

Strategic Priority 4

Promote good governance and strengthen democratic institutions and human rights (foundation for progress on all MDGs, including MDG 8)

The above four Strategic Priorities, informed by the earlier Thematic Analysis and agreed in stakeholder discussions, address the main underlying barriers to socio-economic development in Myanmar. They are presented in the sequence in which each predominantly reflects MDGs 1 to 8. However it is recognized that priorities 1 and 4 are of broader scope than priorities 2 and 3.

⁸From Scenario Analysis and Potential Entry- Points for the preparation of a UN Strategic Framework 2012-2015 by the UN Country Team in Myanmar document commissioned by UNCT Myanmar and prepared by a team of external consultants (December 2009; updated May 2010).

⁹From President U Thein Sein's first speech to the members of Union Government, heads of Union level organizations (New Light of Myanmar, 31 March 2011).

¹⁰The UN Strategic Framework does not include single-agency activities, but only activities that involve two or more UN agencies working together. Single-agency activities are presented in their respective programme documents.

¹¹A UNCT Strategic Prioritization Retreat was held on 17 September 2010, with participation of the UNCT, senior programme staff, heads of field offices and NRAs/ESCAP. The meeting identified 4 Strategic Priorities for UNCT for 2012-2015, taking into account the key development challenges.



Strategic Priority 1:

Encourage inclusive growth (both rural and urban), including agricultural development and enhancement of employment opportunities

Despite abundant natural resources and a productive working age population, Myanmar is less developed than its fast growing neighbours. Its average annual GDP growth rate of a little over 5% during 2005-2010 is considerably below the economy's growth potential. About 15.1 million of the country's population of 58.38 million live in poverty, and 2.6 million live in food poverty.



Despite some improvements over the past five years, the situation remains critical in remote and marginal areas. There are still substantial disparities in living conditions between rural and urban areas and between the 14 Regions and States. Poverty in the rural areas, which contain 70% of the country's population, is still considerably higher than in the urban areas (29% vs. 16%). Both poverty and food poverty in a number of Regions/States are considerably higher than the national average of 26%: for instance, poverty in Chin State is 73%, Shan East 46%, Rakhine State 44%, Shan North 37% and Tanintharyi Region 33%. High poverty incidence is also found within pockets of some Regions/States due to certain specific difficulties faced by the local populations such as inadequate public investment, remoteness and difficult access, lack of natural resources that can support livelihood activities, extremes of weather, marginalization of some population groups, prevalence of local conflicts, restrictions on movement because of administrative regulations, and internal displacement due to large scale civil works projects.

Higher growth in itself is not a sufficient condition for reducing poverty and redressing inequality unless it is inclusive and sustained over time, and is also pro-environment (meaning that growth should not erode natural capital and not degrade the environment). Growth must be inclusive in terms of both its underlying process and its outcome: (i) process-inclusive growth provides opportunities to all, including poor, excluded, and disadvantaged people without any discrimination; (ii) outcome-inclusive growth has two connotations: (a) absolute pro-poor growth, meaning an increase in absolute income of the poor, and (b) relative pro-poor growth, meaning proportionately higher increase in income of the poor compared to the non-poor, thus decreasing income inequality. Furthermore inclusive growth should reduce regional, ethnic, and gender disadvantages.

The first Outcome addresses the need for an inclusive growth strategy. This requires enabling macro-economic policies, sector specific policies, and an enabling institutional environment for policy and programme development.

The UN Country Team, both resident and non-resident agencies, is well placed to make contributions to national efforts in promoting inclusive growth and poverty reduction. At the strategic level the UN can contribute to the national initiative of developing a comprehensive National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS). The analytical work on the NPRS can

draw on the work that the UN has done in recent years on data systems including a nation-wide survey on living conditions, a Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey, a Fertility and Reproductive Health Survey, Food Security Assessments generated by various government departments, and other data and information developed in the context of UN-supported programmes and projects. Moreover, the on-going UN-supported agriculture census and the planned population and housing census will provide comprehensive and up-to-date data including on population size, distribution and dynamics along with a number of socio-economic indicators.

Concurrently, the UNCT will take forward its ongoing initiative of developing a comprehensive knowledge-base for economic and social development. This was initiated in 2011 with the preparation of several technical papers containing assessments of the current situation, and examining strategy and policy reform priorities. This provides a reference base for preparing the NPRS. Additionally, a synthesis document from the UNCT on development policy options will contribute to a national initiative under leadership of the Government to discuss, debate and reach consensus on key development policy priorities and reforms that will contribute to accelerated growth and poverty reduction. The UNCT will also respond to the need for other analytical work including, for instance, preparation of studies on socio-economic development potentials and priorities for each of the 14 States/Regions. This will contribute to sub-national planning aimed at harnessing growth potentials in all regions and at the same time redressing inter-regional disparities.

The UNCT notes the importance of policy coherence and consistency between the various portfolios at the national level. While recognizing sub-national level priorities, policy coordination between States and Regions would be critical.

Tackling urban poverty is equally important since about 2.8 million the country's population lives below the poverty line in urban areas. The UNCT will work with the Government to develop a pro-poor urban development strategy.

The main source of growth is agriculture (crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry), which currently generate 43% of GDP and 54% of employment. The sector has shown some dynamism in terms of a diversified production base and export orientation. Agricultural productivity and growth is however constrained

¹² Strategic Priority 1, Outcome 1: Myanmar's national development policies, strategies and programmes and budget are inclusive, growth oriented, and address disparities across and within regions and socio-economic groups.

¹³ Strategic Priority 1, Outcome 2: The most vulnerable, who are in rural areas, have improved livelihoods, enterprise and employment opportunities, and food security.

by a number of factors including inadequate infrastructure in the rural areas, inappropriate investment in irrigation, inadequate technology dissemination and technical support to farmers, policy inconsistency, and severely constrained financing for agriculture. A key obstacle to more productive agriculture is the lack of well-defined land tenure/occupancy/ownership rights. The UNCT's contribution to agricultural growth as well as improving livelihoods of the most vulnerable groups and improving the income capacity of landless is through Outcomes 2 and 3 of Strategic Priority 1. It is also in these areas that the UNCT has comparative advantage and resources, due to its strong field presence, experience and local knowledge.

The second Outcome addresses the most vulnerable groups with a focus on smallholder and marginal farmers and fishers. Myanmar produces enough rice to meet its consumption needs; however net rice production is not an accurate indicator of food security and nutrition at the household level, and in fact for the most vulnerable groups there are severe problems with access to food. Since there are considerable variations in the levels of food insecurity across and within States and Regions, it is essential to understand, through surveys and assessments, the geographically-specific interrelationship between the three elements of food security: access, availability and utilization of food, in order to respond adequately. There is thus a need to develop and implement holistic programmes for a sustainable food security, by increasing local production and strengthening agricultural markets (at the first leg of the value chain, e.g. from the farmer to the processing industry) as well as establishing local livelihood and safety net activities and appropriate nutrition programmes.

A critical issue in the rural economy is landlessness, which ranges from 20% in the highly productive agro-ecological zone to as much as 75% in the saline-water zones such as the southern-most part of Ayeyarwady Delta. It is the landless poor and marginal farmers and fishers who make up a majority of the rural poor, and the contribution of rural poverty to overall poverty is 84%. Therefore interventions by the UNCT need to target rural poverty reduction through the empowerment of community groups, including self-help groups of the poor and village-level community-based organizations. This should give the rural poor better-organized access to a range of livelihood capital as well as access to knowledge, technology, finance and the technical services of government line departments, NGOs, private sector as well as those offered by other development agencies including the UN and international NGOs. With differentiated strategies for different agro-ecological zones, the UNCT can provide financial support to selected community

groups and their members together with technical assistance and technology support.

Activities will be organized to develop the capacity of micro and small enterprises in the rural areas as well as in peri-urban areas. The emphasis will be on developing their business management skills, trade and vocational skills, and access to markets and finance from existing institutions and programmes. Job opportunities for the landless unskilled and semi-skilled will be promoted through investments that enable rural community organizations to implement priority small-scale social and economic infrastructures such as jetties, footpaths, ponds, small irrigation schemes, dams, embankments, and land development projects. Community-based organizations will be encouraged to build up their capacity to plan, mobilize locally available resources and organize transparent and accountable management systems for repair and maintenance of these schemes with their own resources.

The principal aim of the UNCT is to help develop viable and effective intervention strategies for sustainable livelihoods for the poor and most vulnerable, based on community empowerment and strengthened social capital. Opportunities will be explored with the Government to scale up successful community-based poverty alleviation intervention models for country-wide implementation.

The third Outcome tackles access to rural finance. Access to credit is a severe constraint to improving the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers and poor landless households engaged in off-farm and non-farm activities. The UNCT introduced microfinance in rural and peri-urban areas in 1997, and today its microfinance programme has 385,000 active members with loans outstanding amounting to USD 40 million. There are five other development partners engaged in microfinance on a smaller scale, and one national agency, the Central Cooperative Society, also has a credible operational capacity. If microfinance were to provide on average a USD 200 loan for each borrower, then the total estimated demand for microcredit would be about USD 500 million. Currently, the supply of loans is estimated to benefit only 16% of potential clients or 10% by loan volume. The potential need for agricultural credit representing a relatively larger loan volume per borrower is estimated at over USD 1 billion.

The UNCT will scale up its microfinance programme in order to both expand the capital base and develop the capacity of the microfinance sector, through: (a) injection of additional investment funds; (b) mobilization of donor funding for ex-

panding the programme's capital base; (c) facilitating the entry of 3-4 credible and well experienced microfinance service organizations, preferably from the Asia region, to contribute to developing a competitive microfinance industry in Myanmar; (d) provide technical assistance to agencies operating microfinance in Myanmar; and (e) work with the Government to develop the much needed policy support and enabling microfinance regulatory framework including legal provisions for licensing local microfinance organizations. In the area of agricultural credit, the UNCT offers its support for a comprehensive study of the market for agricultural credit and the institutional development requirements for reforming the agricultural finance sector.

Myanmar is rich in culture. In its rich diversity, culture has intrinsic value for development as well as social cohesion and peace. Cultural diversity can be an asset for the achievement of sustainable development. Recognizing culture in development policy is an investment in the Myanmar's future, and strength in cultural diversity prepares the ground for integration into globalization processes. This means, on the one hand, incorporating culture into development policies for education, science, communication, health, environment and, particularly, developing cultural tourism, while on the other hand providing livelihoods by the development of the cultural sector through creative industries.



Strategic Priority 2:

Increase equitable access to quality social services

Ensuring universal access to quality social services is one of the most essential conditions for establishing an inclusive and equitable society. The UNCT is fully committed to supporting the Government in its efforts to achieve the MDGs including access to education and health through a coordinated approach that aligns UN activities with National Strategic Plans for Education and Health.



The UNCT will adopt an approach that aims to reduce disparities and inequalities not only between the rich and the poor but also among different ethnic groups and geographic areas and between rural and urban areas. This includes - but is not limited to - access to education, access and availability of health care services including reproductive health, and access to and proper use of water and sanitation.

The elements and potential for effective social services that can provide adequate education and health care exist in Myanmar. Developing this potential can be most effectively undertaken if education and health system barriers are understood in the context of the relevant institutional leadership and managerial systems. UNCT contributions will therefore address and strengthen areas of the education and health systems that currently impede the effective implementation of programmes and which constitute barriers to service delivery. The greatest barriers relate to limited financial and human resources in public education and health services. Others relate to the need for aligning and integrating support systems such as supplies and training. Also significant, however, are the barriers that relate to how the education and health institutions direct, plan and organize programmes and the human resources that are responsible for implementing them. Improving the quality, management and performance of social services and developing sustainable and equitable means of allocating resources for quality social services are at the core of UNCT support.

Under Outcome 1, the UNCT will support the Government to fulfill its obligation of ensuring children's right to education as per Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 28, especially by focusing on improving learning achievements, retention and completion of primary education, and addressing challenges of inequality. This effort will build on progress achieved to date, in close collaboration with the Government and partners nationally and sub-nationally to further improve progress towards achievement of MDGs 2 and 3. One of the strategies of the sector will be the Child Friendly School (CFS) approach which provides the basis for equity and quality of education, adopted by the Government as one of the core strategies of the Education For All National Action Plan 2015. The CFS components of inclusiveness, gender responsiveness, effective teaching, safe and healthy learning environments and community participation all aim to promote equity by ensuring that children who are not in school attend school, gender stereotyping and discrimination is reduced, attention to the most needy children and providing them with essential learn-

ing packages, creating a conducive and safe learning environment including WASH in schools, and increasing the participation of communities in the planning and management of schools. The roll out of CFS is progressive, targeting initially the most disadvantaged townships selected based on their health, education and poverty indicators. The multiple issues related to access to education will be an important part of the UNCT's advocacy and policy dialogue, as will be supporting innovations and providing evidence-based models for influencing policy on, for example, children with disabilities and language barriers. The UNCT will be working closely with the Education Thematic Working Group, the main body for coordination and collaboration among the UN, INGOs, local NGOs and the Government, where it will raise policy issues and advocate for more equitable access to quality education. The UNCT will also work with the WASH Thematic Group for the development of WASH in Schools guidelines.

The current provision of Early Childhood Education (ECE) services, especially school-based ECE, is inequitable and mainly benefits urban children. Rates of coverage are lowest in the border Regions and States. ECE quality is constrained by factors such as overcrowding, the lack of appropriate teaching methods and resources for teaching and learning, large class sizes in some pre-schools and limited opportunities for facilitator training and professional development. ECE programmes can help increase equity through promoting school readiness among disadvantaged children. The UNCT will develop National Standards with operational guidelines for ECE based on a comprehensive framework for ECE which includes provision of health care, supporting new parents through information and parenting education, creating a safe environment for young children to play and socialise with their peers, immunization, feeding and nutrition, compensating for disadvantage and fostering the resilience of vulnerable children, and promoting school readiness and preparation for primary school. The UNCT will support a new multi-pronged strategy to enhance the capacity of the education sector by advocating for strategic policy reforms particularly in the field of Teacher Education to promote the progressive adoption of effective teaching and learning methodologies; strengthen the education management information system to support evidenced-based and effective education planning and management; and, improve the quality of service delivery at all levels. The UNCT in consultation with the Ministry of Education and development partners will develop the Basic Education Sector Plan which will support the Government in strengthening education services delivery, and

¹⁵ Strategic Priority 2, Outcome 1: Children, in particular the most vulnerable, have access to and utilize quality early childhood education and primary education.

¹⁶ Strategic Priority 2, Outcome 2: Health systems ensure that the poor,

the vulnerable, most at risk, and the geographically remote populations have access to and utilize quality, uninterrupted and affordable health services, including reproductive health care and HIV prevention and treatment.

to meet commodities needs, during emergencies. Attention will be paid to strengthening education management at all levels of the system, but particularly at the school level.

While progress has been made over the past few years towards the attainment of MDGs, many challenges still remain with regard to reducing neonatal and maternal mortality, reducing maternal and child malnutrition, as well as in ensuring access to clean water and proper sanitation. Substantial investment is needed to deliver quality reproductive health services, slow the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases, reduce maternal and child mortality and ensure that the poor, the vulnerable and the most at-risk and geographically remote populations - and amongst these in particular children - have access to and utilize quality health and other social services. Special focus is required on hard-to-reach areas.

Private spending on health - with out-of-pocket expenses representing over 80% of total health expenditure, and the continuing dependency on donor resources for the funding of health programmes - place at risk the long term sustainability of the public health services as a whole and in particular services designed to protect maternal and child health. The paucity of resources available at national level for implementing public health interventions results in health managers, notably at township level, facing uncertain and often unavailable streams of financial and logistical support. Public spending to social services remains far below regional norms. Concerted and coordinated efforts to address the health financing situation will be needed to identify and develop health financing mechanisms that protect the poor and vulnerable from catastrophic expenses and help to increase their access to health services.

Under Outcome 2, the UN will make coordinated efforts to towards ensuring high quality and equitable health services, placing emphasis on strengthening health system processes in particular at the township level, and contribute towards effectiveness through support to service delivery, human resource development, leadership and management, procurement and supply, health financing and health information system. Efforts will build on the existing spirit of public health service: a commitment by health workers to be of service in spite of hardships and limited material incentives or professional recognition.

Ensuring a continuous and uninterrupted supply of commodities related to health including reproductive health care and HIV prevention and treatment is essential. National strategic plans for child health and reproductive health will be costed,

and new mechanisms to reduce financial barriers and ensure affordability of health care will be developed. Since nearly 20% of the population is in the age group 15-24, adolescent health including reproductive health will be promoted through peer education, behaviour change communication interventions, and piloting user-friendly adolescent reproductive health including HIV prevention services.

In line with the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy on Women's and Children's Health, and the commitments that the Government has made to implement it, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNAIDS (Health 4) will collaborate with the Government and other stakeholders in strengthening the health system and supporting the National Strategic Plans on Reproductive Health and Child Health through effective coordination mechanisms. The joint UNCT action will aim at increasing the availability and accessibility to antenatal care, skilled attendance at birth, post natal care, birth spacing, neonatal and child health care, and ensuring the integration of sexual and reproductive health services with HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Action has already begun through joint programming on maternal, new born and child health by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA.

HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services will be strengthened and expanded through joint programmes with division of labour among members of the UN Joint Team on HIV/AIDS, aligned with the National Strategic Plan for AIDS (2011-2015). Since Myanmar has a concentrated HIV epidemic, focus will be on key affected populations, and strategies will include: a) strengthening behavior change interventions for HIV prevention among female sex workers, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users and the sexual partners of the above, and; (b) supporting better access to care and treatment services, for example STI services, HIV voluntary counseling and testing, anti-retroviral treatment; there will be no discrimination with regard to gender, type of transmission, ethnicity and location; (c) strengthening services for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV as well as treatment, care and support of infected mothers and children including orphaned and vulnerable children; and, (d) promoting commodity security including logistics management and the generation and utilization of strategic information. Comprehensive service packages, better linkages with reproductive health, maternal child health and TB services, and active participation by community and relevant government sectors will be promoted. As Myanmar has been identified by the 10 cosponsors that form UNAIDS as one of the so-called 20+ countries where additional financial support can yield greater impact on the global HIV epidemic, the Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS with the support of the RC/HC will

further advance the joint efforts to turn around the epidemic and improve the service provision in the country.

The UNCT, in coordination with Government services, will also focus on improving communities' capacities to improve and maintain a hygienic and healthy living environment and to protect children from water and sanitation related diseases that undermine child survival and development. Furthermore sustainable solutions need to be found where constraints exist to the provision of safe water and basic sanitation, such as in dry areas and arsenic affected water sources. The UNCT will advocate for the development of a national water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) strategy, an arsenic mitigation action plan, increased budgets for hygiene, sanitation and safe water supply. There will also be support for sustainable locally-determined, user-owned initiatives for hygiene, sanitation and safe water supply for the most vulnerable.

Coordination and synergies will be supported and strengthened among on-going thematic health initiatives, namely those supported by GAVI (health system strengthening), The Global Fund on HIV, TB and Malaria, and the Maternal, New Born and Child Health Initiative. This will be facilitated through support to harmonization of the existing coordination mechanisms, including the National Reproductive Health Working Committee and Child Survival Forum. The Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM), which coordinates all programmes related to the three diseases (AIDS, TB and malaria) in Myanmar, including the Global Fund grants, has now established a new Technical and Strategy Group for Maternal, New-born Child and Children Health, for CCM to better support the health system strengthening and promote effective coordination of funding for the health sector from all sources. Evidence-based advocacy and resource mobilization efforts will be carried out jointly by UN agencies and other stakeholders. Programme monitoring and coordination will be strengthened through research studies, surveys, and mapping of interventions in respect of health services. Joint evaluations will also be carried to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of interventions.

Finally, informed and involved communities contribute towards the delivery of social services. They also hold state structures responsible for their actions. In order to be meaningfully informed and to be able to contribute to planning, decision making, and monitoring of implementation, it is necessary that individuals, communities and community-based organizations have access to relevant, timely and complete information. In disaster-prone areas communities will also want

to ensure that social service infrastructures such as health centres and schools are disaster-resilient.

To this end, under Outcome 3 , the UN will support the collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of data at the township level. The UN will also support the inclusion of vulnerable, underserved and stigmatized population groups as well as children and youth in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of interventions that concern them. The participation of representatives of a broad range of stakeholders including vulnerable communities in existing mechanisms, such as the CCM, will be promoted. Likewise, initiatives such as GAVI-supported health sector strengthening will be used to enhance the participation of communities at national as well as at sub-national levels. For the improvement of education, Parent-Teacher Associations and communities will be encouraged to be involved in decision making.



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Strategic Priority 3: **Reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change**

Myanmar is a country subject to multiple disasters on a frequent and increasing basis. Given the varied terrain and geophysical context of Myanmar, cyclones, storms, floods, fires, landslides, tsunamis and earthquake are all common phenomena. In parallel climate change is impacting the biodiversity, habitat and natural resources of Myanmar, while also being directly linked to the increasing frequency of disasters and extreme weather events being witnessed today.



Following Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, significant progress has been made on the formulation of policy documents and action plans such as the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) and Standing Order on Disaster Management, which has been achieved due to the high-level political will, commitment and institutional arrangements put in place by the Government. As evidenced by the Cyclone Nargis response and more recently by responses to Cyclone Giri and Shan State Earthquake, all major stakeholders operating in Myanmar are committed to reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, through community-level interventions as well as capacity building of local institutions on service delivery to the vulnerable populations. As disaster risk reduction (DRR) cannot be considered in isolation from climate change adaptation (CCA), this lens also needs to be applied in relation to environmental and climate change impacts. Consequently the Initial National Communication (INC), the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) are also being developed with a view to putting in place the institutional arrangements and frameworks for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Although Myanmar is on track to achieve MDG 7 on environmental sustainability, it is also clear that the environment will face increasing pressure as economic and industrial growth gathers pace. The environmental impact assessment capacity of the country is currently very limited as is the capacity to enforce environmental regulations. Similarly, technical capacities remain limited for remote sensing (RS), geographic information system (GIS) modeling and forecasting, as well as for conducting hazard and risk assessments.

Strategic Priority 3 focuses on three Outcomes to be achieved by 2015 which address risk reduction at three levels: the national/policy level; the institutional/systems level; and the community level. The focus will be on.

- (i) support and advocacy for the formalization of national policies, strategies and action plans related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation;
- (ii) enhancement of knowledge, information and systems to enable key stakeholders and decision-makers to have access to information to assess, forecast and monitor disaster and climate induced risks; and
- (iii) strengthening capacities, awareness and resilience of communities, organizations and local authorities in high risk, vulnerable locations, to respond to natural disasters and climate change effects.

At the national/policy level, the MAPDRR, a comprehensive framework of DRR, and the Standing Order for Disaster Management will be supported for finalization and approval. The NDPCC action plan, published in 2008, could be strengthened by linking with sectoral plans and disaster management plans at all administrative levels. The UNCT is also supporting national notifications, amendments and international commitments related to DRR/CCA ratified by the Government, such as HFA, AADMER, UNFCCC in line with UN Conventions on DRR, climate change and biodiversity. The NAPA, INC, NSDS and NBSAP are to be finalized, which will also allow Myanmar to access a number of financing modalities for the crosscutting sectors.

At the institutional/systems level, the focus is on ensuring the availability of enhanced information, data and monitoring systems to enable key decision-makers to make informed decisions and communicate necessary pre-emptive or responsive actions. The current climatic context has seen Myanmar experiencing, since the 1960s, late onset and early withdrawal of monsoon, shortening of the rainy season and weakening of monsoon intensity. Observation records from 45 meteorological stations within Myanmar have also shown decreasing rainfall percentage since 1980s with negative consequences on the agriculture and forestry sectors as well as on water security. Given the unpredictability of weather events and the intensity and frequency of their occurrence, the need for accurate sensing and forecasting capacities nationwide is paramount and requires dedicated support. The following interventions are proposed: firstly, a comprehensive information and communication system on climate change established through improving existing databases and systems and modeling techniques of DMH with capacity building of national staff on the use of advanced technologies (i.e. RS and GIS) and analysis of resulting data; and secondly a central database system to be put in place with sub-database systems also established at the State/Region level. This will support the development of a number of comprehensive hazard risk and vulnerability assessments, maps and reports with detailed suggestions for adaptation measures, which will be mainstreamed into DRR/CCA plans. A number of DRR and climate change sectoral studies and research such as indigenous coping strategies, food security assessments, vulnerability of women and children to floods and cyclones, disaster insurance/cost transfer will be undertaken and findings incorporated into relevant Plans. These various

¹⁷ Strategic Priority 2, Outcome 3: Communities have increased access to information and awareness of their right to participate in assessing, planning, decision making, implementing and monitoring of social services.

¹⁸ Strategic Priority 3, Outcome 1: Vulnerability reduced as a result of implementation of national Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM), and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, policies and strategies.

initiatives need to be spearheaded by Government departments in close collaboration with professional societies, academia and the private sector.

At the community level, the focus is on increased awareness on and resilience to natural disasters at the level of 'last mile' communities, local NGOs and local authorities. DRR/CCA stakeholder networks are to be established or strengthened for planning at local levels. Significant progress has been made by all actors during the last three years for the development of guidelines for communities to cope with environmental issues, adapted to different ecological/location contexts. Numerous training activities for DRR/climate contingency accompanied by public education and awareness initiatives are already underway and will continue to be developed and launched. Both information/IEC products and awareness-raising campaigns will be promoted at the community level. In parallel, to improve resilience to disasters and climate change, programmes and projects on community-based adaptation and mitigation activities will continue to be implemented. These will be geographically focused in locations classified as high risk and vulnerable to hazards such as Ayeyarwady Delta and Rakhine coastal areas for floods, storm surges and cyclones; Dry Zone for fire; Chin and Rakhine States for landslides; and urban ar-

reas for earthquakes. Furthermore, Ayeyarwady Delta and Rakhine coastal areas for salt intrusion and floods; Dry Zone for drought; and Chin and other upland areas for water shortage. All initiatives outlined above will feed into local/regional level Disaster Management Plans with CCA measures integrated.

The outcomes are interrelated and, without each of them, comprehensive measures to protect Myanmar from the effects of hazards and climate change cannot be achieved. The development of capacities in technical institutions by the Government, in partnership with the professional, academic and private sectors, is essential for comprehensive modeling and forecasting. Thus informed decisions can be communicated through established networks to the regional and community levels, ensuring integration into regional- and community-level DRR/CCA plans. The UNCT can play a key role in boosting the capacities of national stakeholders through technical support, capacity building at all levels, and advocacy for establishing the needed communication networks. If the right information is available for decision-making, and if this information is communicated to the right people at the right time, these efforts will minimize human, social and economic losses, and ensure that development gains are not lost because of natural hazards and climate change.

¹⁹ HFA- Hyogo Framework of Actions; AADMER- ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response; UNFCCC- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; NAPA- National Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change; INC- Initial National Communication on Climate Change; NSDS- National Sustainable Development Strategy; NBSAP- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

²⁰ Strategic Priority 3, Outcome 2: Strengthened information and communication systems available for decision makers and key stakeholders to assess and monitor disaster risks.

²¹ Strategic Priority 3, Outcome 3: Vulnerable communities, community based organizations and local authorities in high-risk areas have increased awareness and resilience to respond to natural disasters and climate change.





Strategic Priority 4: **Promote good governance and strengthen democratic institutions and human rights**

The UN recognizes the responsibility of the national and regional authorities to respect, protect and fulfill the basic human rights of all, including rights to quality education and health and rights to food, clothing, housing, social security and decent work. The UN further recognizes that ordinary citizens are key actors in their own development and as such should be empowered to engage in a democratic dialogue with the authorities.



The President in his inaugural speech declared that the new Government “will amend and revoke the existing laws and adopt new laws as necessary to implement the provisions on fundamental rights of citizens or human rights,” and he recognized that “democracy will be promoted only hand in hand with good governance.” The President reiterated the second point in his first address to the members of the new Government: “The most important task of the new administration is to work together to create good governance and clean government. To do so, the work programmes of the Union Government and State and Region governments must be transparent, accountable and consistent with the constitution and the existing laws. It is necessary to respect the people’s wishes and to ensure all-inclusiveness.”

However, there remain some key challenges:

- a. The limited national capacities and incomplete policy frameworks;
- b. The low availability of qualified personnel with knowledge and understanding of international legal instruments;
- c. The need to translate political will into action, and need to allocate resources and expedite implementation of recommendations and obligations under international instruments;
- d. The need to strengthen dialogue, cooperation and partnership between the Government, civil society, UN Agencies and the international community on issues related to good governance, democracy and human rights;
- e. The limited number of civil society and other social networks.

The first Outcome addresses the consistency between national legal frameworks and social policies, plans and programmes with ratified international treaties, international standards and norms, and the Millennium Declaration. By the end of 2011 the UNCT will establish a working group to assist the Government in the implementation of the UPR recommendations. The work plan will also contain the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2012-2021), combating forced and child labor, combating human trafficking, as well as the protection of particularly vulnerable groups with emphasis on groups displaced by conflict and minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, the UNCT will continue to support the Government in institutionalizing legal structures that provide security of property rights, particularly for the poor and vulnerable.

The second Outcome addresses social protection and social welfare. Equal access to social and welfare services is central. Protection also includes the reduction of disparities and inequalities at sub-national levels. Especially for the most vulnerable populations, as well as children, women and elderly, the UNCT will support the Government in training for effective public administration and quality public services, and general capacity development. Capacity development will use a participatory approach, which maintains and strengthens national ownership.

The third Outcome addresses national statistical systems. As the economy of Myanmar grows in complexity, the Government as the key player in promoting equitable growth and in the provision of social services will need to strengthen data and information management systems. The UNCT will provide technical support in establishing a statistical coordination body to ensure consistency in data sets and harmonization of national data and international estimates. In this process, the collection of quality MDG data will be a priority. The MDG/M&E Group is planning to develop a joint programme on strengthening MDG data systems and coordination mechanisms, and bridging data gaps. Generally the UNCT will advocate for improved quality of data, increased dialogue between data users and data producers, more in-depth analysis and wider dissemination and utilization of data for policy formulation, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation.

It will be essential to conduct the population and housing census and complete the agricultural census, which means an investment in improving the statistical capacity of the country. The UNCT will help to Government to produce much needed disaggregated data for development planning, especially since the last population census was conducted in 1983. In the education sector the UNCT will assist the Government in strengthening the educational management and information system (EMIS). The UNCT will cooperate with the Government in conducting a migration survey to inform policy and planning. In the health sector, the UNCT will cooperate to bridge data gaps in health including reproductive health.

The fourth Outcome addresses good governance and human rights. Capacity building/development of NGOs and civil society is important in empowering the population in democratic

²²Strategic Priority 4, Outcome 1: Myanmar’s legal and regulatory frameworks and socio-economic policies, plans and programmes consistent with international treaties already ratified and universal standards. Additional international treaties ratified and work begun to draft national legislation to be consistent with these.

processes and for the progressive realization of human rights. The UNCT expects to continue to provide technical assistance to NGOs and civil society to this end.

The UNCT will also address the need for capacity-building in public institutions and agencies, and for the technical functioning of democratic processes, subject to demand and request and as permitted within the mandates.

A joint Government-UNCT coordination group will formulate a work programme in these areas and follow up to facilitate the activities. Certain Output-related UN working groups and task forces are already in place (some also relevant to other Strategic Priorities): UNCT Sub-Group on Human Rights, MDG/M&E Group, Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting,

Gender Theme Group, Women's Protection Technical Working Group, and National Protection Working Group. These groups will contribute inputs for the overall coordination group. Additionally, the UNCT will also explore the need for liaison support to Myanmar as a member of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).

²³ Strategic Priority 4, Outcome 2: Strengthened availability of, and information on, social protection for vulnerable groups.

²⁴ Strategic Priority 4, Outcome 3: Strengthened national statistical systems for data collection, processing, analysis and coordination.

²⁵ Strategic Priority 4, Outcome 4: Significant progress towards achieving effective public participation in public policy decision-making and implementation, for the progressive realization of human rights and the MDGs.



Section III: Resource Requirements

Resources needed to address the Strategic Priorities will include both core resource allocations from concerned UN agencies as well as resources that would be mobilized from other sources over the implementation period.

The UNCT will continue to advocate that the Government increase public spending on basic social services, and undertake key socio-economic reforms, to maximize the impact and sustainability of UN and partner contributions in the social sectors.

Section IV: Management and Implementation

The overall management and implementation of the activities under the UN Strategic Framework will be guided by the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. Different Agencies will be allocated leadership roles and responsibilities for the Strategic Objectives and their Outcomes. All Heads of UN Agencies remain accountable within their respective Agency mandates, and for their commitment to the UNCT and its Strategic Framework. The Office of the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator will provide Secretariat support.

In implementing the Strategic Framework, UN Agencies will undertake joint programming with a view to maximizing synergies and impact for the benefit of the people of Myanmar. They will to the extent practicable also shape their individual Agency activities with reference to the Framework.

Each Strategic Priority will have linkages with the ongoing UNCT Thematic Working Groups:

- a. Strategic Priority 1 with the Food Security and Agriculture Thematic Group
- b. Strategic Priority 2 with the Education Thematic Working Group, the Health Thematic Working Group, the WASH Thematic Group, the National Nutrition



- c. Network, the HIV/AIDS Theme Group, and the Sexual and Reproductive Health Technical Working Group
- d. Strategic Priority 3 with the DRR Working Group and the Environment Working Group
- d. Strategic Priority 4 with the UNCT Sub-Group on Human Rights, the National Protection Working Group, the Gender Theme Group, the Women's Protection Technical Working Group, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, and the MDG/M&E Group.

For each Strategic Priority the Agencies concerned will design and manage joint programming for their respective Outcomes, and report back to the Convener of the Strategic Priority Group. The existing Thematic Working Groups will be the fora where joint programming will be coordinated at the level of on-the-ground implementation. Implementation of joint programming with geographic focus will also be pursued through Geographic Working Groups.

Consultations with the Government and all other stakeholders will continue throughout the implementation period (see following section).

Section V: Monitoring and Evaluation

In line with the principles of Managing for Development Results, the UNCT through the MDG/M&E Group will undertake monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the UN Strategic Framework.

A twin-track approach will be taken for monitoring. Firstly - as articulated in the Strategic Priority 4 Outcome 3 - support will be provided to strengthen national statistical systems for data collection, processing and analysis so that to the extent possible, existing national M&E systems can be used for the monitoring and reporting of UN Strategic Framework results. Secondly, when this is not feasible UN agencies may undertake specific monitoring and reporting.

Annual consultations between UN and the Government will be conducted. A Strategic Framework progress report will be prepared annually prior to the annual consultation, which will be shared with the Government and other stakeholders. The annual consultations will focus on progress made over the past year, take stock of UN and Government inputs and activities, identify blockages to progress and discuss options to overcome them, and jointly strategize on priorities in planning for the coming year. The timing of the annual consultations will coincide with the annual UNCT Retreat.

There will be an independent mid-term evaluation of UN Strategic Framework execution in 2013-14, to lay the basis for the next strategic exercise for the period from 2015. The evaluation will be cost-shared amongst agencies, and the Office of

the RC will act as an evaluation manager with the guidance of Chair, MDG/M&E Group, and a management group will be formed by the leadership of each of the four Strategic Priority Groups. A reference group will be established with representatives of the Government, contributing donors, civil society and other stakeholders. To ensure accountability and transparency, as well as to promote learning, the evaluation report - once finalized - will be made public, disseminated to all stakeholders and discussed at the 2014 annual consultation.

The MDG/M&E Group will also engage national capacities for evaluation, with a view to supporting the development of national capacity for research and evaluation through appropriate institutions, such as establishment of a national evaluation association. The UNCT has a comparative advantage in bringing regional lessons-learned from nearby countries and thereby promoting South-South cooperation.

Section VI: Operationalization of the UN Strategic Framework

The following matrix is the latest version that reflects the current consensus. It is a living document that is subject to change in the coming months/years following further consultations with the Government and other partners/stakeholders.





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