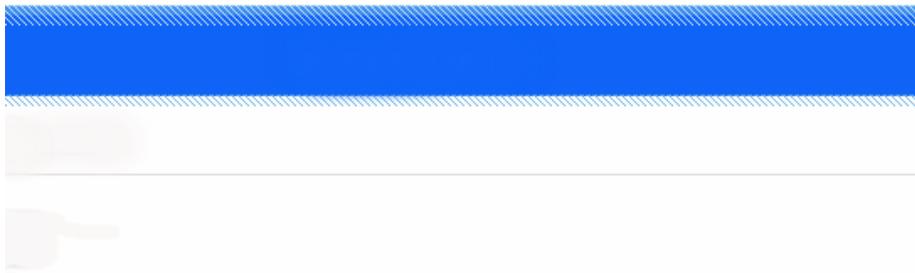


# The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## National Report 2012



MYANMAR



[Graphic courtesy of [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org) country#MMR]

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# The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## National Report 2012

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# The Republic of the Union of Myanmar



[Image source<sup>1</sup>]

This document is presented to the attention of multi-lateral, bi-lateral and independent aid agencies, international financial institutions, participating nations, government partners and their agents. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar thanks you for your attention, patience and cooperation. In the following document you will find extensive and wide-ranging information on current events in Myanmar, an update on Myanmar's development toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the incredible progress that has been made within the state in the last two years toward representative democratic processes, and lessons learned as Myanmar has progressed towards tolerance within its state borders.

At this time we would like to acknowledge the exemplary leadership of President U Thein Sein, who took office less than two years ago following Parliamentary elections by popular vote in 2010. The progress Myanmar has experienced under President Thein Sein's leadership has influenced many nations and international partners to reconsider economic sanctions levied against Myanmar during the previous administration. For this consideration, Myanmar's government thanks the governments and institutions for their fairness and generosity.

It is thanks to President Thein Sein, those government officials who work closely with him, and the concentrated focus on democracy of our entire nation that Myanmar will have greater opportunity to benefit from development assistance, with the goal of financial solvency and independence in coming years. With the lifting of international economic sanctions, all peoples of Myanmar are hopeful for a future free of poverty, ignorance, agricultural and food insecurity, political repression and ethnic tension.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.flyingcolours.org/product-detail.php?ID=1667>

## SECTION ONE: Country Background Information

We, the people of Myanmar, feel that before we can express our need for and interest in development, wish to impart a basic knowledge of our history and culture to those interested in aiding us. While the official name of our nation is Myanmar, we will be occasionally referring to our country as “Burma,” the name by which our country was known until 1988, for purposes of historical accuracy. Myanmar was founded on a rich cultural history that dates back over 3,000 years.<sup>2</sup> The people of Myanmar celebrate this long history. We believe that it is this long history, not only the conflict-ridden history of the past few decades, that has shaped our nation into its current form.

### 1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Myanmar is the largest country in Southeast Asia, with a land area of nearly 677,000 square kilometers.<sup>3</sup> Our country’s expansive length of coastline on the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh on the Western border and Thailand on the Southeastern, provide excellent sea access to Myanmar’s rich natural resource reserves such as timber, ore, natural gas, and water.<sup>4</sup> In addition to Bangladesh and Thailand, Myanmar sits between The People’s Republic of China and India, and also borders the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Eastern edge. While our nation state has no official religion, most of our inhabitants practice Buddhism. Other religions that are prevalent in our country include Islam, Christianity, Paganism, and Hinduism. The Most widely spoken language in Myanmar is the native tongue of the Bamah, Burmese.<sup>5</sup>

The physical landscape of Myanmar ranges significantly. On the Andaman Sea Myanmar sits at sea-level, while the country’s highest point Hkakabo Razi climbs to 5,881 meters in height.<sup>6</sup> The central lowlands comprise seven regions, while the surrounding uplands make up Myanmar’s seven states.<sup>7 8</sup>



<sup>2</sup> N.A.. "A Short History of Burma -- New Internationalist." *New Internationalist*. Dinyar Godrej, 18th Apr 2008. Web. 04 Nov 2012. <<http://www.newint.org/features/2008/04/18/history/>>.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. "About Myanmar: Geography." Web. 2 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.mofa.gov.mm/aboutmyanmar/geography.html>>

<sup>4</sup> Asian Development Bank. "Interim Country Partnership Strategy." October, 2012. Web. 6 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/icps-mya-2012-2014.pdf>>

<sup>5</sup> Evan citation 9

<sup>6</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>7</sup> Asian Development Bank. "Interim Country Partnership Strategy." October, 2012. Web. 6 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/icps-mya-2012-2014.pdf>>

The population of the seven regions largely consists of members of the Bamah (sometimes called Burman) nationality, while many of the residents of the highland states are comprised of Myanmar's many ethnic minority groups.<sup>9</sup> To incorporate the needs of Myanmar's ethnic minorities, following the adoption of 2010 changes to Myanmar's Constitution, there will be an additional six specially administrated, partially self-governing zones.<sup>10</sup> These zones have been conceptualized to allow certain ethnic minorities to have additional self-directed ruling options. Table 1.1 represents the percentage of Myanmar's population belonging to each of the most populous ethnicities, followed by numbers of foreign ethnic groups currently residing in Myanmar. While Myanmar's official language is Burmese, individual ethnicities speak their own languages.

Table 1.1 – Ethnic Groups  
(Percent of population based on 1983 official data)

Burman	69.0%
Shan	8.5%
Karen	6.2%
Arakanese (Rakhine)	4.5%
Mon	2.4%
Chin	2.2%
Kachin	1.4%
Kayah	0.4%
Other	5.4%
Foreign Ethnic Groups	Total population
Bangladeshi	567,985
Indian	428,428
Chinese	233,470
Pakistani	42,140

[Table based Steinberg, David I., p. xxiv<sup>11</sup>]

According to the most recent survey information, Myanmar's population is 54.6 million people with nearly 70% percent of the population in the 15-64 age range.<sup>12</sup> As table 1.2 will show you, age statistics in Myanmar over the past six years have shown improvements in life expectancy, and infant and maternal mortality. Still, mortality rates remain higher and life expectancy remains lower than many of Myanmar's neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. Maternal mortality currently sits at 200 per 10,000 live births, and infant mortality between 47.9<sup>13</sup> 54.51

<sup>8</sup> Picture courtesy of: <[https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate\\_bm.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_bm.html)>

<sup>9</sup> Steinberg, David I. *Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print. p. xxiii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. xxiv.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. xxiv.

<sup>12</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012.

<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>13</sup> Based on statistics compiled from World Data Bank, <<http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home.do?Step=1&id=4/>>

per 1,000 live births.<sup>14</sup> While we recognize that there remains a great possibility for improvements in these statistics, we also acknowledge the improvements that have been made thus far.

Myanmar remains at high risk for the spread of infectious disease. Myanmar's population, particularly the 70% of the populace who live outside of our country's more developed areas<sup>15</sup>, are at significant risk of food or waterborne diseases such as typhoid and bacterial diarrheal diseases. Many segments of the population also remain in risk areas for malaria and dengue fever.<sup>16</sup>

Myanmar's network of primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions, which will be addressed fully in the Education Development Goals section of this report, abide by the basic ideas that all children should have access to education and that all children should be enrolled in education.<sup>17</sup> The literacy rate among the general population in Myanmar is currently 92%, but literacy rates for young people aged 15-24 is significantly higher at 95.7%.<sup>18</sup> Myanmar's primary completion rate above 100% in 2010 provides a hopeful statistic for future education development in our country.

Table 1.2 – Health Demographics, child and maternal health  
(Comparison: Lao PDR and Thailand)

Country Name	Indicator Name	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Lao PDR	Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	65.081	65.66	66.184	66.652	67.064	67.432
Myanmar	Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	63.111	63.418	63.782	64.2	64.662	65.15
Thailand	Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	73.325	73.466	73.613	73.768	73.928	74.091
Lao PDR	Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	43.7	41.6	39.2	37.4	35.2	33.8
Myanmar	Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	53.9	52.9	51.8	50.5	49.3	47.9
Thailand	Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	12.9	12.2	11.8	11.5	11	10.6
Lao PDR	Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	56.1	53	49.6	47	43.9	41.9
Myanmar	Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	71.6	70	68.3	66.3	64.5	62.4
Thailand	Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	15	14.2	13.7	13.4	12.8	12.3

<sup>14</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Health. *Health in Myanmar 2006*. Yangon (Myanmar): Ministry of Health, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Republic of Myanmar. "About Myanmar: Education." Web. 2 Nov., 2012. <http://www.mofa.gov.mm/aboutmyanmar/education.html>

<sup>18</sup> Based on statistics compiled from World Data Bank, <<http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home.do?Step=1&id=4/>>

Lao PDR	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)					470	
Myanmar	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)					200	
Thailand	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)					48	

[Source data: World Data Bank<sup>19</sup>]

In the remaining pages of Section One we will discuss some pertinent historical and political background that we hope will provide our readers with necessary information about Myanmar’s long struggle for independence, democracy, and representation.

## 2. HISTORY

In an effort to help others understand our past, upon which our present society has been built, we transparently divulge the information of our political past in hopes that it will highlight the progress that our country has made. While the governance of our country has passed through the hands of many, Myanmar’s first experiences with colonialism began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the English and Dutch East India Trading companies established trading posts in our country. These European nations exported things like “ivory, lac, raw cotton, silk, and earth-oil, and imported fire-arms, piece goods and other European manufactures”.<sup>20</sup> Shortly after this, our people experienced the first Anglo-Burmese War, which spanned from 1824 to 1826. This war was fought to “regain territory that Burma had wrested away from British India”.<sup>21</sup> This was the first of three wars fought against the British Empire, the third of which resulted in the “total annexation of Burma”.<sup>22</sup> It is a commonly held belief that Britain did not seek to completely control our nation, but instead viewed our nation as a strategic stepping-stone on the path toward business with China.

In the year of 1886, our nation became a province of India. This was a result of British occupation and imperialism. During this time many things changed. For instance, we became the world’s largest exporter of rice.<sup>23</sup> Tensions increased among the Burmese when the British made the financial interests of the Indians and Chinese apparent. Specifically, “Indians were brought in to fill civil-service jobs”, and Burmese nationalists did not approve of this.<sup>24</sup> During the colonial period, Burmese resistance to British occupation of our country was prevalent. This armed opposition finally ended when British forces burned whole villages as a tactic to stop guerilla forces. It wasn’t until 1920 that there were further signs of opposition from the British, and this time it was inspired by university students. Later came protests and anti-tax strikes and eventually armed conflict.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Pearn, Bertie R. *Burma Background*. London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1943. Print.

<sup>21</sup> N.A.. "A Short History of Burma -- New Internationalist." *New Internationalist*. Dinyar Godrej, 18th Apr 2008. Web. 04 Nov 2012. <<http://www.newint.org/features/2008/04/18/history/>>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

At the beginning of World War II, many of our citizens and a large portion of the administration saw an opportunity to gain autonomy in exchange for Burmese support during the war. However, the Thakins refused to participate in the war. A former law student and political advocate, Aung Sang, who was in favor of Burmese autonomy helped, founded the Communist Party of Burma. When the Japanese promised to help our country become independent from the British in exchange for support and training, it seemed to be the best option available. However, when the Japanese invaded our country in 1942, it became apparent that the Japanese only wished to take the place of Britain as our occupier. This sparked Aung San to negotiate with the British to expel the Japanese.

Finally 1947, after over 100 years of British occupation, Burma's independence from Britain was negotiated, and an agreement was reached regarding the unification of the different nationalities under our country. This did not last long, because that same year Aung San and members of his cabinet were assassinated. The independence of Burma from British rule was actually realized in the year of 1948, headed by a former colleague of Aung San, U Nu.

During the mid 1950's U Nu worked with various leaders from other countries to found the Movement of Non-Aligned States. Even though there was an obvious civil war raging on, the 1950's proved to be a decade of progress for our country. Our economy was beginning to look up. The then-current constitution made room for autonomy for the ethnic minorities of our country with in a 10 year time period. However, this wasn't realized under Nu's Anti-Fascist Peoples League; which led to civil unrest. Later in 1958, a "caretaker government"<sup>25</sup> was established under General Ne Win. He sought to eradicate communist factions and obligate the minority states to bend to the power of the central government. Elections were held in 1960, and this gave U Nu his place back as prime minister, but this was short-lived. "Having had his taste of power, Ne Win staged a coup in 1962, and the country's decline under military dictatorship began."<sup>26</sup>

Under Ne Win, the aim was a new type of socialism. This was considered a single party state. During this time there were many abuses of human rights, including the expulsion of peoples from Indian descent. This was detrimental because these same people made up a significant part of the commercial sector of our country. In 1988 Win announced his resignation, which inspired large political protests for democracy, and lead to the massacre of over 3,000 people.<sup>27</sup>

Aung San's daughter Aung San Suu Kyi, who was solicited the opportunity to help establish a democratic government, was put under house arrest while the military declared Martial Law. "The country was to be led by a 19-member State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)".<sup>28</sup> In the year 1990 when Aung San Suu Kyi's co-established National League for Democracy won the polls, the military government refused to hand over power. That following year, Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize for her aim towards peaceful progress, and in 1995, she was finally released from house arrest. "During the 1990s the military regime managed to negotiate ceasefire agreements with many of the insurgent groups, promising

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

them benefits which for many are yet to materialize. In 1997 SLORC morphed into the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).<sup>29</sup>

### 3. 2010 ELECTIONS AND CURRENT EVENTS

In the intervening years since the establishment of the State Peace and Development Council, Myanmar has undergone significant challenges and changes that have resulted in Myanmar today. While our population now experiences increased freedoms, civil unrest related to uprisings against increasing fuel prices in 2007<sup>30</sup> and natural disasters have complicated the democratization process. Despite these setbacks, the previous government called for and held a referendum on Myanmar's revised Constitution in 2008<sup>31</sup>, only three weeks after the devastation of Cyclone Nargis claimed the lives of 138,000 Burmese.<sup>32</sup>

While we praise our predecessors for their tireless diligence, we understand the magnitude of the destruction associated with Cyclone Nargis, and its repercussions on our nation's human resources. We believe that the people of Myanmar, in the election that followed in 2010, chose representatives who understood the need for Myanmar to shift its perspectives. The SPDC may have chosen an auspicious day for the constitutional referendum,<sup>33</sup> but Myanmar's new leadership understands the value and necessity of humanitarian assistance.

As a result of the 2010 elections, a new Parliament selected former Prime Minister Thein Sein as the nation's President. In these elections the Union Solidarity and Development Party received a majority of the popular vote.<sup>34</sup> The elected Parliament then chose the candidate they felt most embodied the nation's need for democracy and representation. As we will discuss in the following section on Development Goals, Successes, and Lessons Learned, President Thein Sein has proved a worthy choice by the legislative body in his moderation and commitment to valuing the will of the Burmese people.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Commonly called the Saffron Revolution, for the color of the robes worn by the monks who protested government mandated fuel price increases. CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>31</sup> Steinberg, David I. *Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print. p. 143.

<sup>32</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>33</sup> Steinberg, David I. *Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print. p. 143.

<sup>34</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>35</sup> See: Sein, U Thein. "The government is elected by the people, and it has to respect the people's will." *The New Light of Myanmar*. 1 Oct., 2011. Web. 2 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/TS-Speech-NLM2011-10-01.pdf>>

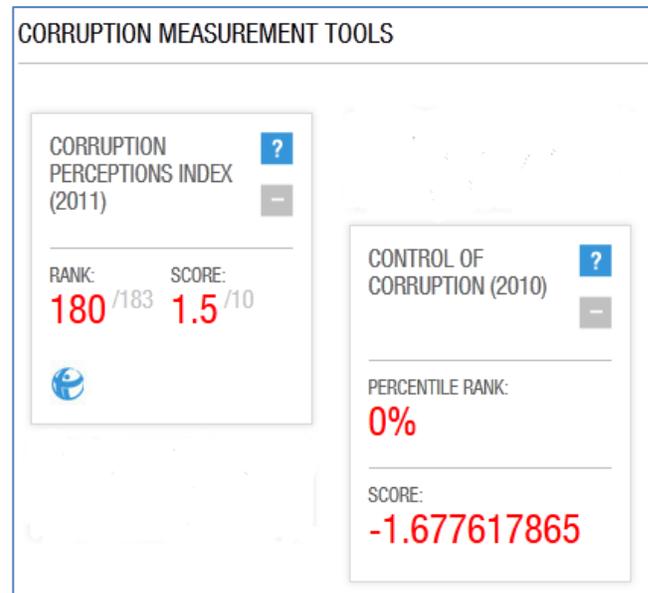
## SECTION TWO: Development Goals, Successes, and Lessons Learned

### 1. GOVERNANCE

**OBJECTIVE:** To build stronger representation in Myanmar's Parliamentary system, and commit Myanmar's best effort to democratization, lessening corruption, and improving government sustainability and transparency.

#### *Challenges*

In 2010, Myanmar held nationwide elections for the first time since 1990.<sup>36</sup> Many international organizations have raised questions about the legitimacy of these elections. Amnesty International, for example, has cited restrictions on speech and peaceful assembly as public violations in the 2010 elections.<sup>37</sup> Western governments such as the United States, Australia and members of the European Union have doubted the results of this election.<sup>38</sup> It has been alleged that the purpose of this election was to cement military authority.<sup>39</sup> In the months leading up to this election, international outlets report instances of arrest and imprisonment of critics of the previous regime.<sup>40</sup>



[Fig 1.1: <http://www.transparency.org/country#MMR><sup>41</sup>]

#### *Successes / Lessons Learned*

Myanmar's current government does not condone unlawful incarceration. We do believe, however, that the election decisions made as a result of these elections, the election of a parliamentary government, is in agreement with the Seven Step Road Map to Democracy<sup>42</sup>, first envisioned by Myanmar's leaders in 2003. Myanmar's governance, headed by President U

<sup>36</sup> MacFarquhar, Neil. "U.N. Doubts Fairness of Election in Myanmar." *New York Times*. 21 Oct., 2010. Web. 2 Nov., 2012. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/22/world/asia/22nations.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/22/world/asia/22nations.html?_r=0)>

<sup>37</sup> Amnesty International. "Annual Report: Myanmar." 28 May, 2011. Web. 1 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/annual-report-myanmar-2011>>

<sup>38</sup> "Western states dismiss Burma's election." *BBC News Asia-Pacific*. 8 Nov., 2010. Web. 1 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11707294>>

<sup>39</sup> Amnesty International. "Annual Report: Myanmar." 28 May, 2011. Web. 1 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/annual-report-myanmar-2011>>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Corruption Perceptions Index measures public sector corruption on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being very corrupt. Control of Corruption measures personal interests represented in public power, and is rated on a scale of -2.5 to 2.5, with lower scores indicating poorer governance.

<sup>42</sup> "7-Step Roadmap (Steps leading up to, including and following the 2010 General Elections)." *Online Burma/Myanmar Library*. Web. 5 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.burmalibrary.org/show.php?cat=2378&lo=d&sl=0>>

Thein Sein, has brought our nation closer to meeting the goals set forward in the Road Map. The final of these goals, the goal around which we have focused our discussion of Development goals, successes and lessons learned, is the seventh and final step our government has envisioned in the long road to join our neighbors in Southeast Asia on the path to development. This final goal, “building a modern, developed and democratic nation by the state leaders”<sup>43</sup> and all elected officials, specifically highlights our dedication to good governance and the emergence of an increasingly democratic and representative state.

The people and government of Myanmar will all attest to the shortcomings of our country’s previous military leadership. Since the election of Parliament in 2010 and President Thein Sein’s installment in 2011, the legislative body and government agencies have made significant changes to address the wrongdoings of our military predecessors. In March of 2011, the SPDC dissolved itself and officially handed over control of the country to the democratically elected Parliament and to President Thein Sein.<sup>44</sup>

We are pleased to note that in the most recent by elections the National League of Democracy, the political party backed by national moral leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, has secured 43 seats in the legislative body.<sup>45</sup> We consider these victories, while small in comparison to the total number of seats in the legislative body, a significant improvement in our country’s commitment to representation. President Thein Sein has also committed himself to supporting our country’s democratic process. In recent meetings with officials, and meetings with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself, the President has made it abundantly clear that should Ms. Suu Kyi run for the Presidency in the next national election as a representative of the National League of Democracy, and should she win the people’s support, Myanmar’s current administration will support her and work diligently to ensure a smooth transition of power.<sup>46</sup>

The President has showcased his dedication to respecting the will of the people of Myanmar. In addition to his clear deference to the peoples’ will in terms of leadership selection, the President has pledged to the people his support of industrialization, the necessity for national electricity infrastructure, and the need for Myanmar to secure its own energy independence.<sup>47</sup> Following international and domestic outcry against the Ayeyawady Myitstone hydroelectric project financed by China, the President called for its immediate suspension. As the President presented in a statement to the Legislative body, “As our government is elected by the people, it is to respect the people’s will. We have the responsibility to address public concerns in all seriousness. So construction of Myitstone Dam will be suspended in the time of our government.”<sup>48</sup> This evolution affirms our government’s commitment to democracy,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Transnational Institute. “Burma’s New Government: Prospects for Governance and Peace in Ethnic States.” *Burma Policy Briefing*. n. 6 (May 2011). P. 1.

<sup>45</sup> “Myanmar’s Suu Kyi sworn in to parliament.” *Al Jazeera Asia-Pacific*. 2 May, 2012. Web. 6 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/05/20125213629935697.html>>

<sup>46</sup> “Burma’s Thein Sein ‘would accept Suu Kyi as president.’” *BBC News Asia*. Sept 29, 2012. Web. Accessed Oct 30, 2012. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19772834>>

<sup>47</sup> President Thein Sein. “The government is elected by the people, and it has to respect the people’s will.” *The New Light of Myanmar*. 1 Oct., 2011. Web. 2 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/TS-Speech-NLM2011-10-01.pdf>>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

commitment to mitigating the effects of climate change and adapting to natural disasters caused by global warming, attention to our country's natural environment, and consideration of the wellbeing of ethnicities whose livelihoods the hydropower project threatened.<sup>49</sup>

### *Future Directions*

In order to address some of challenges that the current administration has inherited from past rulers, Myanmar seeks the support of the international community to partner with us to help improve issues of national governance. We seek to improve our government's fiscal planning, reporting and accounting, as well as transparency and accountability.<sup>50</sup> Recently Myanmar has had the good fortune to revive our partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which has not directly assisted Myanmar financially since the SLORC came into power in 1988. By partnering with ADB, we hope to address the issues related to governance and democratization that have inhibited Myanmar's past development and past partnerships with other organizations. In addition to the above ministerial and agency weaknesses, we envision our partnership with ADB will help us address legal inconsistencies, continue to improve freedoms of speech and press, decrease censorship, and work within our nation's 5-Year National Development Plan<sup>51</sup> to promote inclusive national growth by relying on our nation's impressive human resources, increasing investments, and strengthening our private sector. Most importantly, our joint measures will help move Myanmar closer to international standards in the Millennium Development Goals and assure transparent and careful use of international Official Donor Aid.

We would like to also stress the resolution that President Thein Sein and all government ministries feel toward the emergence of transparent, accountable governance. We thank our international partners for their demonstrations of good faith in the reduction or repeal of economic sanctions. As the President himself has pledged, "the Union government, and region and state government also are harmoniously placing emphasis on emergence of good governance, clean government, burgeoning of democratic practices, prevalence of law and order, economic reforms and environmental conservation."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Asian Development Bank. "Interim Country Partnership Strategy." October, 2012. Web. 6 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/icps-mya-2012-2014.pdf>>

<sup>51</sup> The Plan is still in finalization stages, according to the Asian Development Bank, and not readily available yet. Asian Development Bank. "Interim Country Partnership Strategy." October, 2012. Web. 6 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/icps-mya-2012-2014.pdf>>

<sup>52</sup> Sein, U Thein. "The government is elected by the people, and it has to respect the people's will." *The New Light of Myanmar*. 1 Oct., 2011. Web. 2 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/TS-Speech-NLM2011-10-01.pdf>>

## 2. ECONOMICS

### OBJECTIVE: Economic and Infrastructural Development

#### *Current Development Context*

Myanmar's economy and infrastructural strength is at a crucial point in development. Although our economy is still developing and our infrastructure is sub-par, prospects for fast economic growth are promising because of the improved political environment in our nation and the subsequent suspension of most international economic sanctions. In addition, the easing of foreign currency restrictions, increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and an acceleration of credit growth contribute to our potential economic growth. Our national projects for development are being implemented based on the strength of our natural resources, our human resources, and on our economic and infrastructural endeavors that are in the process of being built. Here is a short list of recent accomplishments:

- At the time of our assumption of state governance, there was an economic recession and – due to war-related occurrences – nearly all the basic infrastructure necessary for development (such as factories and power plants) was not in place. After the assumption of responsibilities, the market oriented economic system in conjunction with the private sector was introduced and the national economic projects that were being implemented were also changed to correspond with the new economic policy. In order to recover from the damage that the authoritarian regime left behind, our administration worked tirelessly to rebuild the nation.
- Both the communication and transportation system in the entire country had deteriorated and much of the productive activity in our country was waning or absent.
- Thanks to the nonstop efforts put forth by our administration, the GDP of the nation went from 47000 million kyats in 1988 to 50260 million kyats in 1990, reaching an average annual growth rate of 5.9 percent<sup>53</sup>.
- Based on continual attention that our administration placed on the economy until 1993, the GDP of the country grew by an average annual rate of 7.5 percent<sup>54</sup>. Next, from 1996 to 2001, the “Second Short Term Five Year Plan” implemented; during this Second Short Term Five Year Plan, the plan was carried out to ensure that Myanmar's economy would be placed on a path of steady and durable economic growth. As a result of its success, at the end of the “Second Five Year Plan,” the GDP increased by an average annual growth rate of 8.5 percent<sup>55</sup>. Currently, the planned

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<sup>53</sup> . Nyunt, General Khin. “Speech by H.E General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar on the Developments and Progressive Changes in Myanmar Naing-ngan.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2003. <http://www.mofa.gov.mm/speeches/speechPM.html>

<sup>54</sup> ibid

<sup>55</sup> ibid

target is to realize an average yearly GDP growth of 10.7 percent.

- In order to reduce unemployment in our nation, our administration has created employment opportunities in various sectors of the economy. As a result, we provided employment for nearly 10 million workers, increasing the work force from 19 million in 1988 to the present 29 million<sup>56</sup>.

Based on the recent success of our administration, resources, and people, we stand behind the affirmation that Myanmar is on the right path to development. A strong foundation and fruitful results are being attained as far as national unity, basic infrastructure, and economic progress are concerned. Our administration hopes that – by presenting a good example and delivering tangible, positive results – we can regain international respect and continue to develop with the assistance of foreign aid.

### *The Government's role in Myanmar's current economic realities*

As the government of a developing country, we recognize the importance and potential benefit that international aid promises. However, we believe that we cannot fully utilize such international aid if we do not take personal initiative in our efforts to develop our nation. In order to overcome our relative exclusion from the global market economy, we introduced a managed floating exchange rate as a major step toward a unified exchange rate system in 2012<sup>57</sup>. We have also initiated reforms in areas such as monetary and exchange rate policies, central banking (including establishing operational autonomy), financial sector development, the enabling environment for businesses (including a foreign investment law), and trade.

In light of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), our objectives focus on poverty reduction, national reconciliation/national solidarity, peace and stability, and upholding the rule of law and democracy. We are finalizing its 5-year National Development Plan (NDP), 2012–2016, which focuses on agricultural development and industrialization, balanced growth among regions and states, inclusive growth, and quality statistics<sup>58</sup>. We aim to achieve inclusive growth by mobilizing human capital, financial resources, and technological advances. We also intend to increase strengthen the role of the public sector in addition to the private sector in the economy, implement measures to achieve MDG targets, and mobilize official development assistance along with domestic and foreign investments<sup>59</sup>. We established a Planning Commission headed by the President in 2012 in order to guide our nation's economic planning and development. We are also preparing a new, more transparent way to communicate with our development partners.

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<sup>56</sup> . Nyunt, General Khin. "Speech by H.E General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar on the Developments and Progressive Changes in Myanmar Naing-ngan." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2003. <http://www.mofa.gov.mm/speeches/speechPM.html>

<sup>57</sup> Green, David Jay. "Bridging the ASEAN Development Divide: Challenges and Prospects - a Regional Overview." *Volume 24, Number 1, April 2007*, 24.1 (2007): 15-34.

<sup>58</sup> Than, Mya, and Myat Thein. "Transitional Economy of Myanmar: Present Status, Developmental Divide and Future Prospects." *Volume 24, Number 1, April 2007*, 24.1 (2007): 98-118

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

Once completed, this new development strategic framework will facilitate the ease and fluency in which aid programs are implemented.

The following sections describe current state-led efforts to combat economic and infrastructural issues present in our country as well as efforts to improve preexisting strengths.

### *A. Agriculture*

In efforts to improve the nation's human development index and its economic strength, our administration focuses heavily on the current development of our agricultural sector. Although much of our country is dedicated to agriculture, the yield of our agricultural sector struggles to keep up with our growing population. In light of this, our administration has intervened in order to improve the issue of agricultural yield. One example of success that we have had in improving our country's agricultural sector can be seen with the paddy, one of Myanmar's principal crops. Initially after the shift towards democracy, paddy production in the nation was only 654 million baskets a year<sup>60</sup>. In order to increase the yield of this highly valued crop in Myanmar, our program focused on increasing acreage, utilizing modern agricultural techniques, and using various methods to ensure adequate water supply for agricultural purposes. In addition, our administration encouraged paddy farmers to grow during both the rainy season and the summer and set a target of reaching an annual production of one billion baskets a year. As a result, paddy production reached over 800 million baskets from 1995-96 to 1997-98 and increased to 965 million baskets between 1999 and 2000; eventually, the target of one billion baskets was realized in 2001<sup>61</sup>. Because the availability of water for agricultural purposes is a main requirement for development of the agricultural sector, the government has constructed dams, reservoirs, and implemented water pumping and underground water tapping projects across the country. As mentioned previously, our administration asserts that the lifeline of our development is the agricultural sector. Although we have had some success in state-led projects, we still suffer from financial shortcomings that prevent us from expanding and starting projects that strengthen the agricultural sector. In order for our country's agricultural reality to reach a scale and yield we aspire to, in the time frame we imagine, many more projects need to be underway.

### *B. Forestry*

Another great natural resource of our country is the forest. About 52 percent of our total land area is still covered with forests containing diverse valuable wood and bamboo resources, including the internationally renowned teakwood<sup>62</sup>. Although our forests have the potential to be exploited for a significant amount of economic gain, we recognize that the sustainability of our forests is crucial to our economic development as well as our environmental development. From 1988 to 1989, reserved and protected public forest accounted for 24.8 million acres and protected area system amounted to 1.35 million acres. Due to preservation and reforestation efforts, the

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<sup>60</sup> *Thein, Myat, and Maung Maung Soe. "Economic Reforms and Agricultural Development in Myanmar." ASEAN Economic Bulletin, 15.1 (1998): 13-29.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> *Sovacool, Benjamin. "Environmental Conservation Problems and Possible Solutions in Myanmar." Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International & Strategic Affairs, 34.2 (2012): 217-248.*

reserved and protected public forest area has increased to 35 million acres and protected area system acreage amounted to 3.36 million acres by 2003<sup>63</sup>. Additionally, forest plantation including teak plantations has been increased to 1.1 million acres. Due to such progress in the forestry sector of our economy, the value of wood products is on the rise and we manage to preserve much of our forest.

### *C. Industry*

As a nation shifting from authoritarian rule to democracy and a nation seeking to develop, the path to industrialization has been hindered. In order to achieve economic growth based on modern industrial production during the time of our government, we are endeavoring to increase the capabilities of the state owned large industrial enterprises and to increase industrial production as a whole. In addition, we aim to increase the industrial capabilities of certain regions and offer more job opportunities. The private sector set up eighteen industrial zones and additionally expanded industrial zones in various areas of our country<sup>64</sup>. At the moment, private industry is capable of producing motor vehicles, agricultural machinery and equipment, electronic goods, and spare parts needed for large factories. In addition to placing an importance on the private sector, we also assert that having a strong state-run industry is a necessity. With a view to increase industrial production, improve the quality of the products, and produce import substitution goods, 257 new factories varying in size and capacity have been established in the state sector<sup>65</sup>. In addition, the private sector has constructed 24,293 new factories; therefore, the number of state and private owned factories has reached a number of 51,980 at present<sup>66</sup>. These efforts and achievements show the endeavors by both state and private sectors to develop a powerful industrial sector in order to realize the emergence of Myanmar as a modern industrial country. In all, we as the government understand the necessity for both state-held and private industry. Although our current administration is openly welcoming private firms in the effort to develop, our main priority is to create a strong, permanent industrial sector that is owned by the state.

### *D. Transportation Infrastructure*

We also recognize that developing a solid transportation infrastructure is essential to building a strong foundation for economic growth. Since the shift towards democracy and the entrance of our government, major roads have been constructed, further linking the capital to the rest of the country. In 1988, there were only 461 roads in the country; in efforts to expand our

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid*

<sup>64</sup> . Nyunt, General Khin. “Speech by H.E General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar on the Developments and Progressive Changes in Myanmar Naing-ngan.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2003. <http://www.mofa.gov.mm/speeches/speechPM.html>

<sup>65</sup> ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

transportation network, we constructed 55 new roads<sup>67</sup>. In addition, we have constructed various bridges in efforts to connect the capital to the regions once majorly isolated by large rivers. Before 1988, there were only two major bridges; today, 158 new bridges of various sizes now cross our country's mighty rivers<sup>68</sup>. These state-led infrastructure projects ease logistics between provinces, thus strengthening the economic capabilities of our nation. Such infrastructure projects yield tangible, positive results; however, the benefits of these projects slow down with limited funding. If our country hopes to attain a higher level of economic development, it needs the infrastructural boost that only a more connected transportation system can provide.

#### *E. Electricity*

The advancement of our nation and the raising standard of living of our people have led to a significant increase in the amount of electricity we consume. Therefore, our administration is implementing systematic measures to meet the increased demand for electricity. In order to increase electricity generation, the government has built hydroelectric plants, steam turbine plants, natural gas plants, as well as electricity plants using diesel oil; as a result, the total output of our nation has nearly doubled since these projects were implemented<sup>69</sup>. In addition, eleven new state-led electric power projects are also under construction. When these new projects are completed, an additional 1960 megawatts of electricity will become available to the public. These electricity projects, however, are heavily dependent on financial resources. In order for Myanmar to provide electricity for all people, we require additional funding to expand the electric network. In addition, technological advances that improve the efficiency of our electricity production are necessary for future sustainability.

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<sup>67</sup> Than, Mya, and Myat Thein. "Transitional Economy of Myanmar: Present Status, Developmental Divide and Future Prospects." *Volume 24, Number 1, April 2007*, 24.1 (2007): 98-118

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*

<sup>69</sup> Green, David Jay. "Bridging the ASEAN Development Divide: Challenges and Prospects - a Regional Overview." *Volume 24, Number 1, April 2007*, 24.1 (2007): 15-34.

### 3. PUBLIC HEALTH

**OBJECTIVE:** To evaluate the quality, improvements, and challenges of the collective population-level health of the Myanmar people.

*General Information on the Myanmar Health Care system:*

As one of the social objectives of our government, we are committed to “the uplift of the health, fitness and educational standards of the entire nation”<sup>70</sup> Structurally, we have a National Health Committee that is made up of members from the Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council. It is a high level interdisciplinary entity that makes policy regarding health concerns at a national level. One benefit of this system is that there is a health committee at each administrative level, which allows for collaboration and coordination between the sectors. Progress can be noted with the realization of the National Health Plan or (NHP), which was put into effect in 2006 and ended in 2011. NHP focuses on, “improving health, to raise average levels and reduce inequalities; improve responsiveness to people’s expectations; and improving fairness in the distribution of financial contributions”<sup>71</sup>. As a nation, we are committed to improving the health care system.

Locally, health service is provided by local hospitals, station hospitals, and centers of health for rural areas. We utilize the Primary health-care approach, which thrives upon voluntary and community health workers. Visible evidence of the influence of education in the local health care system is that “There was a remarkable increase in the number of various categories of health workforce, as many new health-related universities and training institutions had been founded between 1988 and 2007”<sup>72</sup>. An area of challenge is that our public health care system is systematically lacks resources, and there is a problem with coverage and access. One of the reasons why this is true is that “very few countries are providing direct financial support to the Government of Myanmar due to restrictions imposed by their national governments and the European Union to this form of Assistance.”<sup>73</sup>

Statistically, Myanmar has a population of 55.4 million, with 70% of people living in rural areas<sup>74</sup>. For brevity of this report, we will focus on three main groups of what we find to be the largest health challenges in our country. These groups are **infectious disease**, **maternal/child/adolescent health**, and **access to safe water**. We will outline specific difficulties, apparent necessities, and visible improvements that can be seen in each of these sectors of health. The WHO has been working with us in an effort to “Improve health system performance, reduce excess burden of disease, and improve health conditions for mothers, children, and adolescents”<sup>75</sup> These three points are the areas of our health sector are those that need the most attention, and have made the most progress.

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<sup>70</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

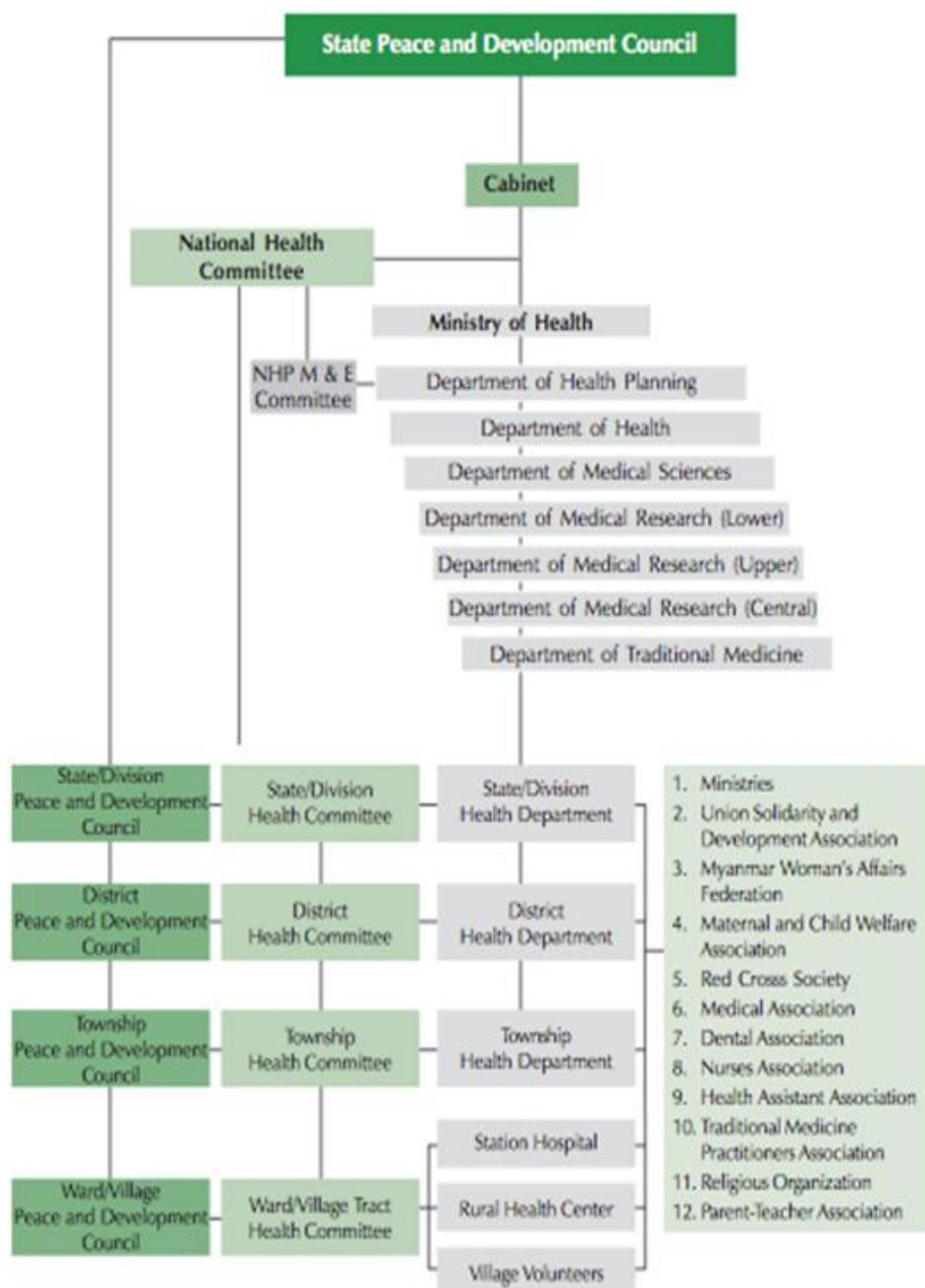
<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup> Ministry of Health. *Health in Myanmar 2006*. Yangon (Myanmar): Ministry of Health, 2006.

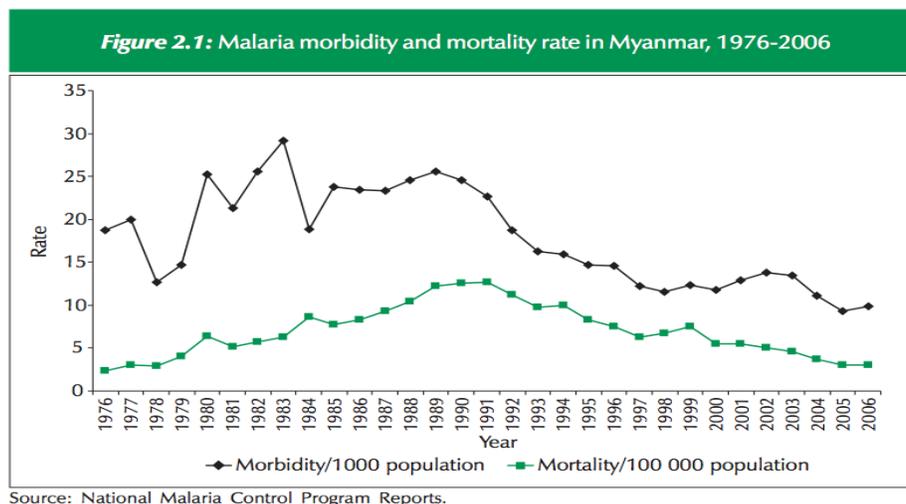
<sup>75</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006

## Myanmar health services delivery system



### *Infectious Disease*

Malaria is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in our country, and about “70% of the Myanmar population lives in malaria endemic areas”<sup>77</sup>. In terms of Infectious disease, this is our biggest problem.



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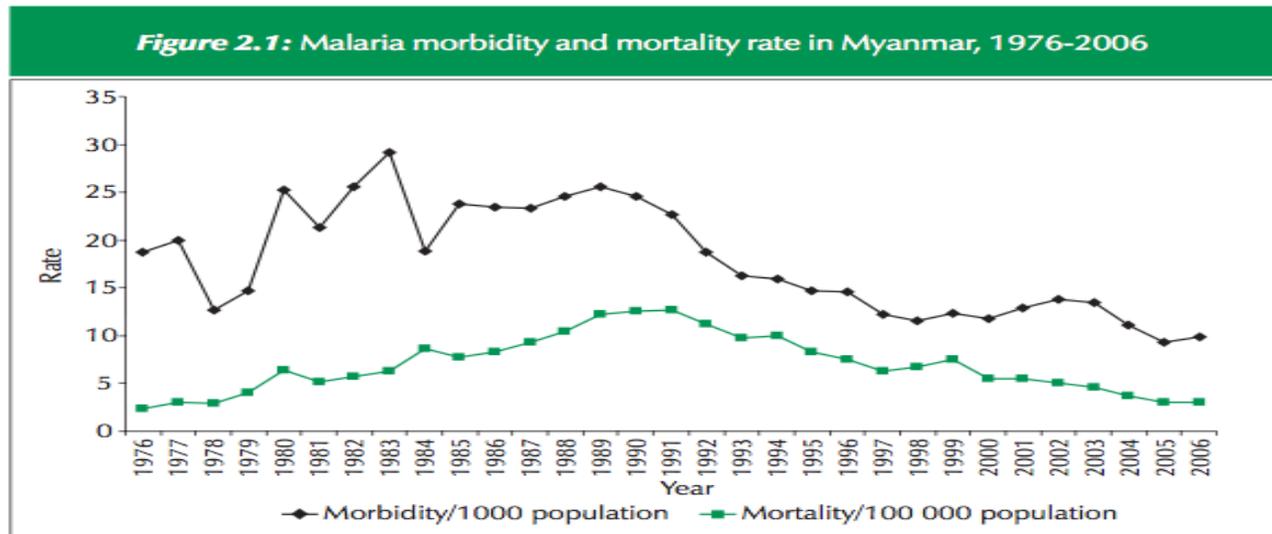
The struggle against malaria is also intertwined with Child and Maternal health, and agricultural workers because these groups are affected disproportionately. Mothers and children are affected more because of biological reasons, while agricultural workers’ disproportionate infection rate is due to geographical location and lifestyle. A specific obstacle in the path to eliminating malaria is that the virus is evolving and becoming resistant to drugs. “Plasmodium falciparum accounts for 75% of malaria infections and is now highly resistant to commonly used anti-malaria drugs such as sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine.”<sup>79</sup>

It has been confirmed by the WHO that visible progress has been made from 1990-2006.

<sup>77</sup> Ministry of Health. *National Malaria Control Programme 2005*. Yangon (Myanmar): Ministry of Health, 2006

<sup>78</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006

<sup>79</sup> Ministry of Health. *National Malaria Control Programme 2005*. Yangon (Myanmar): Ministry of Health, 2006.



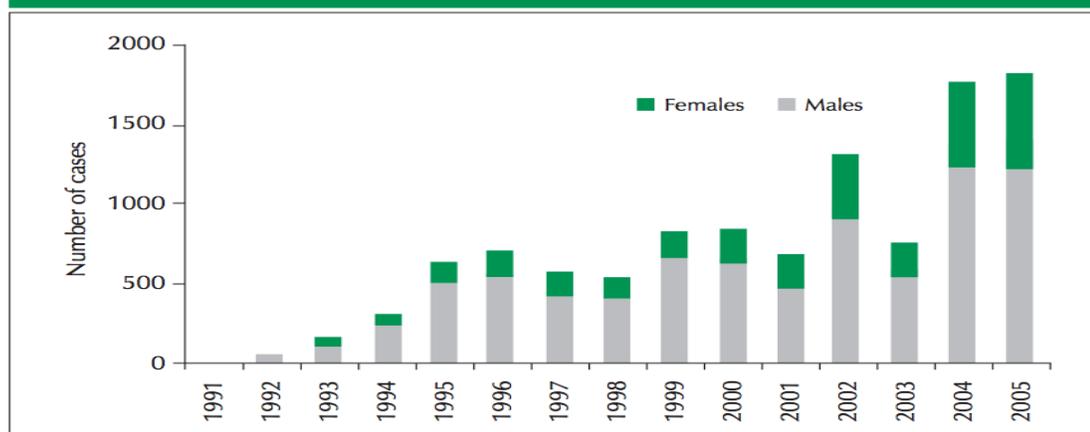
This is thought to be due to the National Malaria Control Strategy which was implemented by our government. However, despite the obvious progress made, we still face challenges before we can eliminate malaria. Areas of attention include “distribution of insecticide mosquito nets, addressing multi-drug resistance, and equitable access to treatment”.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to malaria, Tuberculosis is a heavy burden on our population. According to the WHO, our country “is among the 22 countries globally with the highest burdens to tuberculosis (TB)”.<sup>81</sup> An unfortunate fact about Tuberculosis is that it cannot be viewed as an isolated problem. It is extremely apparent that HIV/AIDS positive individuals have a significantly higher risk of contracting Tuberculosis, and make up the largest percentages (apart from infants and the elderly) to die from TB. Because there is such a high correlation between HIV and TB, many of our programs aim to target both communicable diseases under what the WHO refers to as “Umbrella programs”. For example, a fund exists called the “Three Diseases Fund”<sup>82</sup>. This fund targets HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis in an effort to make progress in treating these diseases systematically at the same time. Following this epidemiological sequence; if fewer individuals are infected with HIV, then less will catch TB, and people infected with malaria will be more likely to have immune systems strong enough to combat the disease. Like malaria, TB is emerging with drug-resistant strains, which poses the same challenge. While there has been progress with respect to tuberculosis in our country, mostly due to the National Tuberculosis Programme, a vital necessity to combat TB for our nation, are new TB prevalence surveys, because in order to know how to best treat the population, we first need to know infection and mortality rates.

<sup>80</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006.

<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Health. *National Tuberculosis Programme Myanmar annual report 2007*. Yangon: Ministry of Health, 2007

<sup>82</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006

**Figure 2.2: Reported AIDS cases, distribution by sex, Myanmar, 1991-2005**

Source: National AIDS Programme, Myanmar.

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According to the WHO, “the overall prevalence of HIV among adults is 0.67% in Myanmar while the prevalence among populations at higher risk of exposure, such as sex workers and injecting drug users (IDUs), were 33.5% and 42.46%, respectively.”<sup>84</sup> Unlike malaria and TB, HIV/AIDS infection rates are getting higher over time. While our country's HIV/AIDS prevalence is not as threatening as many lesser developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa, we are still facing a crisis and better access and coverage to primary health care, sexual health education, and promotion of prophylactics would greatly increase our chance to significantly lower the prevalence of HIV in Myanmar. Despite all of the challenges that we face with regard to HIV, there are national health plans being put into action that are designed to combat the disease. For example the multi-sectoral National Strategic Plan that was finished in 2006 is being built upon by “strengthening the health system and involving communities to scale up prevention, care, and support services.”<sup>85</sup>

While Myanmar does not have a comparable rate of non-communicable (lifestyle) diseases as the Developed world, they are playing an increasingly disturbing role in our country, especially in urban areas. Our Myanmar is suffering from cardiovascular disease, obesity, and cancer, all of which are directly related to the collective lifestyle choices of our people. It is our mission as a government to improve that quality of life of our citizens and public health interventions would play an important role in changing population-level collective high-risk behaviors in Myanmar. “A study conducted in capital cities of all states and divisions in 2001 showed that 14.6% of females between the ages 18-60 were overweight and 3.8% were obese. Among males, 7.2% were overweight and 1.4% were obese.”<sup>86</sup>

These are high obesity rates for a Southeast Asian country such as Myanmar, are alarming to say the least. Higher rates of obesity correlate with higher rates of diabetes and cardiovascular

<sup>83</sup> Ibid

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Health. National Health Plan 2006-2011. Naypyitaw (Myanmar): Ministry of Health, 2007.

disease. Another issue is tobacco. With 40% of all adults in Myanmar smoking<sup>87</sup>, one can only assume to see high levels of lung, throat, and mouth cancer, along with a heightened risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

### *Maternal/Child/Adolescent Health*

When it comes to the health of mothers and their children in Myanmar, the biggest health problems are **chronic malnutrition, measles, birthing conditions, and unsafe abortions**. According to the WHO, “the prevalence of anemia among pregnant women was 71%, among schoolchildren 75%, and children under five 76%.”<sup>88</sup> These statistics are in fact startling; however, our administration looks forward to ample progress against malnutrition because many of the deficiencies that are observed in the people of Myanmar are changeable if not reversible. It is noted by the WHO that these deficiencies “may be due to insufficient intake of iron-rich foods, poor knowledge on cooking methods that could enhance the absorption of iron from the gastrointestinal tract, and worm infestations.”<sup>89</sup>

One form of progress can be noted in this area is attributed to The Iodine Deficiency Disorders Elimination Programme, which collaborates with the Ministry of Health, Myanmar Salt, and Marine Chemicals Enterprise of the Ministry of Mines, to install population level interventions. One example of it’s success was the intervention to introduce iodine into daily diet, which cures goiters. “The Visible goiter rate among six to eleven-year-old children nationally is reported to have declined from 33% in 1994 to 12% in 2000, 5.5% in 2003 and less than 5% in 2006.”<sup>90</sup>

There has also been significant progress made in the fight against measles. In 2001 the total number of cases reported was 2,291. This lowered to 735 in 2006.<sup>91</sup> This can be a direct causation of the Mass Measles Campaign that took place in 2007. Although we have made significant progress in both of these maternal and child mortality factors, there is still things that can be done. Many more people die of malnutrition and measles in rural areas than in an urban setting. Mobilization of health care and resources to address rural needs would be crucial against measles and malnutrition. This is also the case for birthing conditions and unsafe abortions.

The most recent estimates give the number of 360 per 100,000 live births for maternal mortality ratio.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, “Maternal mortality was estimated to be about 2.5 times that in urban areas.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ministry of Health. Sentinel prevalence study of tobacco use in Myanmar 2001. Yangon (Myanmar): United Nations Technical Working Group on Health, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

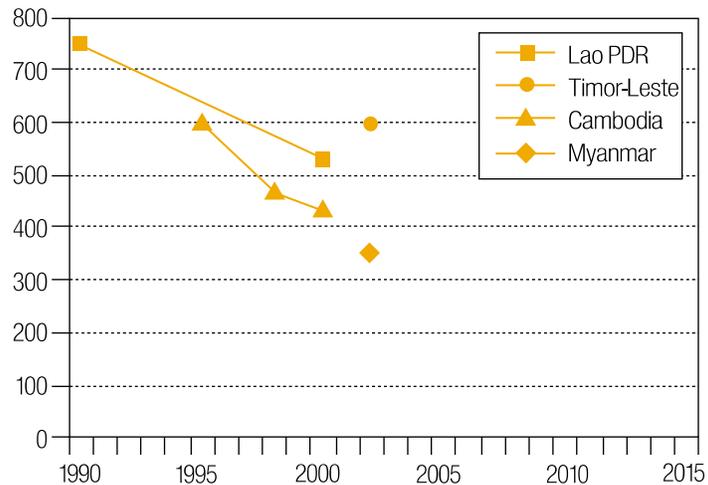
<sup>92</sup> World Health Organization. Maternal mortality in 2000: estimates developed by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA. Geneva (Switzerland). WHO, 2004 [http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/maternal\\_mortality\\_2000/mme.pdf](http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/maternal_mortality_2000/mme.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006

These two statistics have a direct correlation with the fact that the majority of births in Myanmar are performed at home. A skilled professional does not administer a little less than half of those births. What we need our nation, are trained professionals that can assist in rural births to help ensure the health of both the mother and the child. (See figure 1)<sup>94</sup>

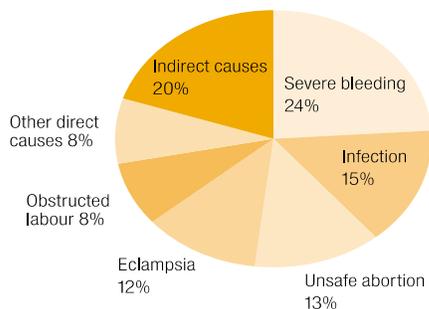
It is estimated by the WHO that “unsafe abortions may account for half of all maternal deaths.” There is a lack of data to support this claim, but the prevalence is obviously high<sup>95</sup>. Because of this, a 5-year Strategic Plan for Reproductive health was launched in 2004. This issue is mainly an adolescent health issue, but also plays a huge role in the percentage of maternal deaths in Myanmar. Not many programs exist for adolescents in our country, but the latest one was called the Plan for Adolescent Health (2008-2012).

**Figure 2: Trends in MMR in countries of high MMR**



**Note:** These vary in some cases from the estimates from WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA.  
**Sources:** Country MDG reports.

**Figure 1: Causes of maternal death**



**Source:** WHO 1997.  
 \*Other direct causes include ectopic pregnancy, embolism, anaesthesia-related. Indirect causes including anaemia, malaria, and heart disease.

Despite all of the challenges with maternal and infant mortality, according to this UNFPA graph, there is a downward trend in maternal mortality in Myanmar.

<sup>94</sup> UNFPA. "Maternal and Neonatal Health in East and South East Asia." UNFPA. (2006): 37. Web.<[https://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib.../613\\_filename\\_bkmaternal.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib.../613_filename_bkmaternal.pdf)>.

<sup>95</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006.

**Table 1: Maternal health indicators for East and South-East Asia**

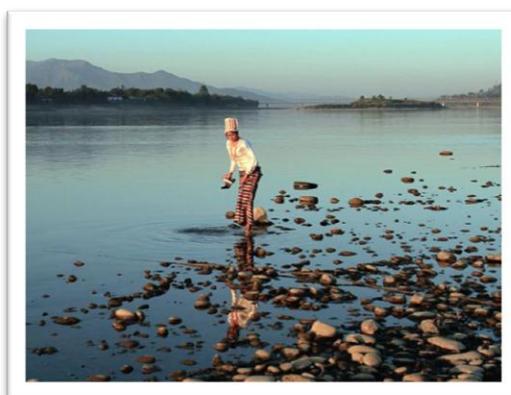
	MMR (per 100 000 live births)	Range of MMR estimate	Lifetime risk of maternal death (1 in )	Number of maternal deaths	Per cent of deliveries with skilled birth attendants (%)
Lao PDR	650	160-1 200	25	1 300	19
Timor-Leste	600	170-1 200	30	140	24
Cambodia	450	260-620	36	2 100	32
Myanmar	360	91-660	75	4 300	56
Indonesia	230	58-440	150	10 000	68
Philippines	200	120-280	120	4 100	60
Viet Nam	130	32-240	270	2 000	85
Mongolia	110	75-150	300	65	99
DPRK	67	17-130	590	260	97
China	56	28-110	830	11 000	97
Thailand	44	22-88	900	520	99
Malaysia	41	20-81	660	220	97

Sources: WHO 2004a and UNFPA 2005.

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### Water/Sanitation

In our country, we know that water is the life-source of the world. While the majority of our inhabitants have access to water, it isn't enough. The WHO reported in 2011 that only "79% of the population had access to *improved* water supply, and 83% had access to sanitary means of disposing excrement."<sup>97</sup> Only a little over half of schools have an adequate supply of water. These facts are dangerous together. We as a people need to make sure that everyone has sustainable access to clean water, and that disposal of human waste is planned out in relation to water supply to prevent disease. The WHO has made significant headway with implementing safety plans in pilot townships, which are under observation. But, there needs to be more done about getting this programs to more remote parts of the country.



[Irrawaddy River, Myanmar. Source: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2011/10/111026-mekong-irrawaddy-hydropower-dams/>]

<sup>96</sup> UNFPA. "Maternal and Neonatal Health in East and South East Asia." *UNFPA*. (2006): 37. Web.<[https://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib.../613\\_filename\\_bkmaternal.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib.../613_filename_bkmaternal.pdf)>.

<sup>97</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Central Statistical Organization. *Statistical Yearbook 2004*. Yangon (Myanmar) Central Statistical Organization, 2006

## 4. EDUCATION

**OBJECTIVE:** To support and improve primary education infrastructure, increase national literacy rate, and expand secondary education.

In Myanmar, we recognize that education plays one of the most key roles in development, and the general betterment of our people. According to the United Nations Development Report that was published in 2011, adult literacy rates are at 92%<sup>98</sup>, while the most current statistics show that youth literacy rates are at 96%.<sup>99</sup>

### *Myanmar Education System*

The basic education school system for our country spans 11 years. It consists of primary schooling, lower secondary schooling, and upper secondary schooling. The pupil to teacher ratio is 28.4/1<sup>100</sup>. It is estimated that about 58.2% of the average household population has had basic education<sup>101</sup>. Believing that education is a right and closely related to a better quality of life, we believe that it is crucial to bring this percentage up. Survey data collected in 2003 showed the Net attendance rate for primary school was 83.5%, while that of secondary school was 49.2%. This suggests that more attention could be paid to programs that involve incentives for children to continue their post-primary education<sup>102</sup>. Our government would recommend stipend incentives for children and their families, so that children aren't forced to decide between an education or low-paid agricultural work.

### *Educational Development Plans*

One of the biggest plans put into work is called the Myanmar Education for All National Action Plan (EFA-NAP). This was put into action in 2003 and spans through 2015. This plan is “aimed at improving the education sector, especially access, quality and relevance, and management of the primary and lower secondary levels”<sup>103</sup>. A positive aspect of this plan is that it also focuses on supporting out of school adults and teaching them important life skills to be able to make a living.

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<sup>98</sup> Myanmar Ministry of Education. "Country Report: Myanmar Education Development Strategy." *Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education*. (2008): 23. Print

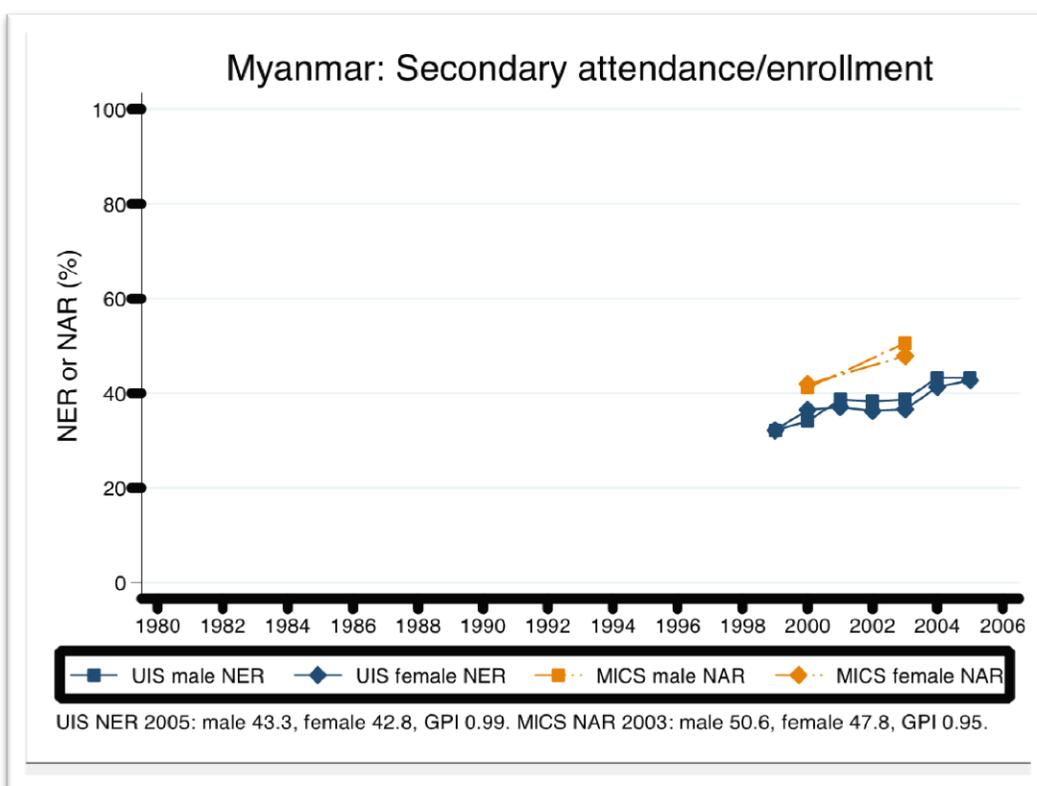
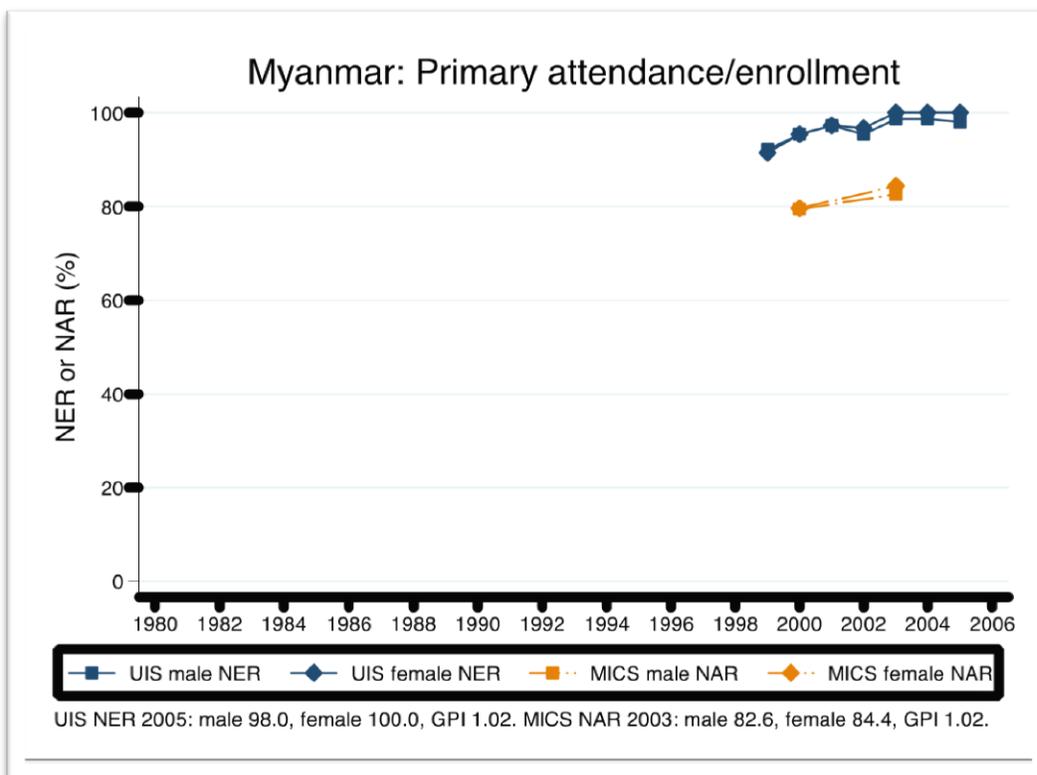
<sup>99</sup> UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, Statistics and Monitoring Section, [www.childinfo.org](http://www.childinfo.org), May 2008

<sup>100</sup> UNDP. "Human Development Report 2011, Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All." *UNDP Human Development Report*. 2011 edition.(2011): 160. Print

<sup>101</sup> Myanmar Ministry of Education. "Country Report: Myanmar Education Development Strategy." *Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education*. (2008): 23. Print

<sup>102</sup> UNICEF. "UNICEF Annual Report for Myanmar." *UNICEF South East Asia Development Program*. Myanmar 2010.(2010): 27. Print

<sup>103</sup> Myanmar Ministry of Education. "Country Report: Myanmar Education Development Strategy." *Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education*. (2008): 23. Print



104

A larger program exists that is called the 30-Year Long-Term Education Development Plan. Its' 10 main programs can be found in the Myanmar Country Report published by our Ministry of Education. They are as follows:

- “Emergence of an education system for modernization and development
- Completion of basic education by all citizens
- Improvement of the quality of Basic Education
- Opportunity for pre-vocational and vocational education at all levels of education
- Providing facilities for e-education and ICT
- Producing all-round developed citizens
- Capacity building for educational management
- Broader participation of the community in education
- Expansion of non formal education
- Development of educational research.<sup>105</sup>

Finally, an “Inclusive Education” plan, which targets disadvantaged students, ensuring equal access to education to all, has made significant progress. “ One of the major achievements of the plan is the significant increase of primary enrolment rate having a net primary intake rate of 98.01% in 2007-08 compared to 92.1% in 2001-02, and also having a net primary enrolment rate of 83.8% in 2007-08 compared to 78% in 2001-02.”<sup>106</sup>

### *Strengths and Challenges*

While we are faced with challenges in terms of access to education for all, we as a nation also have much strength that is being used to combat this problem. Education is heavily funded by NGO's and bilateral aid organizations. In Myanmar, we have a very collective culture, and enjoy the advantage of collaboration between Parents and teachers. Right now, our largest challenges are the lack of sufficiently trained teachers, lack of teaching materials, lack of schools for children with special needs, and the necessity to raising awareness of educational problems, and development.

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<sup>105</sup> Myanmar Ministry of Education. "Country Report: Myanmar Education Development Strategy." *Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education*. (2008): 23. Print

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

## 5. GENDER EQUALITY

**OBJECTIVE:** To counteract colonial attitudes toward gender and return to a more egalitarian society with balanced gender roles.

### *Gender Equality*

Traditionally, our Burmese women have enjoyed a greater level of liberty and independence than the majority of their Southeast Asian counterparts. Early colonizers were shocked at their level of participation in the public sphere, as well as their dominant role as caretaker of the family unit. Consequently, in an effort to westernize our culture, colonizers and missionaries attempted to paint the agency and activity of Burmese women as a sign of our savagery and an indicator as to our lack of development<sup>107</sup>. We must work to reverse the perverse affects of colonization in order to restore the Myanmar woman to her former glory. We believe that both in a historical as well as current sense, the government of Myanmar has worked towards equality for women as proposed by MDG number 8. The United Nations has ranked Myanmar 96 out of 146 nations on the Gender Inequality Index for 2011. This approach to measuring gender equality includes three different dimensions/indicators towards development – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity.

Table A: Myanmar's GII for 2011 relative to selected countries and groups<sup>108</sup>

	GII value	GII Rank	Maternal Mortality Ratio	Adolescent fertility rate	Female seats in parliament (%)	Population with at least secondary education (%)		Labor Force Participation rate (%)	
						F	M	F	M
Myanmar	0.492	96	240	16.3	4.0	18.0	17.6	63.1	85.1
Cambodia	0.500	99	290	41.8	19.0	11.6	20.6	73.6	85.6
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.513	107	580	39.0	25.0	22.9	36.8	77.7	78.9
East Asia and the Pacific	....	---	79	19.8	20.2	48.1	61.3	64.2	80.3
Low HDI	0.606	---	532	98.2	18.2	18.7	32.4	54.6	82.7

[Source in footnote]

Under Myanmar national law, there is no discrimination against women. There has been a long history of legal protection and action to support this claim. As early as 1947, sexual equality and the protection of women's rights were clearly outlined in the Myanmar State Constitution<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> Lwyn, Tinzar. "Stories of Gender and Ethnicity: Discourses of Colonialism and Resistance in Burma." *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 5.3 (1994): 65. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 02 Oct. 2012.

<sup>108</sup> *Human Development Report 2011- Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*. Rep. N.p.: United Nations, 2011. Web. <<http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/MMR.pdf>>.

<sup>109</sup> Article 13, "All citizens, irrespective of birth, religion, sex or race, are equal before the law; that is to say, there shall not be any arbitrary discrimination between one citizen or class of citizens and another"- fr. "Gender Equality in Myanmar." *SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<http://genderindex.org/country/myanmar>>.

Apart from judicial and constitutional protection, the government of Myanmar has a firmly established network of women advocacy groups and committees, all the way from a national to a grassroots level to promote women's affairs. This began with the formation of the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (established on in 1996)<sup>110</sup>. In accordance with the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), Myanmar works to enhance and support woman's affairs through various hierarchical outlets:

- Myanmar National Committee
- Myanmar National Working Committee
- State/divisional working committees
- District/township committees

### *Maternal/Reproductive Health*

In 2004 our government developed and launched a five-year strategic plan for reproductive health in an effort to meet MDG goals. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the implementation of the Myanmar Reproductive Health Policy in accordance with the National Health Plan<sup>111</sup>. Progressive steps were made to provide contraceptive services to over 100 townships (~1/3 of the country). In accordance with UNFPA (United Nations Family Planning Administration) we continue to strive to provide health care services to all our citizens, with 112 townships receiving reproductive healthcare services in 2010<sup>112</sup>. Nevertheless, and despite funding from UNFPA, shortages in essential drugs and personal have been reported. To combat this lack of funding, the Ministry of Health has focused on providing community awareness and advocacy programs for women and youth in order to help them understand their contraceptive options. The 2007 FRHS survey contends that knowledge of contraception practices and options is around 97% for currently married women of a reproductive age. The percentage of never married women who are aware of at least one or more forms of contraception is around 92% (as of 2007)<sup>113</sup>.

In accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals, Myanmar aims to significantly reduce both the infant and the maternal mortality rate by 2015- to below 35 deaths/1000 live births and 45 deaths/1000 live births respectively<sup>114</sup>. In fact, according to the Ministry of Health,

<sup>110</sup> Representatives included members of the Ministry of Labour, Education, Foreign Affairs, Health, Information, etc. As well as representatives from the Myanmar Red Cross Society, the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the Myanmar Women's Sports Federation and the Myanmar Women's Entrepreneurs' Assosiation - fr. "Gender Equality in Myanmar." *SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<http://genderindex.org/country/myanmar>>.

<sup>111</sup> Ministry of Immigration and Population, Department of Population, and UNFPA. *Country Report on 2007 Fertility and Reproductive Health Survey*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Oct. 2009. Web.

<sup>112</sup> Ministry of Immigration and Population, Department of Population, and UNFPA. *Country Report on 2007 Fertility and Reproductive Health Survey*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Oct. 2009. Web.

<sup>113</sup> Data collected by the Department of Population, in collaboration with UNFPA provides a comprehensive view of the progress being made towards improving reproductive health, education, and economic activity in an attempt to increase the empowerment of Myanmar women. The 2007 survey covered 8352 ever-married women between the ages of 15-46 and 6106 never-married women between the ages of 15-34. In total 32, 416 households, with a total of 156, 538 people were interviewed.

<sup>114</sup> *Country Assessment Report Country Profile of the Union of Myanmar*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. United Nations, 2005. Web. <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/Myanmar.pdf>

rates have already reduced, from 55.1 deaths/1,000 live births in 1999 to 49.7 deaths/1,000 live births in 2003. Improvements are due to our commitment to increase maternal and prenatal care by 60%, through technical trainings, community advocacies, and nutritional education.<sup>115</sup> In 2010 we placed 52 in country comparison, with 200 deaths/100,000 live births – ranking us above some of our closest neighbors<sup>116</sup>.

### *Education/Literacy Rates*

The government of Myanmar understands the importance of a quality education as a means of empowering our young girls and women. By 2015 we aim to ensure both free and compulsory primary education to all children, with an emphasis on diminishing any inherent gender disparities that may exist<sup>117</sup>. The figures are encouraging:

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>
<i>Ratio of girls to boys in - primary education*</i>	<i>92.83</i>	<i>93.86</i>	<i>97.15</i>	<i>98.44</i>
<i>- secondary education *</i>	<i>93.64</i>	<i>100.46</i>	<i>104.98</i>	<i>95.75</i>
<i>- tertiary education #</i>	<i>150.64</i>	<i>152.66</i>	<i>167.58</i>	<i>151.55</i>
<i>Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 years old *</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>101.4</i>

<sup>118</sup>Source \*Department of Educational Planning and Training  
# Respective Agencies

Adult literacy rates reflect the above data. As of 2006, female literacy rates were at 86.4% as compared to the male literacy rate of 93.9%<sup>119</sup>. We will continue to increase educational opportunities for our female youth, with the expectation that literacy rates will also increase. Educational opportunities lead to greater empowerment for women both within the domestic, as well as public sphere.

<sup>115</sup> *Country Assessment Report Country Profile of the Union of Myanmar*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. United Nations, 2005. Web. <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/Myanmar.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

-2010 figures place Indonesia at 51, Bangladesh at 45, Cambodia at 44, and Laos at 20.

<sup>117</sup> *Country Assessment Report Country Profile of the Union of Myanmar*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. United Nations, 2005. Web. <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/Myanmar.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> *Country Assessment Report Country Profile of the Union of Myanmar*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. United Nations, 2005. Web. <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/Myanmar.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

### *Civil/Economic Rights and Participation*

Legal and property rights for both married and unmarried Myanmar women are equal to those of men. In Myanmar, the woman has a right to choose a spouse and file for divorce, especially in cases of domestic abuse. Perhaps most important is the maintenance of her individual identity post matrimony. Women do not change their name once they have married<sup>120</sup>. The Myanmar wife keeps her individual identity, and therefore maintains all her rights to property and inheritance. Even after matrimony, women's rights to property are protected under the Married Women's Property Act<sup>121</sup>. This is not a result of Western influence, but instead a survivor of its influence despite colonial intervention.

*“In most of Asia women have had to fight for equality with men primarily on three matters: marriage, divorce, and inheritance. In Burma we have been singularly fortunate in possessing this equality even before we knew it was a problem” – Daw Mya Sein<sup>122</sup>, The Atlantic Magazine (1958)*

Furthermore, a woman's space is not held in the narrow confines of the domestic sphere. Reality is quite the opposite. Women in Myanmar enjoy a prominent role in the economic realm. Data from as early as 1990 reports 6.57 million women participating in the official labor force<sup>123</sup>, with rates only increasing. Throughout the first decade of this millennium, Myanmar has maintained a relatively stable participation rate in the formal labor sector – at 75% for females 15+ in 2010<sup>124</sup>. In fact, we consistently rank higher than our East Asian and Pacific counterparts.

<sup>120</sup> Nwe, Than T. "Gendered Spaces: Women in Burmese Society." *Transformations* 6 (2003): 6-8. *Transformations Journal*. Web.

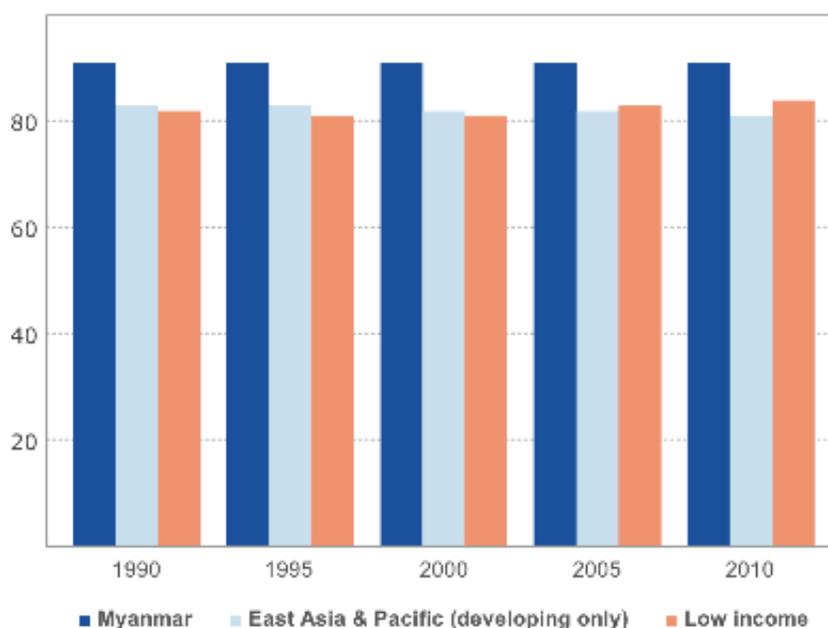
-In fact, there is not even a Myanmar word for Mrs. (we simply refer to our women as Miss (Ma) and Ms. (Daw).

<sup>121</sup> The Married Women's Property Act – Section 5: “Any married woman may effect a policy of insurance on her own behalf and independently of her husband; and the same and all benefit thereof, if expressed on the face of it to be so effecte, shall ensure as her separate property, and the contract evidenced by such policy shall be valid as if made with an unmarried woman”- fr. "Gender Equality in Myanmar." *SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<http://genderindex.org/country/myanmar>>.

<sup>122</sup> Sein, Daw Mya. "The Women of Burma." *The Atlantic* Feb. 1958: n. pag. *The Atlantic*. Web. 9 Nov. 2012. - *“DAW MYA SEIN, born in 1904 in Moulmein, is of Mon and Arakanese stock. Her distinguished career typifies the increasingly active role of women in Burmese public life. Mother of two children, she has still found time to be headmistress of several schools, editor and broadcaster, first roman elected to the Rangoon City Corporation, delegate to the London Round Table Conference of 1931 and the Paris UNESCO Conference of 1946, President of the National Council of Women, and a leader in social work. She is Lecturer in history at Rangoon University and has made two lecture tours in the United States.”*

<sup>123</sup> 1990 Myanmar Labour Force Survey – fr. Committe on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. Rep. United Nations, 1999. Web. <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw22/mmr.pdf>>.

<sup>124</sup> Labor Participation Rate, female (% of female pop. ages 15+). N.d. Raw data. The World Bank, n.p.

**Graph #: Ratio of female to male labor force participation (In %)<sup>125</sup>**[Source<sup>126</sup>]

In terms of rights within the economic sector, women are protected from discrimination in employment under the Law Defining the Fundamental Rights and Responsibilities of Workers<sup>127</sup> and guaranteed paid maternity benefits under the Leaves and Holidays Act/Social Security Act. Women have an equal right to men to apply for bank loans and engage in contracts. The Myanmar Woman's Affairs Federation provides micro-credit loans to women wishing to manage small-scale businesses or engage in agricultural work. 2006 alone afforded temporary loans of MMK72.4 million (USD 11 million) to 8,606 women<sup>128</sup>.

Lastly, women are not prohibited from participation in the political sphere. In fact, even before a shift in regime, the Myanmar Constitution included a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex in the appointment of Government. Currently, women hold 26 seats in parliament – with prominent civil and humanitarian rights leader Aung San Suu Kyi as the spearhead.

<sup>125</sup> World Bank. "Ratio of Female to Male Labor Force Participation (in%)." Chart. N.p., n.d. Web.

<<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/myanmar>>

<sup>126</sup> WB

<sup>127</sup> "Gender Equality in Myanmar." *SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012.

<<http://genderindex.org/country/myanmar>>.

<sup>128</sup> Similar programs exist. Such as the one run by the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (which provided approximately MMK180 million (USD28 million) to more than 45,000 women as of 2007.

-Ministry of Immigration and Population, Department of Population, and UNFPA. *Country Report on 2007 Fertility and Reproductive Health Survey*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Oct. 2009. Web.

## Violence Against Women

Despite all government efforts to protect the rights and physical wellbeing of our citizens, the Myanmar government does recognize the need to combat and reduce the instances of human trafficking – especially the trafficking of women for sexually oriented work. Our current government is committed to diminishing all types of corruption and working towards a safer environment for all citizens. Our inclusion in the ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children (2004) is not enough. Therefore, in 2010, the Myanmar government developed a National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking. This includes

changes in policy and suggestions with regards to prevention, prosecution, protection, and capacity building<sup>129</sup>. Specific initiatives include but are not limited to, the establishment of Myanmar-Thailand Border Cooperation Mechanisms, conducting community based prevention activities, and the formation of new Anti-Trafficking Task Forces.

Crucial to the prevention of trafficking of women, is providing relevant information and resources to allow them to be able to protect themselves. Represented here are the results from the FRHS 2007 survey<sup>130</sup>. We must continue to increase knowledge and awareness in an effort to combat violence against our women.

	Urban	Rural	Total
Ever heard	98.6	88.9	91.7
<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>1562</b>	<b>3452</b>	<b>5014</b>
<b>Perception on age of women who are most likely victims of Trafficking</b>			
<15	14.0	11.1	12.0
15-19	73.8	74.8	74.5
20-24	10.9	12.1	11.7
25-29	0.3	0.7	0.6
30+	0.1	0.1	0.1
Don't know	0.8	1.2	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Main causes</b>			
Poverty	69.3	63.5	65.3
Illiteracy	8.1	10.5	9.8
Hope for better life elsewhere	8.9	9.0	8.9
Entrapment	9.7	12.7	11.7
Others	2.9	2.8	2.9
Don't know	1.0	1.5	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Opinion on how the traffickers influence</b>			
False job offer	88.2	86.8	87.2
Fake marriage	2.0	2.3	2.2
Promise of a happy family	4.5	5.3	5.1
Others	4.2	3.4	3.6
Don't know	1.1	2.2	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>1562</b>	<b>3452</b>	<b>5014</b>

<sup>129</sup> Myanmar. Ministry of Home Affairs: Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons. *Five-Year National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Web. <<http://myanmarhumantrafficking.gov.mm/content/five-year-national-plan-action-combat-human-trafficking-annual-work-plan-2010>>.

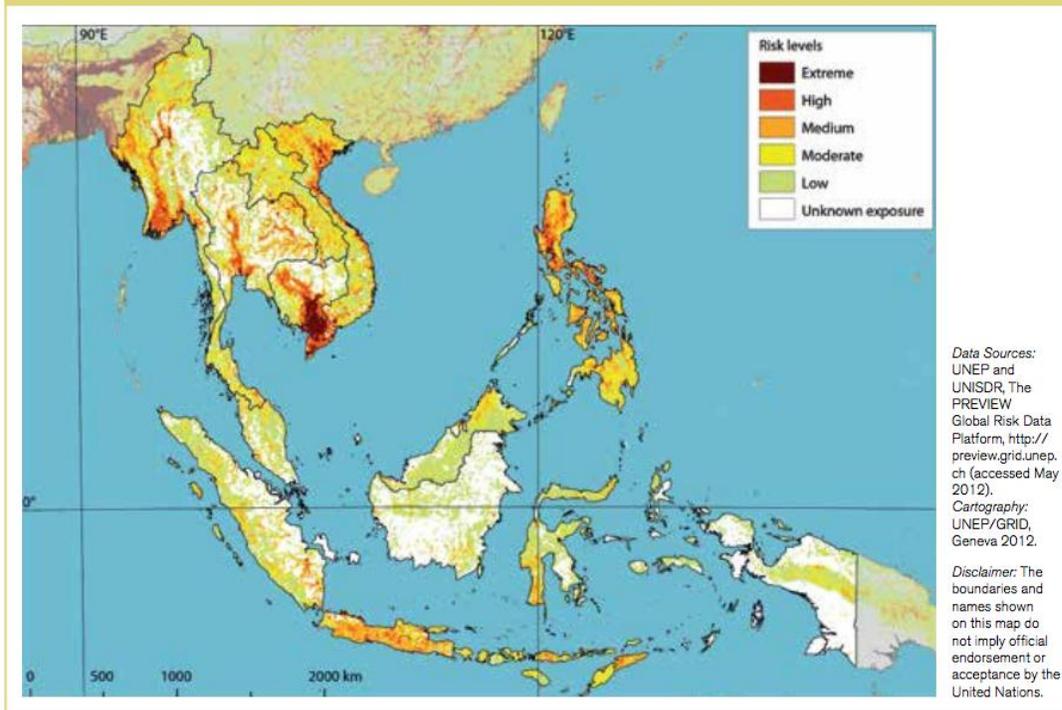
<sup>130</sup> 2007 FRHS survey

## 6. CLIMATE CHANGE/DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

**OBJECTIVE:** To adapt to and mitigate climate changes which create natural disasters.

The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most disaster-prone areas of the world – accounting for 91% of global human exposure to tropical cyclones, 92% of floods and 66% of landslides<sup>131</sup>. Myanmar alone is subject to a series of natural hazards, including – cyclones, storm surges, floods, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, drought, and fire<sup>132</sup>. Furthermore, in Myanmar there is an increased risk of vulnerability to major disasters due to the almost 70% of the population residing in rural areas<sup>133</sup> (2010).

**Map 1.4 Mortality risk distribution of selected hydro-meteorological hazards (tropical cyclones, floods and rain-triggered landslides) in South-East Asia**



<sup>131</sup> ESCAP, and UNISDR. *Asian-Pacific Disaster Report 2012*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. United Nations. (2) Web. <[http://www.unisdr.org/files/29288\\_apdr2012finalowres.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/29288_apdr2012finalowres.pdf)>.

\*calculated on a per capita basis

<sup>132</sup> Rainy season occurs between the months of May and October and can lead to severe floods. Floods entail serious damage and consequences for our infrastructure, economy, and health. The Northwestern Region, Central Lowland and the Shan Plateau-Yunnan region are particularly susceptible to seismic activity. In fact, during the past century there have been at least 18 large earthquakes just in the Central Lowland alone. Tsunamis can occur along the 2,400 kilometers of the Myanmar coastline. Drought risk occurs across 54 Townships in 13 District, affecting approximately 10% of the total area of the country.

- Myanmar. Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Relief and Resettlement Department. *Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) 2009-2015*. N.p.: Government of the Union of Myanmar, n.d. ADPC Home. Aug. 2009. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <[http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction\(MAPDRR\)\\_Ver\\_english.pdf](http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction(MAPDRR)_Ver_english.pdf)>.

<sup>133</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

As such, it is crucial that we work to strengthen internal capacity to combat natural disasters as well as comply with international strategies for disaster risk reduction. The Myanmar government is committed to following the provisions set out at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNISDR) at the “Rio+20” conference (July 2010) as they relate to disaster risk reduction through broader and longer-term development strategies<sup>134</sup>. To better understand Myanmar’s commitment to disaster risk reduction, as well as our capacity to react to incidents of natural disaster, it is necessary to examine the events of the 2008 Nargis cyclone.

### *Cyclone Nargis: Response and Lessons Learned*

Official figures report that the May 2, 2008 Cyclone killed 84, 500 people and left 53, 800 missing<sup>135</sup>. The national government was quick to respond. Calls for aid were released to the international community and the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Committee handled distribution<sup>136</sup>. Within a month, multi-lateral cooperation was underway in the form of an assessment committee comprised of the National Government of Myanmar, ASEAN, and UN Agencies. The result was two-fold, with the formation of the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) to assist in recovery and aid<sup>137</sup>, as well as the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction, to prevent similar destruction in the future. Furthermore, Myanmar exhibits a commitment for multi-lateral coordination as a signatory member of the ASEAN Agreement of Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)<sup>138</sup> as well as the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005 (HFA).

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Committee has developed the Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) in order to better respond to future disasters. The plan is comprised of seven components to achieve the ultimate goal of making “Myanmar Safer and more Resilient against Natural Hazards, thus Protecting Lives, Livelihood and Developmental Gains”<sup>139</sup>. Represented below are all seven components of MAPDRR and their relation to both HFA and AADMER goals and priorities.

<sup>134</sup> ESCAP, and UNSDR. *Asian-Pacific Disaster Report 2012*. Rep. N.p.: n.p., n.d. United Nations. (5) Web. <[http://www.unisdr.org/files/29288\\_apdr2012finalallowres.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/29288_apdr2012finalallowres.pdf)>.

<sup>135</sup> "Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis 2008 Facts and Figures." *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*. N.p., 11 May 2011. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/asia-pacific/myanmar/myanmar-cyclone-nargis-2008-facts-and-figures/>>.

<sup>136</sup> National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *News Release No.2. Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 17 May 2008. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<sup>137</sup> Myanmar. Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Relief and Resettlement Department. *Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) 2009-2015*. N.p.: Government of the Union of Myanmar, n.d. *ADPC Home*. Aug. 2009. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <[http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction\(MAPDRR\)\\_Ver\\_english.pdf](http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction(MAPDRR)_Ver_english.pdf)>.

<sup>138</sup> On October 15, 2012 (International Day for Disaster Relief) Vice-President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham reaffirmed Myanmar commitment to ASEAN disaster relief goals.

"Vice-President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham Addresses Ceremony of International Disaster Reduction 2012." *The Republic of the Union of Myanmar: President Office*. N.p., 15 Oct. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Myanmar. Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Relief and Resettlement Department. *Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) 2009-2015*. N.p.: Government of the Union of Myanmar, n.d. *ADPC Home*. Aug. 2009. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <[http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction\(MAPDRR\)\\_Ver\\_english.pdf](http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction(MAPDRR)_Ver_english.pdf)>.

**Table: 2** Component-wise numbers of projects and its linkage to HFA &AADMER

S/N	Component	HFA Priorities	AADMER	No. of Projects
1	<b>Component 1:</b> Policy, Institutional arrangements and further institutional development	Priority 1	Article 6, 10	4
2	<b>Component 2:</b> Hazard, vulnerability and risk assessment	Priority 2	Article 5	8
3	<b>Component 3:</b> Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems	Priority 2	Article 7	10
4	<b>Component 4:</b> Preparedness and Response Programs at National, State/Division, District & Township levels	Priority 5	Article 6, 8	9
5	<b>Component 5:</b> Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction into Development	Priority 4	Article 6	13
6	<b>Component 6:</b> Community based Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction	Cross-cutting	Article 6, 7	9
7	<b>Component 7:</b> Public Awareness, Education and Training	Priority 3	Article 6, 7	11
<b>Total</b>				<b>64</b>

[Source]<sup>140</sup>

Each component is comprised of a variety of subcomponents, objectives, and activities to improve disaster preparedness and relief. Furthermore, they outline the expected outcomes, their estimated duration and potential bi-lateral and multi-lateral donations and opportunities for collaboration. For example, Component 1 identifies the development of disaster risk reduction capabilities in each government industry to enhance training capacity and encourage regular meetings between different committees. This sub-component is particularly interesting in that it highlight Myanmar's ability and willingness to work within the international framework – potential partners include UNOCHA, WHO, UNHRR, UNICEF, ASEAN, MRCS, and other non-specified NGOs.

The government's first priority at the onset of Cyclone Nargis was to protect the local people of Myanmar. Although we cannot prevent natural disasters, we are committed to reducing our vulnerability and increasing our capacity to respond to them as they occur. Cyclone Nargis, despite its great devastation, has given the Myanmar government apt opportunity to perfect and increase our responsiveness and aid to all people.

<sup>140</sup> Myanmar. Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Relief and Resettlement Department. *Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) 2009-2015*. N.p.: Government of the Union of Myanmar, n.d. *ADPC Home*. Aug. 2009. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <[http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction\(MAPDRR\)\\_Ver\\_english.pdf](http://www.adpc.net/v2007/ikm/ONLINE%20DOCUMENTS/downloads/2010/MyanmarActionPlanonDisasterRiskReduction(MAPDRR)_Ver_english.pdf)>.

### *Protecting the Environment*

Climate change and its subsequent consequences affect not only Myanmar, but the entire international community. As such, we are committed to development in the most sustainable and environmentally friendly manner as is possible. The actions and sentiments of our current President, Thein Sein, reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development in collaboration with the international community:

“We look forward to reaching tangible outcomes at the upcoming 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties (CMP 7) to the Kyoto Protocol in Durban, South Africa. Although the road to Durban will be a difficult one, my delegation shares the view that our discussions on the issue should be placed within the context of promoting the sustainable development”

– President U Thein Sein address at the 67<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly (September 27, 2012)<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, President Sein recently attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting (November 6, 2012), which focused on, among other issues, food and energy security, sustainable development, climate change, and disaster risk management<sup>142</sup>. The government is also discussing the possibility of a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) three-year plan for sustainable development, with one of the main objectives being the assurance of environmental sustainability<sup>143</sup>.

Of special interest to our government are sustainable agricultural practices. As an agro-based country, with approximately 70% of the labor force in this sector<sup>144</sup>, it is of utmost importance that we work to prevent floods and droughts that can affect crop output<sup>145</sup>. Recently Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation, U Myint Hiaing, presented the 2012/2013 strategies for agricultural development. These include:

<sup>141</sup> Sein, U. Thein. "President U Thein Sein Delivers an Address at the 67th United Nations General Assembly." Address. 67th United Nations General Assembly. UN Headquarters, New York. 27 Sept. 2012. Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 Sept. 2012. Web.

<[http://www.mofa.gov.mm/news/2012/Sept\\_Oct2012/UNGA\\_speech\\_news\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mofa.gov.mm/news/2012/Sept_Oct2012/UNGA_speech_news_2012.pdf)>.

<sup>142</sup> "President Thein Sein Attends 9th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit in Laos." *Eleven: No.1 Newsmidia in Myanmar*. Eleven, 09 Nov. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://elevenmyanmar.com/politics/1253-president-thein-sein-attends-9th-asia-europe-meeting-summit-in-laos>>.

<sup>143</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development. "UN Development Program Proposes Three-year Plan in Myanmar." *National Planning and Economic Development*. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 9 Oct. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<[https://www.mnped.gov.mm/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=973%3Aun-development-program-proposes-three-year-plan-in-myanmar&catid=11&Itemid=126&lang=en](https://www.mnped.gov.mm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=973%3Aun-development-program-proposes-three-year-plan-in-myanmar&catid=11&Itemid=126&lang=en)>.

<sup>144</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012.

<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>145</sup> Sein, U. Thein. "President U Thein Sein Delivers an Address at the 67th United Nations General Assembly." Address. 67th United Nations General Assembly. UN Headquarters, New York. 27 Sept. 2012. Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 Sept. 2012. Web.

<[http://www.mofa.gov.mm/news/2012/Sept\\_Oct2012/UNGA\\_speech\\_news\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mofa.gov.mm/news/2012/Sept_Oct2012/UNGA_speech_news_2012.pdf)>.

- 1) Development of new agricultural land
- 2) Provision of sufficient irrigation water
- 3) Provision and support for agricultural mechanization
- 4) Application of modern agro-technologies
- 5) Development and utilization of modern varieties<sup>146</sup>

A collaborative effort is needed to combat climate issues in the modern world. Together, with our individual citizens, international organizations and local NGOs we can work towards our commitment to environmentally sustainable progress.



[Image: Aerial view of Cyclone Nargis, 2008. Image courtesy of [http://www.orientaltales.com/links/help\\_myanmar.html](http://www.orientaltales.com/links/help_myanmar.html)]

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<sup>146</sup> Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. "Collaborative Efforts of Government and the People." *Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation*. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Aug. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.moai.gov.mm/index.php/news/204-collaborative-efforts-of-government-and-people.html>>.

## 7. MIGRATION, REFUGEES, AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

**OBJECTIVE:** Recognize the struggles of Burmese migrants, refugees, and internally displaced peoples, encourage cooperation between sending and host countries, and seek assistance to make sure those in need within our borders have their basic needs met.

Each year thousands of Myanmar's people flee our borders due to an overriding fear that our government will not protect their social, economic and political rights. The World Bank demonstrates the vastness of this phenomenon with its estimation that through the course of 2010 there were approximately 514.2 thousand migrants who left Myanmar<sup>147</sup>. Those who do not possess the facilities or economic resources to migrate out of Myanmar are left to become refugees or internally displaced persons – more than 450,000 such individual currently reside within the country borders<sup>148</sup> without any means of re-establishing their livelihoods and communities. The current democratic government of Myanmar refuses to accept such a reality as inevitable. We will continue to improve our human and civil rights record, strengthen our economy, and incorporate ourselves within the international community, in order to ensure all Myanmar people feel safe and economically/socially mobile. We must ensure that international migration is a sustainable contributor to our economic development and that our overseas nationals are protected and valued<sup>149</sup>.

### *The Burmese Migrant/Refugee*

The internal causes for displacement are our primary concern. As such, it is important to distinguish between the different objectives and reasons for migration.

*Human and Social Rights* - The current Myanmar government recognizes the need to reorient our priorities towards the protection of individual human and social rights. Negotiation with ethnic resistance groups must work to protect ethnic and religious minorities. Furthermore, Myanmar is committed to working with international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) as well as various NGOs to combat unfair labor practices and conditions for workers within the country<sup>150</sup>.

*Economic* – Myanmar has entered a new age of international economic cooperation. Since the implementation of the new regime, international support, both in trade relations and donor aid, is expected to experience an exponential increase. The lift of international economic sanctions, especially those of the United States, ensures Myanmar's increased economic development and integration into the world system.

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<sup>147</sup> Myanmar." *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*. 2nd ed. N.p.: World Bank Publications, n.d. 168. *ISSUU*. 09 Nov. 2010. Web. <<http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/9780821382189>>.

<sup>148</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

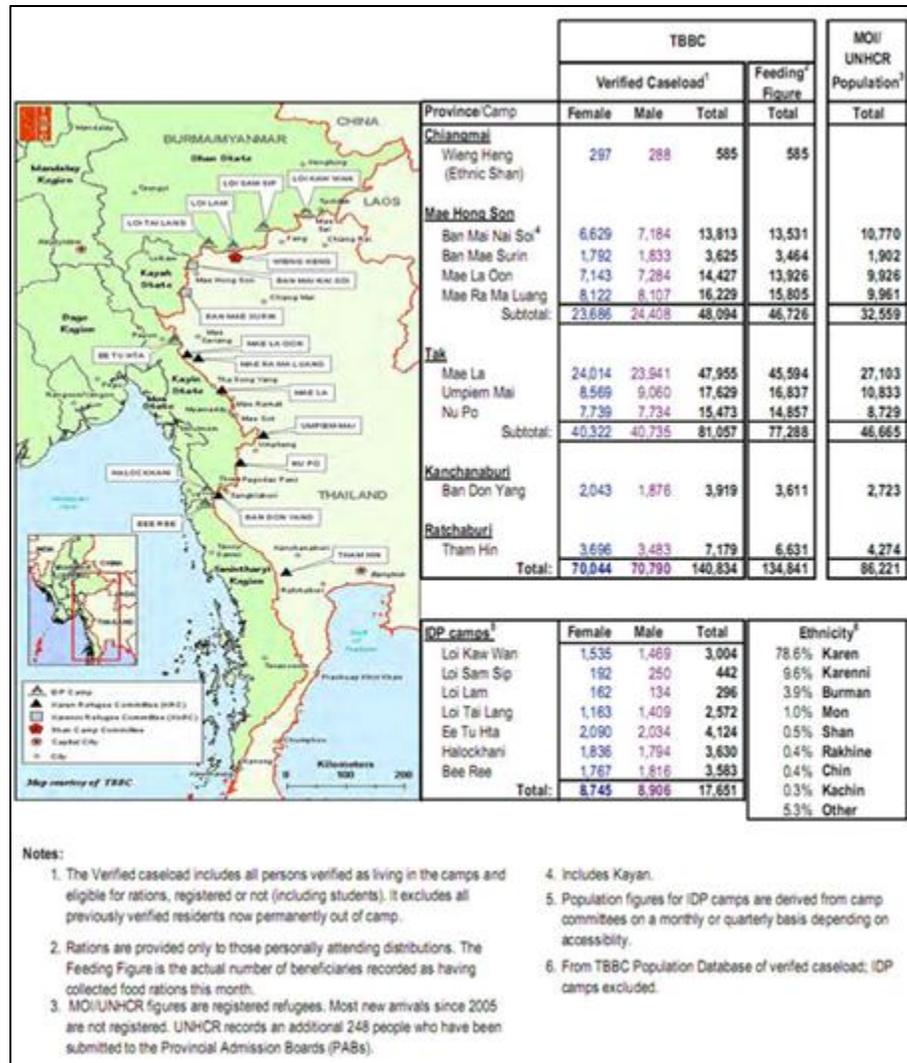
<sup>149</sup> Hall, Andy. "Myanmar and Migrant Workers: Briefing and Recommendations." *Hans and Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public and International Law*. Mahidol Migration Center, 06 May 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<sup>150</sup> Department of Labour. *Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Labour*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.mol.gov.mm/en/departments/departments-of-labour/>>.

*Environmental* – Myanmar geographical location puts us at increased risk for natural disasters, especially in the form of floods, cyclones, and earthquakes. As discussed in the section on environment and climate, the government has learned from the mistakes made in the wake of Cyclone Nargis 2008, and continues to aim for greater risk prevention, reduction and response.

*Case Study: Thai/Myanmar Migration/Refugee Cooperation and Policy*

Emigration to Thailand represents the vast majority of Myanmar migrant travel. Alone it hosts over 1 million registered Myanmar citizens – a statistic that significantly overshadows the neighboring country rates. Thailand in particular represents an attractive option for migrants for a variety of reasons, one of which being the shared 2400 kilometer border between the two countries. Thailand also affords greater economic opportunities with a much stronger and consistent system. As such, the government of Myanmar stands committed to both regulating the departure, return and safety of migrant workers and camp refugees through bi-lateral coordination and cooperation with the Thai government.



[Source <sup>151</sup>]

<sup>151</sup> "Latest Refugee Distribution on Thai-Burma Border." *Mizzima: Specializing in Burma Related News and Multimedia*. Mizzima News, 02 July 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

### *Government and International Progress*

Some work has already been done. The 2003 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries represents clear, bi-lateral movement towards a solution. It aims to ensure:

- proper procedure for employment of workers;
- effective repatriation of workers, who have completed terms and conditions of employment or are deported by relevant authorities of the other Party, before completion of terms and conditions of employment to their permanent addresses;
- Due protection of workers to ensure that there is no loss of the rights and protection of workers and that they receive the rights they are entitled to;
- Prevention of, and effective action against illegal border crossings, trafficking of illegal workers and illegal employment of workers.<sup>152</sup>

The government is taking action in the form of Myanmar's Five-Year National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking (2010), which includes a renewed interest in the implementation of the MoU with Thailand, China, and Malaysia, through regular bilateral Task Force Meetings<sup>153</sup>. Safer and more visible routes of transportation are in the works as a means to combat illegal crossing and border corruption. For example, as of July 2012, the Thai National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) has approved two new expressway projects to link the two countries<sup>154</sup>. Safer means of transportation will also increase the likelihood that family members in Myanmar receive their due remittances.

Lastly, we are open to support from the international community. The government of Myanmar complies with the 2012 targets, developed by the UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) include:

- Fair protection processes and documentation
  - Improved access to status determination procedures and efficiency of processing enhanced
  - Civil registration and civil status documentation are strengthened
  - Identification of stateless people is improved based on clarified criteria
- Security from violence and exploitation

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<sup>152</sup> The Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, and The Government of the Union of Myanmar. Rep. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<[http://www.no-trafficking.org/content/pdf/thaimyanmar\\_mou\\_on\\_employment\\_cooperation\\_english.pdf](http://www.no-trafficking.org/content/pdf/thaimyanmar_mou_on_employment_cooperation_english.pdf)>.

<sup>153</sup> Myanmar. Ministry of Home Affairs: Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons. *Five-Year National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking Annual Work Plan for 2010*. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

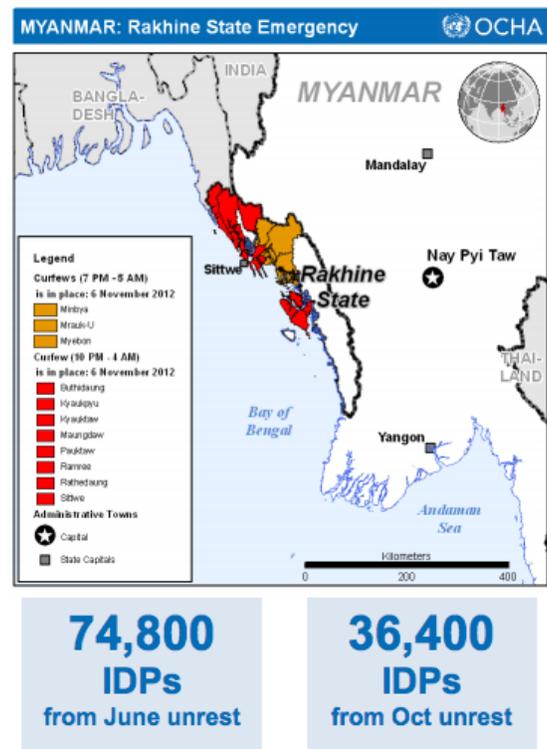
<sup>154</sup> "Thailand and Myanmar Sign Pacts for Joint Development." *The Nation*. N.p., 23 July 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

- The risk of sexual and gender-based violence in camps is reduced and the timing and quality of response are improved
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- Basic needs and essential services
  - Improvement of health and well-being of urban refugees and asylum-seekers
- Durable solutions
  - The potential for resettlement is realized
- Favorable protection of the environment
  - Access to the territory is improved and the risk of refoulement reduced<sup>155</sup>

### *Internally Displaced Peoples: The Rakhine State*

Due to the abuses of the past regime, Myanmar is currently combating ethnic and religious tensions in the northern Rakhine province. The latest report produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates the total number of IDPs in Rakhine has reached over 110,000 people since conflict began in July 2012. In retort, the government launched The Rakhine Response Plan, calling for \$32.5 in aid. As of the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, \$16 million has been donated. However, the plan is in need of revision due to the re-insurgent violence experienced this fall<sup>156</sup>.

The Union Minister of Border Affairs, in coordination with representatives from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia has visited ten affected townships in order to further assess the humanitarian situation<sup>157</sup>. Inter-agency rapid needs assessment has been conducted to assess the current situation. Urgent needs include food, health, shelter, water sanitation, and hygiene. As of November 5, the WFP (United Nations World Food Program) has provided 455 MT of food to approximately 27,000 IDPs in affected areas. Nevertheless, aid is still incredibly crucial and gratefully accepted. Furthermore, recent upheaval should not discount the many meaningful steps the government has taken to combat the human rights abuses of the past regime<sup>158</sup>.



<sup>155</sup> UNHRC- The UN Refugee Agency. "2012 UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Thailand." *UNHCR* -. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e489646.html>>.

<sup>156</sup> OCHA: Office for the Coordination of International Affairs. *Myanmar: Displacement in the Rakhine State*. Rep. no. 12. United Nations, 06 Nov. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<sup>157</sup> OCHA: Office for the Coordination of International Affairs. *Myanmar: Displacement in the Rakhine State*. Rep. no. 12. United Nations, 06 Nov. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

<sup>158</sup> OCHA: Office for the Coordination of International Affairs. *Myanmar: Displacement in the Rakhine State*. Rep. no. 12. United Nations, 06 Nov. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2012.

Table: Burmese Refugees in Thailand

UNHCR 2012-2013 planning figures for Thailand							
TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2012		DEC 2012 - JAN 2013		DEC 2013	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Myanmar	89,870	89,870	90,790	90,790	83,970	83,970
	Various	950	950	930	930	910	910
Asylum-seekers	Myanmar	16,740	8,020	8,960	250	36,960	28,250
	Various	1,510	1,510	1,530	1,530	1,550	1,550
Stateless [1]	Stateless	542,510	-	542,510	-	542,510	-
Others of Concern	Myanmar	57,090	57,090	57,090	57,090	22,090	22,090
<b>Total</b>		<b>708,660</b>	<b>157,440</b>	<b>701,810</b>	<b>150,590</b>	<b>687,990</b>	<b>136,770</b>

[1] Figures for stateless persons are based on ongoing discussions between the Thai authorities and UNHCR and will be further verified in the course of the year.

[Source: <sup>159</sup>]

## STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ETHNICITY

The recent conflicts in Rakhine State have impressed upon our administration the necessity of addressing the question of human rights as it relates to our many ethnic groups and the greater population of Myanmar. This administration, led by the President, is well aware that Myanmar's many challenges relating to human rights, including human rights violations of the past administration against minority groups such as the Rohingya, have contributed to economic sanctions levied against Myanmar as a whole. These economic sanctions have exacerbated already challenging conditions, and decreased our nation's ability to receive and distribute the financial and human resource aid necessary to improve the lives of all of our citizenry.

We recognize the mandate of the right to development as a human right<sup>160</sup>, and urge international partners, multi and bilateral, independent and non-governmental, to consider Myanmar's urgent need for poverty reduction. While our partners around the world may doubt our commitment to improving human rights within Myanmar's borders, we urge them to consider the following:

- Since the establishment of the new government, there has been a steady release of political prisoners that had been incarcerated unjustly by the former regime.<sup>161</sup>
- The government continues to strive for a centralized and peer-oriented judicial system. While our adherence to customary and colonial law has a long history,<sup>162</sup> we understand and are working hard to make substantive changes to national legal code.

<sup>159</sup> UNHCR- The UN Refugee Agency. "2012 UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Thailand." *UNHCR* -. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e489646.html>>.

<sup>160</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development." *United Nations Human Rights*. United Nations: Geneva (May 2011). Web.

<sup>161</sup> Geoge, William Lloyd. "Myanmar's careful reformist: Thein Sein" *Al Jazeera*. 7 Oct., 2011. Web. 30 Oct., 2012. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/10/2011105154431129473.html>>

- Media censorship, which the previous administration refused to reconsider, has lessened substantially, and we make continued efforts toward opening Myanmar up for telecommunications and internet access.<sup>163</sup>
- Our commitment to representation and democracy shows in the most recent by election—of 44 seats available, 43 were taken by the National League of Democracy.<sup>164</sup>
- We continue to strive for development—including improved access to services (electricity, roads) and public health (with the help of multilateral agencies), education, and economic interdependence.

Myanmar and her leaders understand that fundamental, large-scale change takes time. We appreciate the patience and commitment of our partners. To show the government's good faith, President Thein Sein has acknowledged and we confirm that Myanmar must re-examine its views towards the Rohingyas.<sup>165</sup> It is worth stating, as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself has mentioned, that the violence in this situation has been perpetrated towards many people. As Ms. Suu Kyi has also indicated,<sup>166</sup> we encourage caution in addressing the issue, and a careful review of the 1982 Constitution versus the current Constitution on issues of ethnicity.

While recent ethnic tensions and violence in the border regions of Myanmar have deepened the administration's concerns over safety and security, we are hopeful that we will be able to move forward from a period of sectarian violence and that the international community will support Myanmar in both containing ethnic skirmishes and pushing for cease-fire agreements, in the short term, between all parties being effected by the conflict.



[Image: Courtesy of <http://www.flyingcolours.org/product-detail.php?ID=1667>]

<sup>162</sup> CIA. "East & South East Asia: Burma." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Nov. 2012.

<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.

<sup>163</sup> "Suu Kyi sees 'positive' change in Myanmar." *Al Jazeera Asia*. 18 Sept., 2011. Web. 30 Oct., 2012.

<<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2011/09/20119184468282395.html>>

<sup>164</sup> "Burma's Thein Sein 'would accept Suu Kyi as president.'" *BBC News Asia*. 29 Sept., 2012. Web. 30 Oct., 2012.

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19772834>>

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> "EU chief Barroso offers new development aid to Burma." *BBC News Asia*. 3 Nov., 2012. Web. 4 Nov., 2012.

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20189448>>

### ***SECTION THREE: Myanmar's Relationship to International Aid***

#### *Multilateral Aid: The Asian Development Bank (ADB)*

The majority of our government's relationship with both bilateral and multilateral international aid agencies has begun to blossom along with the recent shift to democracy. Myanmar began economic relations with the International Financial Institution (IFI) called the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1973; however, the ADB expressed its reservations in regards to giving Myanmar development aid funding since 1988 as a result of the previous authoritarian regime that gripped the nation until recently<sup>167</sup>. Despite this, our current turn to democracy is opening the previously closed doors for international development aid. In response to the ongoing efforts by the government of Myanmar to promote a democratic government and market-based economy, the ADB adopted a phased approach to economic reengagement with Myanmar in early 2012<sup>168</sup>.

This reengagement with the ADB is crucial to our nation's development because it signifies the Bank's dedication to reforming an economic relationship with our nation. More importantly, however, the significant preparatory analytical work and extensive dialogue between countries required to design economic and infrastructural aid agreements highlights our current government's capacity to revive our relationship with international aid agencies. We believe our recent shift from authoritarian rule to democracy allows our nation to receive much-needed international aid. This in combination with our assertion that the economic, infrastructural, and human development that international aid brings will undeniably support, promote, and reinforce our new endeavor for democracy.

According to the ADB, long-term economic growth is dependent on exports of resource-based commodities and raw materials, investments geared towards improving preexisting infrastructure, a strong increase in FDI, and greater international trade<sup>169</sup>.

#### *Bilateral Aid:*

Myanmar looks forward to cooperating with bilateral organizations representing our international partners. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of a few nations with whom we have worked closely, or with whom we anticipate extensive future association and partnership. Our joint efforts have included the following:

- With gratitude to the Government of Norway, which has offered a generous technical assistance grant of \$850,000, we will work in association with the Asian Development

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<sup>167</sup> . Nyunt, General Khin. "Speech by H.E General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar on the Developments and Progressive Changes in Myanmar Naing-ngan." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2003. <http://www.mofa.gov.mm/speeches/speechPM.html>

<sup>168</sup> ADB. 2012. *Myanmar in Transition: Opportunities and Challenges*. Manila

<sup>169</sup> *ibid*

Bank to update electricity infrastructure. These updates will benefit individuals, families, and the private sector.<sup>170</sup>

- In cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, the government of Australia will grant \$370,000 in technical support to assist Myanmar's Educational Plan goals. Of principal importance to this collaboration will be post-primary education.<sup>171</sup>
- The government of Myanmar would like to thank Japan's government for its generous support. In addition to forgiving \$3.86 billion of debt<sup>172</sup>, Myanmar looks forward to continuing to build a strong financial relationship with Japan and other advanced, industrialized nations.
- After receiving United States Secretary of State Hilary Clinton last year, President Thein Sein looks forward to an unprecedented visit from United States President Barack Obama this month.<sup>173</sup> President Obama will be the first President of the United States to visit Myanmar, and the government is hopeful that this visit will mark the continuation of improved diplomatic relations with the United States.

The government of Myanmar, its ministries, and its leadership looks forward to strengthening our relationships with nations throughout the world. We believe that the breakthrough collaborations that have occurred in the last year have testified to Myanmar's commitment to development and the principles of democracy and fair representation.

*Non-governmental and Independent Aid:*

The people of Myanmar have a long history of involvement in Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Organizations.<sup>174</sup> It has been estimated that there are more than 214,000 Community Based Organizations and Local NGOs, and the government of Myanmar considers these existing organizations necessary to supporting social services in Myanmar<sup>175</sup> and key to forming partnerships with International NGOs. We are confident that the existing representative structure throughout Myanmar will not only be greatly useful to NGOs that wish to become involved in Myanmar, but also shows a potential framework for representative democracy in our country from the ground up.

We look forward to increasing opportunities to dialogue and engage with International Non-Governmental groups, other aid agencies, and independent donors.

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<sup>170</sup> Asian Development Bank. "ADB, Norway to Help Update Myanmar Electricity Law." Asian Development Bank. 5 Nov., 2012. Web. 7 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/news/adb-norway-help-update-myanmar-electricity-law?ref=countries/myanmar/news>>

<sup>171</sup> Asian Development Bank. "ADB to Support Myanmar Education Assessment, Reforms." Asian Development Bank. 23 Oct., 2012. Web. 7 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/news/adb-support-myanmar-education-assessment-reforms?ref=countries/myanmar/news>>

<sup>172</sup> Koh, Yoree. "Japan Seeks a Deal on Myanmar Debt." The Wall Street Journal, 7 Oct., 2012. Web. 7 Nov., 2012. <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443493304578037801602419648.html>>

<sup>173</sup> "Obama to make historic visit to Myanmar." Al Jazeera Asia Pacific, 9 Nov., 2012. Web. 10 Nov., 2012. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/11/201211942656163448.html>>

<sup>174</sup> Saha, Soubhik Ronnie. "Working Through Ambiguity: International NGOs in Myanmar." *The Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard University*. Sept., 2011. Web. 6 Nov., 2012.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

#### ***SECTION FOUR: Towards the Future***

Our administration sees a bright future for the overall development of Myanmar. This is because our administration sees development as a multi-faceted entity; although this section primarily focuses on the economic and infrastructural aspects of Myanmar's development, these aspects are directly linked to the future human development of our citizens. We hope that, with the financial and technical assistance of our international partners, our administration can continue to create positive development for the people of Myanmar and set the stage for future democratic governments to come.

Because of the autocratic nature of Myanmar's previous regime, there has been a considerable dearth of official development aid flowing into Myanmar from multilateral, bilateral and individual aid groups such as Non-governmental organizations. It is regretful that the government disbanded in 2011 provided such significant roadblocks against Myanmar receiving aid from external sources, particularly humanitarian aid and aid necessary for further economic development.<sup>176</sup> The government of Myanmar and her agencies acknowledge that our country is not performing to full potential on many of the Millennium Development Goals, but as we continue to move toward full, representative democracy we look forward to greater involvement in expanding our economic sectors through agriculture development and industrialization, improving national financial stability, working toward more reliable statistical information and data collection, and making national growth inclusive by increasing investments and strengthening the private sector.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Ware, Anthony. "The MDGs in Myanmar: relevant or redundant?" *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*. 2011, 16:4, 579-596. p. 579.

<sup>177</sup> Asian Development Bank. "Interim Country Partnership Strategy." October, 2012. Web. 30 Oct., 2012. <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/icps-mya-2012-2014.pdf>>

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[norway-help-update-myanmar-electricity-law?ref=countries/myanmar/news](http://www.adb.org/news/adb-norway-help-update-myanmar-electricity-law?ref=countries/myanmar/news) >

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### **Images:**

Flag of Myanmar: <<http://www.flyingcolours.org/product-detail.php?ID=1667>>

Irrawaddy River, Myanmar. Source:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2011/10/111026-mekong-irrawaddy-hydropower-dams/>

Map of Myanmar: <[https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate\\_bm.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_bm.html)>

MTV End Exploitation And Trafficking (EXIT) campaign banner:

<http://mtvexit.org/myanmar/slide/trafficking-my/my-anti-trafficking-headers/>

Title page graphic: <[www.transparency.org/country#MMR](http://www.transparency.org/country#MMR)>