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### Back to Office Report

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Title Regional Stakeholder Engagement Specialist

Date submitted 17 August 2015

1. Practice area: BPPS / Sustainable Development and Resilience Cluster

2. Mission period (incl. of travel days)

From: 2 to 6 August 2015

3. Type of mission: Orientation and fact finding for Asia Pacific Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and Indigenous Peoples' (IP) representatives in the UN-REDD Policy Board

4. Clients

UNDP CO – Lat Lat Aye, Saw Doh Wah, Khin Hnin Myint

5. Purpose of mission

- a) Strengthen existing participatory approaches for REDD+ readiness, through the sharing of regional and international experiences, and conversations of best practice for the case of Myanmar.
- b) Provide guidance on how to structure multi-stakeholder dialogues for the development of a national REDD+ strategy in Myanmar, especially to enable REDD+ as a catalyst for sustainable development while enhancing the ongoing peace process in general.
- c) Provide guidance to the CSO and IP constituencies on options for organisational strengthening, particularly, to prepare for the self-selection and full and effective participation of their CSO and IP representatives in the Programme Executive Board (PEB) of the forthcoming UN-REDD Myanmar national programme.
- d) Offer UN-REDD Policy Board representatives visiting the country with the opportunity to appreciate the quality of the work and commitment of Myanmar to REDD+, so to ease the appraisal and approval of the Myanmar's national-programme proposal to come.

6. Documents, materials, resources

Mission agenda

7. Mission members

Celina Yong, Grace Balawag (IP), Teng Rithiny (CSO)

8. Costs

UNDP/UN-REDD global budget

9. Brief summary of the mission

#### 9.a Background

In early 2015, the UN-REDD Programme invited Myanmar to submit an Expression of Interest for a full national programme, so to be able to better implement the Roadmap. This Expression of Interest was retained as priority for the Programme, and Myanmar was subsequently requested to make an oral presentation during the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UN-REDD Policy Board, on 21-22 May in Washington D.C. The UN-REDD Policy Board unanimously welcomed Myanmar's proposal, commending particularly its multi-stakeholder and participatory approach, and invited the country to submit a proposal for funding of a full national programme as soon as feasible.

During the mentioned UN-REDD Policy Board meeting, the representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and Indigenous Peoples (IP) commended the participatory approach undertaken by Myanmar during the roadmap development process. They offered to lend their support to Myanmar's readiness process to enhance the valuable and innovative approach, particularly in terms of experiences and best practice in multi-stakeholder engagement and participation in REDD+ processes in the region and globally. Following that, a UN-REDD support mission was organised to Myanmar, while the UN-REDD Myanmar national programme is under finalisation, in order to enrich the national multi-stakeholder and participatory process for REDD+ with regional and international experiences.

#### 9.b Main Findings

**a) While REDD+ has the potential to contribute to the ongoing peace process, the Programme should consider if, when and how this could happen while still maintaining a clear focus on REDD+ objectives.**

The Government of Norway, especially the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) in Yangon, is actively contributing to the on-going peace process: supporting regional CSOs such as the faith-based Shalom Group, working on the issue; facilitating discussions between the Karen National Union (KNU) and Ministry of Electric Power to build hydropower dams in the area. As one of terms during negotiation, armed ethnic groups have pushed to manage their resources directly in their respective areas. As such, RNE sees REDD+ as a potential tool to advance this agenda. The Norwegian Resident in Yangon aims to facilitate a successful National Ceasefire Agreement before the end of his term in 2015, but the national election in November 2015 creates some uncertainty for a positive outcome.

In a bilateral meeting with Daw Nang Ohnmar Than, a Development Advisor with RNE, she advised that not all armed ethnic groups are democratically elected, and may not genuinely represent the local communities, but rather suppressing them. As this is not legitimate representation, any forms of engagement should try to separate the needs of the local communities from the armed groups. She further cautioned that some Ethnic Minority (EM) organisations are associated with armed ethnic groups, and a thorough but discrete background check should be done prior to further engagement. Ohnmar recommended to discuss further with ILO that has an infrastructure-related project in a number of armed conflict states, who may be able to offer insights from project implementation.

Grace, drawing on her experience with the armed conflict in southern Philippines, shared that her government had assigned a dedicated ministry to oversee this issue. She further cautioned against overloading REDD+ with the peace process, especially with Myanmar at preliminary stages of REDD+.

Franz Arnold, FAO/UN-REDD Technical Advisor based in Nay Pyi Taw, suggested a separation of political from technical focus in REDD+. He also raised the possibility of building and analyzing different scenarios for REDD+ implementation in conflict vis-à-vis non-conflict states. Dr Thaug Naing Oo was non-committal in his response to this issue.

Careful consideration is required to determine how and where this agenda could fit into a national REDD+ process that is still in preliminary stages, without diverting its focus. The Country Office's working group on peace building, albeit a new initiative, has a potential role to play by providing ground-based recommendations on if, how and when REDD+ could best be utilized for this objective.

**b) Clearly communicate that “inclusivity” does not mean all 135 EM groups in Myanmar are engaged during readiness, but their interests need to be determined, and engagement aligned with key milestones in developing the national REDD+ strategy.**

Dr Thaug Naing Oo repeatedly inquired if and how all EM groups should be engaged in the readiness process, further doubting the ability of one organisation or network to represent all groups. His concerns are likely that “inclusivity” and “full and effective participation” of EM translate to engaging with every EM at all times during the REDD+ process. Grace, in an attempt to correct this misperception, shared that the Philippines also has many IP groups, but not all of them engage in REDD+ and natural resources. For a start, these different groups had decided amongst themselves, who was interested in REDD+, and who was not. The former then strategized in terms of how to utilise REDD+ as a vehicle for their own broader development goals. As such, there was sustained interest, even when international REDD+ negotiations progressed very slowly – REDD+ was never the final destination for their engagement.

An Ethnic Minority / Nationalities Network was established during the ASEAN Forum in 2014, and managed by Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT), but is not widely known by the government. It has not been active, even though there was a suggestion to form a REDD+ Working Group among interested network members during the preparatory dialogue among ethnic minorities, coordinated by the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact and supported by regional UN-REDD Programme in May 2014. During the knowledge sharing workshop on stakeholder engagement in REDD+ process on 3 August, 13 network members have identified which of the 6 Technical Working Groups they will take part in. Lat Lat Aye has offered informally review this Network.

The Programme could consider selecting “interim” national IP/EM representatives in the Programme Executive Board (PEB) during the readiness phase. When the scale and scope of REDD+ are clear, then further representation could be identified from the pilot areas where demonstration activities will take place. Furthermore, an upcoming stakeholder mapping and analysis of key decision makers may provide further guidance.

**c) A NGO with established working relationship with MoECAF to facilitate the organisation and self-selection of national CSO and IP interim representatives in the upcoming UN-REDD Programme Executive Board (PEB).**

The civil society has only begun to emerge after the recent political changes. Daw Nang Ohnmar Than raised the issue of engaging with registered CSOs and EMOs, while recognising that they are far and few in between given that the military had suppressed civil movement. There is a NGO Registration Law pending, and most CSOs/NGOs are operating within a grace period while their

registrations are approved. This leaves unregistered CSOs/NGOs, especially EMOs in a vulnerable position, depending on the good will of the government and any possible fallout from the upcoming election.

In a meeting with U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin (DDG) and Dr Thaug Naing Oo, the Land Core Group (LCG) and Myanmar Environmental-Rehabilitation Network (MERN), both unregistered, were both well-known and well-received by the government. They were concerned that FD may come under criticisms over some CSO's suggestion from the workshop on 3 August that the Myanmar Forest Association (MFA) could act as interim coordinator for all the CSOs. This is because MFA members are mostly retired DGs from FD. One alternative is to check with MERN or LCG if they are interested to be involved in REDD+, with a preference for the former. Meanwhile, the latter has IP/EM representatives, and could provide further information or networking with IP/EM.

A preliminary discussion with MERN ended positively, in terms of their interest to participate in REDD+; their experience and focus of providing integrated environmental conservation and livelihood development; experience handling small (US\$20,000) to large (US\$3million) projects; active network with currently over 21 national organisations focused on governance (MERN, EcoDev), rights-based issues (POINT) and environmental issues; and operational information and feedback mechanisms.

One of the key conclusions from a discussion with Lat Lat Aye, Grace and Rithiny is for an *interim* focal network or organisation for each of the CSO and IP/EM PEB position during the readiness phase, vis-à-vis a nation-wide grassroots to district to national selection of potential representatives. The latter is currently premature given that the process and support to develop national REDD+ strategy has barely begun. Both Grace and Rithiny strongly supported using the REDD+ process to build and strengthen networks over time. A well-established network such as MERN or NGO could be contracted by the Programme to facilitate the process of self-selecting *national interim* CSO/NGO and EMOs or network for PEB. A concept note and ToR will be drafted.

**d) REDD+ should actively seek entry points to influence and learn from the current three-pronged national approach regarding land use: land use policy; land law; and Onemap project.**

Under the leadership of FD, a 6<sup>th</sup> draft of the land use policy is available, with a final version expected by end of 2015, including a Land Use Policy Guidance. The LCG, a sub-group off the Food Security Working Group, has been working closely with FD as communication focal point to facilitate and consolidate input and feedback from respective states and regions. Two of the criticisms levelled at FD was the lack of recognition for indigenous rights, with implications on customary land, and a weak gender focus. While U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin informed that there will be a separate chapter on indigenous and customary lands, it was not clear how they will address the weak gender focus.

From there, FD will develop a National Land Law, an enormous endeavour expected to cover all 34 laws related to land under the jurisdiction of various ministries and agencies. The Attorney General's Office is expected to lead as focal point. It is yet unclear who the lead agency may be, either MoECAFD/FD or Ministry of Agriculture, who currently is perceived as not in favour of a National Land Law. As part of an effort to support the Land Use Management Plan, the government has awarded a contract to the University of Bern in Switzerland to produce integrated map that covers agriculture, forestry, mining, transportation and urban development, among others. Known as the "One Map" project, the National Planning and Economic Development is the coordinating body, but a focal agency has not been identified, although FD is a main contender.

The land use policy has undergone an unprecedented 2-year bottom-up consultation process, which has not been without its detractors. Through it, the civil society has learned to be better organised, both in terms of raising capacity to better provide feedback, as well as prioritising strategic points of engagement. For a start, the Programme could build on this experience for the REDD+ process.

**9.d Expected Outputs**

- A joint mission report synthesizing the discussions held and advice provided.

**10. Key counterparts**

- UNDP CO – Lat Lat Aye, Saw Doh Wah, Khin Hnin Myint

**11. Follow up action matrix**

Action to be taken	By whom	Expected completion date
Discussion with ILO in Myanmar	Celina, Lat Lat Aye, Khin Hnin Myint	On-going
Informally evaluate efficacy of Ethnic Minorities/Nationalities Network	Lat Lat Aye	On-going
Concept note and ToR for the self-selection of interim national CSOs and EMOs PEB representatives	Celina	Completed
Determine LCG's interest to participate in REDD+	Celina, Khin Hnin Myint	On-going

Share Grace and Rithiny's joint mission report with RNE, Franz and CO	Celina	Mid-end August
12. Distribution list		
UNDP UN-REDD, UNDP CO – Lat Lat Aye, Saw Doh Wah, Khin Hnin Myint		

## Annex 1: Mission agenda

Date	Agenda	Key partners	Venue	Remarks
Day 0 Sun, 2 Aug	1. Arrive in Yangon		Yangon	
Day 1 Mon, 3 Aug	1. Depart for Nay Pyi Taw 2. Briefing meeting with UNDP 3. Bilateral meetings with CSO and EM constituencies 4. Knowledge sharing workshop on stakeholder engagement (afternoon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FD</li> <li>• UNDP</li> <li>• FAO</li> <li>• CSO and EM constituencies</li> <li>• Development partners/donors</li> </ul>	Nay Pyi Taw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half-day workshop / dialogue event with Government and non-government constituencies to exchange view on the value, roles, concerns and options for a participatory process in REDD+. (Refer to agenda)</li> </ul>
Day 2 Tues, 4 Aug	1. Meeting with FD and other key government ministries 2. Return to Yangon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FD</li> </ul>	Nay Pyi Taw (morning)  Yangon (evening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up with discussion points from Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Stakeholder Engagement</li> </ul>
Day 3 Wed, 5 Aug	1. Meeting with FAO 2. Meeting with Royal Norwegian Embassy 3. Debrief with UN Agencies 4. Meeting with MERN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norway</li> <li>• UNDP</li> <li>• FAO</li> </ul>	Yangon	
Day 4 Thurs, 6 Aug	Depart Yangon			

## Annex 2: Agenda of bilateral meetings with CSO and EM Constituencies on 3 August 2015

The objectives of these bilateral meetings are to:

1. Obtain a common understanding of the opportunities and challenges CSO and EM constituencies face in the national REDD+ process based on lessons learned from on-going engagement.
2. Identify initial potential entry points for strategic engagement in the national REDD+ process for further discussion during Stakeholder Consultation Workshop.

Venue: Nay Pyi Taw

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Person-in-charge</b>
7:35 am	Arrival in Nay Pyi Taw	
9:00 am	Introduction to mission, its objectives and mission team	UNDP CO with support from UN-REDD Regional
9:15 am	Bilateral meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CSO</li><li>• EM</li></ul>	Teng Rithiny (CSO) Grace Balawag (IP)
11:15 am	Summary of key points and preparation for Stakeholder Consultation Workshop	UN-REDD Regional
11:45 am	Wrap up	UNDP CO

## Annex 3: Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Process on 3 August 2015

### Objectives of the workshop

1. Create a common understanding among stakeholders on the national REDD+ process in light of international REDD+ framework, including options and best practice for multi-stakeholder engagement and participatory approaches.
2. Enable government officials to share their vision and expectations for REDD+ with the CSO and EM constituencies, and obtain feedback.
3. Enable the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and Ethnic Minority (EM) constituencies to identify entry points for their engagement in the national REDD+ process.

### Agenda

Date: 3 August 2015

Time: 1:00-5:00 pm (lunch will be provided at 12:00 noon, before the workshop)

Venue: The Hotel Amara, Nay Pyi Taw

Time	Item	Person-in-charge
1:00 pm	Registration	
1:30 pm	Welcome remarks	Myanmar REDD+ National Focal Point
1:45 pm	Synopsis of the international REDD+ framework	Ms Celina Yong, Regional Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
2:00 pm	REDD+ in Myanmar: Roadmap and beyond Q&A	Dr Thaug Naing Oo , Director, Forest Department
2:30 pm	Break & Group photo	
2:45 pm	Lessons in developing an inclusive and equitable national REDD+ strategy Q&A	Ms Grace Balawag Ms Teng Rithiny
3:15 pm	Group discussions: Entry points to strengthen engagement in development of a national REDD+ strategy, and national contact persons for CSO and EM	Ms Teng Rithiny – CSO Ms Grace Balawag - EM
4:00 pm	Plenary discussion	Ms Celina Yong. Regional Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
4:30 pm	Wrap up	UNDP
4:45 pm	Concluding remarks and way forward	Myanmar REDD+ National Focal Point