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1. Practice area: BDP/EEG	
2. Mission period (incl. of travel days) From: 28 April to 2 May	
3. Type of mission: Technical backstopping	4. Clients POINT AIPP
5. Purpose of mission To provide technical oversight and input to the National Preparatory Meeting of IP from 29 April to 1 May, and the Dialogue for IP on REDD+ on 2 May 2014 in Yangon	6. Documents, materials, resources
7. Mission members Celina Yong	8. Costs UNDP/UN-REDD national budget

9. Brief summary of the mission

As part of on-going efforts to strengthen the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples (IP) in national REDD+ processes in Asia-Pacific, the UN-REDD Programme based in the Asia-Pacific Regional Center in Bangkok, Thailand, is collaborating with a regional IP group – Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) to conduct a series of dialogues in three countries: Bangladesh (3 to 6 June 2014), Myanmar (29 April to 2 May 2014) and Viet Nam (7 to 9 May 2014). These dialogues consist of a national preparatory meeting among the IP, followed by a one-day dialogue between the IP with the relevant government agency leading REDD+, and the Programme.

Myanmar was selected due to its inclusive process during the roadmap formulation, specifically a TWG on Stakeholder Consultation and Safeguards where one of the co-chairs is an IP/ ethnic minority (EM) representative. One of the results from this early engagement process has been a sense of collective national ownership of REDD+ from various stakeholders, particularly, the EM. This dynamic should be strengthened further, especially as Myanmar prepares to enhance its national capacity to implement REDD+. The collaboration also contributes to Outcome 1, Output 1.1 of the UN-REDD Programmatic Support Programme Document: Strengthened stakeholder representation and consultation.

The preparatory meeting was rich with very frank discussions and debates among the 34 EM participants regarding pros and cons of their relationship with REDD+, particularly engagement with a government grappling with democracy and an on-going peace process, and the implications to their customary laws and practices. The ensuing dialogue with the alternate national REDD+ focal point from Forest Department, Dr Thaug Naing Oo, provided the motivation for participants to decide how they will organise themselves, and how they will be represented. There was consensus to form a Working Group (WG) on REDD+ and Forest under the recently established national EM forum. However, POINT and other related networks will conduct a scoping study before forming the WG. The events were organised by POINT, an EM organisation who is a network partner of AIPP.

9.a Main Findings

National Preparatory Meeting of EM, 29 April to 1 May

- a. AIPP, through a SIDA-funded project, had provided support to POINT for awareness-raising on REDD+ throughout the country. However, only a handful of those participants were able to attend the meeting. Therefore, the expectation for a more in-depth discussion regarding EM's strategic involvement in REDD+ processes did not materialise and a lot more time had to be allocated to bring participants up to speed with what REDD+ is.
- b. Distinct difference in intergenerational perception regarding the possibility that REDD+ will eventually be implemented successfully under an uncertain political climate. The older generation, having lived through the military rule, demonstrated a great deal of mistrust towards any initiative that is even vaguely related to the government. In contrast, the younger generation was more open, albeit cautious, and more willing to engage.
- c. Grappling with what it means to be 'indigenous' and how it should be defined. This exchange is taking place against a background of on-going peace talks between the government and armed groups, as well as the first census in the last 37

years. Objections were also raised to how the sub-ethnic groups have been categorised under the 8 major groups that were used for the census, e.g., the Nagas as a sub-group under the Chins.

- d. A related EM Rights Protection Bill is perceived by the EM as more of a tool for cultural preservation as opposed to preserving or enhancing customary laws, practices and rights.
- e. Uncertainty regarding how their customary laws and practices will be impacted by REDD+, especially the practice of shifting cultivation. There was agreement that not all shifting cultivation practices can be broadly labelled as 'sustainable', as there are practices in some regions that are clearly not. In order to make a justifiable case for shifting cultivation, participants were strongly encouraged to start documenting their practices. Additionally, participants should find out what the current policies related to shifting cultivation are.
- f. In relation to the above, there were also clear calls for emerging policy options to look into alternative livelihood options, food security, clarity over land tenure rights, and benefit sharing mechanisms.
- g. Armed conflict was seen as a major impediment to the potential success of REDD+ as these are the areas with high forest cover. No clear or immediate solutions could be identified.
- h. While there is still a general sense of mistrust towards the government, participants agreed that REDD+ provides a good entry point for their full and effective participation.

#### Dialogue of EM on REDD+, 2 May

- a. High expression of interest to participate in the REDD+ process, but impaired by the lack of knowledge and capacity to engage more constructively in the dialogue, resulting in some frustration among participants.
- b. However, participants were encouraged by Dr Thaug Naing Oo's willingness to engage and share developments in the current national REDD+ process.
- c. Based on discussions from the preparatory meeting, the participants requested that
  - EM representatives be part of the drivers for deforestation and forest degradation study, especially in relation to shifting cultivation and its relationship to broader aspects beyond burning at the initial stage, e.g., its relation to biodiversity, livelihood and food security. Emphasis should be on the holistic benefits of shifting cultivation as opposed to the initial slash-and-burn practices;
  - Each TWG allocate a space for EM representatives;
  - Information, educational and communication materials to be translated to indigenous languages, especially in pilot or demonstration areas.
  - Establish an independent grievance redress mechanism in relation to deforestation and forest degradation and its impact on EM.
- d. Post-dialogue, the participants decided to
  - Form a WG on REDD+ and Forest under the national EM Forum, and develop a clear action plan for engagement;
  - Nominate POINT to collaborate with other networks and conduct a scoping study to identify *who* should be or is willing to be in the WG, and *what* information is needed;
  - Ensure more information is shared with EM communities in pilot areas.

#### *9.c Results achieved (key outputs)*

- Recommendations to strengthen full and effective participation of EM in REDD+ received
- Strategies to create mechanisms for better IP representation discussed internally among the EM.

#### *9.d Expected outcomes and impacts*

- EM participation strengthened through awareness raising and dialogue to contribute to national REDD+ process.
- Stronger EM representation at national and sub-national levels.

#### 10. Key counterparts

- National IP organisation – Myo Ko Ko and Naw Ei Ei Min, POINT (Myanmar)
- Regional IP organisation – Joan Carling and Lakpa Nuri Sherpa, AIPP (Thailand)

#### 11. Follow up action matrix

Action to be taken	By whom	Expected completion date
Share recommendations and steps forward with CO	Celina	After mission
Prepare report of preparatory meeting and dialogue	POINT, AIPP	End of Q2, early Q3

#### 12. Distribution list

UNDP UN-REDD, UNDP CO