UNDP Programme Narrative in 2016-2017:
Promoting Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in Myanmar

1. Executive Summary

Building on lessons learned in the first half of the country programme cycle (2013-2017), this document lays out how UNDP will strengthen contributions to the programme's goal to support poverty reduction and sustainable development, by implementing the recommendations of the mid-term review of the programme and responding to the evolving political and development context in 2016-2017. Myanmar stands at a historically important juncture with the conclusion of the recent Parliamentary Elections, the victory of the opposition National League for Democracy and the ongoing political transition.

UNDP's Myanmar's programme goal as stated in the Country Programme Action Plan is *"to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development that are right-based, gender sensitive, inclusive and equitable by strengthening institutional capacity of national and local governments and non-state actors."* This goal is to be achieved through three pillars and outputs. The three pillars are Local Governance and Local Development, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction, and Democratic Governance.

The purpose of this narrative is to address recommendations emanating from the Mid Term Review that UNDP Myanmar should strengthen inter-linkages between pillars, between national and local level work and between institutions and communities. It also provides a mechanism for UNDP Myanmar to more effectively tell its story. The narrative aims to complement and not replace our Results and Resources Framework.

To this end, UNDP Myanmar's programme narrative will pursue a thematic focus which will serve to help UNDP work more coherently across our pillars and output structure, focus on our areas of comparative advantage, and help to maximise our impact. The four themes are at the nexus of Myanmar's anticipated development needs in 2016-2017 and UNDP's comparative advantages. The themes will not replace pillars and outputs but serve to strengthen linkages, and coherence across them. The themes may be summarized as follows:

- Men, women and civil society are empowered to understand and advocate for rights and public services which respond to their needs;
- Community strength and resilience to deal with local economic, disaster and conflict shocks, and environmental degradation;
- Communities and institutions are able to better resolve conflicts, bridge differences and build trust;
- Key government and public institutions have processes, laws and systems that are better able to reflect and respond to the needs of poor and vulnerable people.

UNDP Myanmar's key comparative advantage is the unparalleled spread of partnerships across Myanmar institutions: vertically from the Union level down to the community; and horizontally across the different branches of the state and with non-state actors. This enables UNDP to link policy agendas with institutions and actors; to facilitate engagement on sensitive issues between state and non-state actors; to support scaling of locally driven solutions into higher level policy agendas and to ensure that higher level solutions are better informed by local voices. We are able to use this advantage of having multiple entry points for engagement, to tackle and promote human rights through different lenses and different thematic issues linked to the core governance challenges that Myanmar faces.

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2. Purpose

This document addresses key recommendations identified during the mid-term programme, review, in particular the need for a stronger programme narrative and a stronger integration of the existing programme pillars and outputs in order to maximize impact. To this end, the programme narrative explains how UNDP's different programmatic inputs contribute to the achievement of the country programme's overarching objective of poverty reduction and sustainable development. It discusses the objectives of work in the context of ongoing changes, outlines how we will contribute to change in line with our comparative advantage areas, and concludes with a statement of assumptions and risks.

3. What are the changes that UNDP Myanmar wants to contribute to?

In recent years Myanmar's administration has pursued an agenda with stated aims to significantly increase economic growth, widen and deepen relationships with ASEAN and the international community, end armed conflict, and make measurable improvements to the lives and prospects of Myanmar's people. Over this time period, expectations for change amongst Myanmar's people have taken root, and many are demanding improved livelihoods, access to better services, and greater political inclusion. The expectations for change have recently been reinforced by the results of the nationwide elections and the overwhelming victory of the National League for Democracy.

However, Myanmar's institutions and people are struggling to overcome the legacy of an authoritarian past, and to make positive changes in Myanmar's governance. At the same time, poor resilience to economic shocks, conflict and disasters puts further at risk the possibility that gains in economic growth will translate into tangible development outcomes for Myanmar's poorest people in the long term. Despite recent progress in Myanmar's socio-economic development, the cost of disaster and economic loss due to disasters and climate change is still high for Myanmar.

UNDP wants to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in Myanmar by enhancing inclusive and responsive governance and the realization of rights- contributing towards a development agenda that improves the situation of Myanmar's poorest and most vulnerable, with economic growth that does not come at the expense of the realization of people's human rights and the sustainable use of natural resources. UNDP will contribute by continuing to enhance equality, accountability and participation in legislative and policy development, and in the formulation of development strategies and plans; and by continuing to support empowering people and communities to participate, to advocate for their rights, and to hold authorities to account.

Further, UNDP intends to build resilience of communities to economic shocks, climate change impact, disasters, environmental degradation and conflict. As people, families, communities and groups, and public institutions come together to resolve these challenges, UNDP will further the building of social capital, that can both prevent future violence and help address the social exclusion that generates the conditions for poverty and conflict.

4. How will change happen?

This section describes one path for positive change, which can enable poverty reduction and sustainable development. However, Myanmar's future path is uncertain, and there are multiple scenarios for how the country might change moving ahead.

The current reforms have brought Myanmar on a path towards growth and achieving greater development gains. It is through promoting responsive governance, peacebuilding and the realization of human rights and gender equality, development gains will be felt by people across the country: the poorest individuals can be empowered to live with dignity and freedom, and be an active part of the future development of the country.

Positive changes will occur if changes to governance systems and processes happen at all levels of government- namely union, regional and local- and if proportional efforts are placed at empowering individuals and non-state actors including civil society to advocate and demand improvements. Within government, greater responsiveness, accountability and efficiency will occur through opening up of legislative development, planning and policy making processes; greater levels of awareness of needs and use of evidence in driving policies and strategies; better means of engaging with the people and resolving conflicts peacefully; and more responsive service delivery. Reciprocal efforts to improve men and women's

understanding of their rights, how these could be better met, and how they can advocate for change, will lead to improvements in governance, as well as the realisation of rights.

In Myanmar, positive changes towards improvements in governance and the realisation of human rights will likely be gradual and measured, taking into account constraints in the democratic transition and the peace building process. Good enough governance, e.g. electoral processes, gradually progressing towards greater representation in decision-making bodies at all levels, and increased access to information can help in expanding political inclusion. The empowerment of civil society, especially groups genuinely representing the poor and excluded, can help drive policies which enable the expansion of livelihoods; increased resilience to shocks through greater preparedness and financial inclusion; and improved realisation of rights.

At the union level, changes will happen when there is greater independence, mutual accountability and cooperation between the three branches of the state- the executive, the legislature and the judiciary- thereby ensuring the separation of powers whilst working together in the interests of the state and its people. These changes will happen through a number of different pathways. Firstly, through the full democratisation of the legislature and the executive through constitutional changes leading into a reduced role of the military. Secondly, through improvements in human resource and ethics systems to ensure that appointments to positions in both the judiciary and the civil service are made on the base of merit and that processes are open and transparent. At the regional/ state and local levels, changes to ensure that both the Regional/State Governments, the Regional and State Parliaments and ideally Township Administrations have their own staff which are accountable to them rather than the central government will help ensure that there is more effective service delivery at the regional/state and local levels. Finally, ensuring that sub-national governments are clear about their responsibilities, have systems and processes in place, and are adequately resourced to carry them out, is essential.

Stronger Parliaments at both the Union and Regional/ State level which have the capacities to call the executive to account will also strengthen the separation of powers and lead to more accountable horizontal governance. Changes will happen through Parliament having greater and more effective scrutiny over legislation, policies and executive actions. This can be achieved by having more robust and effective committees, including in particular the Bills Committee, the Public Accounts Committee and the Rule of Law and Tranquillity Committee. Parliaments are also an important venue for sustainably managing conflict.

Changes at the regional and local level will happen and be strongest if there is a robust decentralisation framework in place which goes beyond what is set out to date in the Constitution and other relevant legislation, and if there are the right systems and capacities to implement the changes that will allow this framework to be operationalised effectively. In particular, capacities need to be built up at the individual, organisational and systems level to allow a shift in the centre of gravity for service provision. Greater decentralised services

should lead to services which are both more efficient and responsive to community priorities. This also has the possibility of contributing to greater community cohesion.

Improvements in governance alone will not lead to sustainable and effective change without long-lasting peace in the country. Positive change will come from efforts to apply conflict sensitive approaches to prevent and identify early conflict, to bridge divisions between communities, ethnic groups and institutions and to build their ability to find mutually acceptable solutions to conflict. At the community level, positive change will happen through actions that help build up social cohesion and develop or reinforce a social contract. Conflict can be prevented through the development of mechanisms and skills that enable disputes to be resolved and redressed through non- violent means such as building up trust, promoting effective dialogue and putting in place functioning grievance and redress mechanisms. Higher political efforts to address key sources of conflict such as the environmental governance and the management of natural resources, and differences over the distribution of power between the centre of government and ethnic populations who demand a federal system and greater levels of autonomy and self-administration are also required. In the non-government controlled areas separate systems of governance and service delivery have been set up. These cannot cease to exist overnight, thus positive change will also happen if consensus-building on convergence and gradual integration of governance systems, and trust-building, takes place.

Myanmar's development gains including poverty reduction, improvements in local governance etc. are at risk if impacts of disaster risks and climate change are not properly addressed. Myanmar is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts, landslides, fires and tsunamis. Myanmar has a risk index of 6.8, occupying globally the tenth position out of 191 countries, and the first within Asia Pacific[1]. The Global Adaptation Institute ranks Myanmar 167 out of 176 countries; a ranking which is as much a reflection of Myanmar's exposure to climate change as it is of the country's low capacity to manage climate risks.[2] During the last 10 years, Myanmar has experienced an increasing frequency and severity of disasters. Disaster risks are likely to be further exacerbated due to processes attributed to climate change and variability, mismanagement of natural resources and extractive industries, deforestation, and environmental degradation. In this context, Myanmar needs a much stronger ability to prepare for and deal with the consequences of disasters, invest in climate change adaptation and natural resource management. The poorest communities need to be involved in developing their own capacity to resist disaster since they have most to lose, and to give them a greater political stake in the community.

5. What is UNDP's Comparative Advantage in Myanmar

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[1] Index for Risk Management (INFORM)
[2] Global Adaptation Institute (2013), "Gain Index", http://index.gain.org/ranking

UNDP's past and current programming in Myanmar has positioned the organisation uniquely to promote change in areas of poverty reduction, sustainable development, and governance and human rights.

UNDP is the only implementing partner in Myanmar who has ongoing programming with all three branches of government, at all levels union level to village tract, as well as partnerships with civil society networks, rights-based groups and media in key states and regions. UNDP has proven ability to programme on and see change in sensitive areas such as the rule of law and social cohesion, and to engage at high political levels on issues pertinent to poverty reduction and human rights. UNDP has credibility as a neutral facilitator and has built a strategic niche in governance reforms. It has been entrusted by government to support high-level priorities in local governance, administrative reforms, development effectiveness, rule of law and parliament. UNDP retains strong field offices and community links in 8 states and regions, and is able to call upon and be a part of the resources of the wider UN, especially in terms of advocacy. As a member state organisation, with offices throughout the global South, UNDP is in a position to facilitate experience sharing and partnerships. As UNDP plays a facilitation and coordination role on development issues at the highest level (such as the UN Development Group, and as the secretariat for Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation), UNDP is in a position to play a coordination role in Myanmar, too.

UNDP's approach focuses on the sustainability of results through developing capacities at the individual, organizational and systems level, transfer of skills and transferring and exiting from activities when the time is right to allow public institutions and civil society actors to carry forward work when external assistance is no longer required. UNDP therefore ensures that there is adequate national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the continuation of development results and their benefits in the future.

Thus UNDP is in a stronger position than other partners to:

- Link up human rights-based policy agendas across institutions and sectors, and promote the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into planning and policy agendas.
- Support the transformation of local needs and locally driven solutions into higher level policy agendas.
- Support the piloting of union-led initiatives in multiple contexts, with the potential for comparative review and a sustainable national roll-out.
- As a trusted partner of both state and non-state stakeholders, facilitate engagement and dialogue, including on sensitive issues, from local level to union level.
- Offer a range of options for partners to address problems, which are appropriate to capacity and context, and enable stronger South-South cooperation.
- Build national ownership of development agendas, beyond government only, by bringing private sector, parliament, and civil society into development cooperation.
- Strengthen implementation of development cooperation in Myanmar by facilitating strong South-South partnerships and drawing on global experience and resources.

6. How will UNDP contribute to change?

UNDP will contribute to change by focusing on four interlinked themes which correspond to areas in which UNDP has comparative advantage, and by using both human right based and capacity development approaches. The interlinked themes provide a guiding narrative which will drive UNDP's activities and results- helping with prioritisation, and ensuring strong linkages and joint work across outputs and pillars- and complement rather than replace our Results and Resources Framework. Within each theme, there are multiple institutional partners.

The four themes are as follows:

- Men, women and civil society are empowered to understand and advocate for rights and public services which respond to their needs;
- Community strength and resilience to deal with local economic, disasters, conflict shocks, and environmental degradation;
- Communities and institutions are able to better resolve conflicts, bridge differences and build trust;
- Key government and public institutions have processes, laws and systems that are better able to reflect and respond to the needs of poor and vulnerable people.

UNDP will focus on human rights based principles which inform, guide and steer all our work and processes. These principles are; universality, inclusivity, participation and inclusion, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency. We will focus on specific civil/ political, economic, social and cultural and collective rights issues, including women's human rights, the right to fair trial and legal redress and environmental rights. Although we will not adopt the use of language referring to duty bearers and right holders, we will use these principles in designing our programme interventions.

UNDP defines capacity as the ability of individuals and organizations to perform their core functions, identify and solve problems, set own objectives and achieve them on a sustainable basis. UNDP will target capacities at the individual and the institutional levels, and at the systemic level to create an enabling environment for changes, building on internal knowledge and lessons on capacity development support in transition contexts.[3]

By working on themes which straddle across sectors and using human rights and capacity building approaches, UNDP will maximise its impact on improving governance and rights.

1: Men, women and civil society are empowered to understand and advocate for rights and public services which respond to their needs

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[3] UNDP, Practice Note on Capacity Development (2007) and other resources; UN Guidance for Effective Use and Development of National Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict (2013).

Theme 1 focuses on improving demand led governance processes by enabling and empowering Myanmar men and women to demand and advocate for their human rights, and to effectively participate in governance and sustainable development processes. UNDP will focus on increased participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) and communities in local decision making and planning, policy making and legislative processes, and support their advocacy through selected research and analysis at Union and sub-national levels. UNDP will work through civil society networks and relevant initiatives, including Rule of Law Centers, to empower men, women and CSOs to participate in these processes and claim their human rights.

UNDP is well positioned[4] to support Myanmar's public institutions to address priority concerns through demand-side civil society empowerment for social accountability and voice. Primarily, UNDP can inform CSOs and communities about opportunities to engage in local development issues. The issues of focus that have emerged are: improved rule of law and greater human rights awareness; ethnic minority participation in the UN collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD); addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); ethnic minority rights related to devolution of power/state level autonomy (see Theme 3); promoting the right to effective remedies; the right to information and participation in planning and budgeting processes including those for preparedness and risk reduction measures.

UNDP will use multiple avenues and existing partnerships to build capacity of civil society capacity, in particular strengthening women's participation and leadership, complement community development and social cohesion initiatives, and linking civil society in different ways to government actors and public institutions.

First, UNDP will continue to partner with and provide institutional capacity support to recently established state/region CSO associations to enable them to advocate for change. The focus is on leveraging their networking and civic representation strengths, e.g., engaging 'all communities within a community' in the space for civic dialogue, mobilizing collective voice for advocacy and social accountability, and multiplying rule of law training as well as CSO capacity development and rights awareness training provided by others, throughout the network. UNDP will connect these CSO networks with existing and emerging platforms for participatory and inclusive local development planning (e.g., village/township development support committees) and environmental governance and disaster risk reduction (e.g., DRR Youth Volunteer Network), access to justice (e.g., Rule of Law Centers) and peacebuilding (anticipated national political dialogue down to local level).

Second, UNDP will continue to strengthen citizen's capacity to understand and protect their human rights and to participate in local development and dispute resolution based on rule of law principles, protecting the rights of the most vulnerable. This is done through support to

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[4] UNDPs nationwide Local Governance mapping (2015) revealed several challenges in local governance that has served as an entry point for interventions, e.g. women's participation in local administrations, access to information and public services, lack of accountability, and lack of participation in local decision making.

the Rule of Law Centers to train local CSO leaders and lawyers, and find opportunities to link this to relevant training for public sector officials (including justice actors and informal/administrative justice decision-makers). UNDP will also connect the Centers with existing and emerging justice initiatives to meet broad needs for legal awareness raising, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution and other justice services. The work that UNDP has done so far in supporting clinical legal education, working with 18 universities throughout the country, will also allow academia to contribute to a culture of public empowerment and shared solutions to rights concerns. Through this work a cadre of leaders at local level will exist to enable people to understand and protect their rights and to participate in local development and dispute resolution based on rule of law principles, protecting the rights of the most vulnerable.

Third, UNDP will continue to strengthen women's participation and leadership in governance by working with female Village Tract/Ward Administrators (VTAs/WAs) and by providing institutional capacity support to the Federations of Self-Reliant Groups (SRGs) and their newly established *May Doe Kabar* National Network of Rural Women (31 existing groups across 8 States/Regions which UNDP assisted to federate to township and national level). At local level the federated SRGs will continue to develop their role as women-led, women-focused CSOs to increase rural women's engagement with local development and improvement of public services delivery through both traditional and innovative channels (e.g. community radio and social media). Training and networking support for women VTAs/WAs and federated SRG leaders will promote a grassroots pipeline for women's leadership in governance. The national level *May Doe Kabar* network will be supported to lead the expansion of rural women's empowerment through modeling the SRG concept. UNDP will also partner with UNFPA/others to support *May Doe Kabar* in developing coordinated community response to sexual and gender based violence (which they have identified as a priority stream of work), in mainstreaming gender concerns within the larger state/region CSO associations, and in connecting with legal aid and legal reform advocacy.

UNDP's partners under this output will consist of civil society organisations, media networks, interest groups such as trade unions and rights based groups such as women's groups as well as local administrations and justice sector actors.

2: Community strength and resilience to deal with local economic, disasters, conflict shocks, and environmental degradation

Theme 2 focuses on building resilience of communities to deal with the shocks and risks stemming from or precipitated by poverty, conflict, disaster, climate change and environmental degradation. UNDP's strategy for building resilience is based on the close correlation between human and natural disasters, climate change, poverty, development, and the environment, given Myanmar's protracted human conflict and its relatively high vulnerability to natural disasters as well as climate change impacts and environmental degradation.

During the recent years, UNDP's work in resilience has included both institutional-strengthening for environmental governance and disaster risk management including a number of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy and regulatory frameworks, community level capacity-development for disaster preparedness and response, early recovery assistance to disaster and conflict affected communities, and livelihoods support to high-poverty and conflict-affected areas.

Under this theme, first, UNDP will continue its support to creating an enabling environment for community resilience, specifically through continued support to policy formulation and policy implementation, including for example, on climate change mitigation through emissions reduction, preservation of eco-systems in Protected Areas and Disaster Risk Management (DRM). UNDP will continue and step-up its efforts to mainstream conflict sensitivity, environmental conservation, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development and poverty eradication policies and programmes. This strand of work will be go in tandem with UNDP's support to strengthening institutional responsiveness and accountability (theme 4).

Second, UNDP will continue its efforts to strengthen institutional capacities for resilience. For example, support to the establishment and institutionalization of a Myanmar Disaster Loss and Damage Database, support to the formulation and facilitation of national and sub-national conflict and disaster risk assessments and planning exercises, support to the coordination of early recovery efforts in disaster and conflict contexts, will contribute to ensuring that institutional mechanisms are in place for both prevention as well as early response.

Third, UNDP will directly support communities to build resilience, providing them with both the opportunities and the capacities to prevent, mitigate and recover from or overcome disaster, conflict, and poverty shocks. This strand of work will bring a stronger coherence to UNDP's work at the community level, with more integrated support for early recovery, DRM and poverty eradication, and will be undertaken in geographic areas where these priorities best converge. UNDP's direct community assistance activities will focus on developing models and good practice for scale-up beyond the organization's own efforts and coverage. In support of disaster and conflict recovery, UNDP will help communities to increase income levels and diversify income sources, while more sustained support will focus on building assets, skills, value-chains and markets for sustainable livelihoods that are not reliant on external assistance. This will also include targeted support for traditionally vulnerable and excluded groups, specifically women in order to promote their active engagement in income-generating activities. Special focus is given to women to bridge the inequity gaps, given their frequent exclusion from formal employment sectors, limited access to skills development, credit and financial services, and weaker representation in decision-making.

Fourth, UNDP, in collaboration with UNCDF will promote access to finance, as financial inclusion has been recognize as an important tool to reduce poverty and increase resilience. To effectively do this first a base line of the state of financial inclusion was developed through

extensive research to develop the Making Access Possible (MAP) diagnostic. This laid the foundation for the development of the financial inclusion Roadmap, which was approved by the Myanmar government. To oversee the implementation of the Roadmap a high level Inter-ministerial committee was established. UNCDF and UNDP provide support and guidance to the secretariat as the Action plan and monitoring and evaluation framework are being finalized. UNDP and UNCDF will continued to ensure that a range of basic financial products (savings, credit, insurance, payment, remittances), but also innovative digital financial services are available to all segments of society, at a reasonable cost, and on a sustainable basis so people in all locations can benefit from economic growth.

Fifth, as an integral part of its support to disaster and conflict recovery efforts at community level, UNDP will provide support to communities to enable them to manage the difficult trade-offs between environmental conservation and maintenance of livelihoods, and to better mitigate the risks of disasters and the effects of climate change. This includes supporting the introduction of climate resilient crops and livestock production systems as mechanisms to mitigate the effects of climate change; supporting communities to be a part of management mechanisms for natural reserves and mixed use land; supporting infrastructure such as irrigation and storage systems; and incentivising communities to engage in environmental conservation projects. UNDP will work with communities to develop Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) plans linked with end-to-end early warning systems, and support their ability to engage with local administrations in the use of these plans.

UNDP's partners under this theme are Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of Border Affairs, Department for Rural Development, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group, Red Cross, UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN-Habitat, UN-OCHA, technical institutions such as Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, community based organisations and other community structures, civil society organisations, local private sector and financial institutions, as well as local administrations.

3: Divisions within and between conflict and violence affected communities and groups bridged

Theme 3 centres around strengthening peacebuilding and conflict resolution through an approach which focuses on bridging differences between communities, groups and institutions. The recently signed National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) between the Government of Myanmar and 8 Non state armed groups (NSAGs), and the broader political dialogue that is billed to follow, offers the best opportunity to resolve the country's ethno-political conflict. Official peacemaking continues to be supported by a number of civil society led peacebuilding initiatives, including those that bring together stakeholders at the local and community level, including civil society, community representatives, NSAGs, and local

governance institutions and state and region governments and parliaments that are usually not fully-engaged in higher level processes.

UNDP has engaged in social cohesion and peacebuilding activities at the community and sub-national levels, in the country's border states, where it has used livelihood assistance as an entry-point for strengthening community ties, developed capacities for social cohesion among sub-national stakeholders and developed capacity for dialogue across a broad range of actors including governance institutions at the local level and civil society groups. It has leveraged its comprehensive programme by bringing civil society networks into the dialogue. Strengthening women's leadership in social cohesion and peacebuilding has been a particular focus of this work, including through the use of UNDP's institutional link to NPEACE (a multi-country network of Asian peace activists) and South-South cooperation as tools for contributing to this area.

The political dialogue following the signing of the NCA will be more diverse in participation and scope. Newly legitimate state governments and parliaments will assert their influence on the process. The dialogue will address questions of devolution of powers, resource management, as well as the convergence of administrations in ethnic areas, and participation of ethnic representative in state institutions. The process will be more complex than the NCA negotiations and longer-term in nature.

UNDP will benefit from its credibility and the strong relationships it has built with all relevant actors, based on its track record of successful support for livelihoods at community level, for a more responsive government at township level, for a more capable and better organized civil society and a more representative parliament at state level. Hence, UNDP will work to strengthen peacebuilding and conflict resolution through an approach which focuses on bridging differences between communities, groups and institutions. This will be taken forward through four different entry points.

Firstly, UNDP will use its entry points at policy level to provide expertise and assistance on technical issues as they relate to the political dialogue and settlement. This will be in areas which UNDP is already working in such as decentralisation and the wider linkages to public administration reform or potentially, constitutional reform, an area of work which UNDP has a comparative global advantage and expertise.

Secondly, UNDP will focus on building capacity of institutions in direct contact with communities to equip them to resolve conflicts peacefully. A key part of this work will be on promotion of inclusivity and proper representation within institutions recognising both gender and the ethnic diversity of the country. Improving representation will better enable the administration to make policies and provide services that do not fuel divisions. Strengthened outreach by parliamentary committees at all levels will be key to ensuring that Parliaments are more representative, engage with communities and function as spaces for productive dialogue and debate. In areas coming out of conflict or affected by violence, UNDP will promote adequate representation in local and township level decision-making structures, and build the capacity of individuals to balance conflicting interests.

Thirdly, UNDP will use its convening power to foster township and state-level platforms that facilitate systematic dialogue between government, ethnic armed groups and other key stakeholders including state parliamentarians, private sector actors, civil society organisations and community groups in conflict affected areas. The dialogue will be facilitated on issues of common interest that could promote joint identification and problem-solving on conflict issues. Township-level dialogue will be piloted in townships of mixed administration. The results of these dialogues can be fed upwards into wider policy debates whilst relevant national/ union policy issues can be fed downwards and discussed in the state dialogues. The recommendations coming out of these dialogues can also be fed into the other themes ensuring that the peacebuilding work is linked in and is complimentary to other ongoing work on state-building and fostering community resilience.

The fourth area of work will focus on building competencies for conflict sensitivity, social cohesion, mediation and dialogue skills in institutions, which have the most interaction with communities, which are conflict affected, or where there are divisions. This includes the Ministry of Home Affairs- General Administration Department, the Myanmar Police, the Ministry of Border Affairs and staff from the Courts who play a key role in conflict and dispute resolution. UNDP will simultaneously use these capacity-development exercises to improve the interaction and trust between the institutions themselves.

Work under this theme, will be closely linked to UNDP work under theme 2 on community resilience recognizing the important inter-linkages between resilience, social cohesion and trust in building approaches to resolve differences and contribute to sustainable peace in conflict affected areas. Work under this theme will retain a particular gender focus, recognizing both the differential impacts of conflict and violence on all genders, and the continued under-representation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding in Myanmar.

UNDP's partners under this theme will consist of community based organisations and other community structures, civil society organisations, local administrations and law enforcement officers, Parliaments at State and Region and Union level, law enforcement and justice institutions at union level, and the President's Office.

4: Key government and public institutions have processes, laws and systems that are better able to reflect and respond to the needs of poor and vulnerable people

Theme four focuses on the capacity development of the executive, the legislative and the judicial branches of government in order to build trust and accountability between public institutions and the people. It builds an enabling environment for change, complementing work in Theme 1, by developing capacities within key public institutions to be more responsive, efficient, transparent and accountable to people's needs. It has a particular emphasis on better integrating the priorities of the poor and vulnerable into public sector decision-making, policy-making, and law-making. This stream of work is based on the assumption that making public institutions more responsive, transparent and accountable

will improve the quality of governance, quality of public services and equity in access to service delivery and to justice.

UNDP will continue to work with the legislature, judiciary, and executive institutions to develop and implement long term strategic policies and institutional plans which are more pro-poor, inclusive and participatory. UNDP will work with all branches to facilitate a change in the mindset and increased capacity of policy-makers and senior civil servants, enabling them to better develop and implement these visions, and have a more inclusive and participatory approach to policy-making. UNDP will work with them to strengthen how they gather and use data. This work will be carried out at Union and State/Region level.

In this context, will concentrate on four interlinked areas. First, UNDP will work across sectors through our partner institutions to improve evidence based policy and more responsive and accountable public policies. This will include work on improving data and research and how it is used to improve the content of policy, and systems to improve participation and transparency in policy making. It includes among others, strengthening, technical assistance to support the government in designing, and monitoring national policy frameworks related to key reform areas (e.g. national planning and development assistance frameworks, the National Environmental Policy, Strategic Framework, National Climate Change Policy, Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Framework for Administrative reforms, the Financial Inclusion Roadmap), and mainstreaming environmental conservation, climate change and disaster risk reduction in the development sectors. UNDP will also continue to support the government (both systems and capacities) to ensure that key laws such as the Regional and State Parliament Act, Environmental Conservation Law (2012), Disaster Management Law (2013) and subsequent rules and regulations, are further cascaded down and operationalized at the sub-national level.

Second, UNDP will support the development, clarification and implementation of public administration and decentralization policies, and build capacity to promote more effective and accountable service delivery. UNDP will provide technical assistance to Union and state/region executives to define union, state, region and lower level governance structures and accountability mechanisms that directly relate to improving the delivery and efficiency of basic public services. UNDP will support institutional performance management systems which will help achieve service delivery priorities and targets, and will continue to support initiatives that improve service delivery (such as the One Stop Shops) and strengthen monitoring and oversight mechanisms for service delivery. These include social accountability frameworks at the township level which will enable citizens to hold administrations to account. As part of this, UNDP will improve the capacities of civil servants through strengthened leadership skills and mindset change so they can better set and implement major policy decisions.

Third, UNDP will continue work on capacity development activities for the Union and state/region parliaments to ensure that the legislature is more responsive to the needs of the people. This includes support to the development of the Parliament's committee structures,

ensuring Parliaments are able to critically review draft legislation, are open to participation by the public and are able to hold the government to account by exercising oversight functions. Capacity development of key services including research and further development of the Union Parliament's Learning Centre will continue. At the region and state level the focus will be on networking and coordination among the 14 parliaments for reform and on strengthening the committees to act as channels for public participation, in particular of ethnic minorities, in the law-making and oversight processes.

Fourth, the capacity development of the judiciary will focus on a number of inter-related areas. UNDP will strengthen technical skills and knowledge of judges and justice sector officials in key areas such as international human rights law, legislative drafting and administrative law. Technical assistance will enable the best use of data and data systems to improve efficiency on the courts and justice sector institutions- such as through improved case management. UNDP will also support mechanisms and procedures that will improve public trust and accountability in the justice system. This includes building capacities on fair trails and ethics, and working with selected pilot courts to develop mechanisms to inform people about their procedures and laws in order to improve transparency and public engagement.

UNDP will continue to advocate and raise awareness around gender into public policies, laws and decision-making building on, and expanding its experiences, within, e.g. the justice sector by incorporating a strong gender emphasis, usage of sex aggregated data and technical assistance in drafting gender sensitive legislations. Further strengthening of leadership and organizational skills of female administrators and the national network of rural women, May Doe Kabar will also continue.

UNDP's partners under this thematic area are a number of Ministries and departments such as Ministry of Home Affairs and its General Administrations Department, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Parliaments, Legislative institutions, Union Civil Service Board, President's Office, Financial Services Institutions and civil society organizations.

7. What are our Assumptions and Risks?

There are several key assumptions underpinning this narrative, as well as related risks.

First, it is based on the assumption that there will continue to be sufficient commitment and momentum from decision makers within the Myanmar government, and the military and other power-brokers, towards meaningful change and democratic transition in Myanmar, and that there is space and mandate for UNDP to engage where positive commitment exists. Furthermore, it assumes that the issues covered under this programme are complemented by progress in other related areas to realize poverty reduction and sustainable development, especially with regards to the peace process and the protection of human rights.

There are several related risks associated with these assumptions: 1) a shift in reform priorities which reduces emphasis on the achievement of development and poverty reduction (or completely re-orients away from it); 2) closing space for international engagement in reforms, and in particular that UNDP's space for engagement on the constitution and peace process will close further; 3) significant deterioration in the peace process or in the protection of human rights across the country, undermining international and national commitments to support further reforms. These could follow on from a change in decision makers due to elections or other political events, changes in regional and global politics which mean there are no longer incentives to carry out difficult reforms, and rising military influence or a culture of impunity. Large scale political upheaval could threaten programme achievements in their entirety.

Key mitigation measures centre on ensuring a broad base for engagement within and across institutions and the public, encouraging continued interest and momentum for poverty reduction, sustainable development, and responsive governance, providing a strong evidence base for change, and communicating around UNDP's mandate. Whilst UNDP will not be in a position of influence when it comes to the place and role of the military and military-linked institutions and staff in Myanmar's decision-making bodies, and their role in addressing human rights abuses, UNDP will be able to promote advocacy and training in rights issues to military related institutions such as the Ministry of Home Affairs.

A second assumption is that enhancing good governance and human rights, building from the four key areas of empowering people, building community resilience, bridging divides, and strengthening institutions, is a key avenue for achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development. As there are multiple scenarios for how Myanmar will grow and develop moving forward, a risk is that poverty reduction gains will be had without improving governance or acknowledging rights of the poorest and most vulnerable- for example, through prioritisation of poverty reduction in certain areas, or only for rural Bamar. This impacts the sustainability of poverty reduction measures. Key mitigation measures for this risk include a continuing emphasis on rights and governance at all levels (as above), linked to national and international commitments and standards that the government has signed up to (including the Sustainable Development Goals).

Assumptions relating to continued funding and human resources, and continued active support from the development partner community also pertain to the achievement of the programme. Key risks are reductions in global funding for development/Myanmar, and reduced development partner engagement in democratic governance and human rights. Key mitigation measures are around communicating the achievements of UNDP's programme, ensuring adequate support from UNDP's headquarters towards fundraising, and building South-South partnerships.