



## Promoting Technology to support Food Security and Nutrition

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **Informal country level consultation for the 35th session of the FAO Asia and the Pacific regional conference (APRC) in Myanmar**
- **Restoring and protecting the agriculture livelihoods of vulnerable communities through disaster risk reduction**
- **Promoting good practices in climate change adaptation for Myanmar Fisheries Sector**
- **The global agriculture and food security programme in Myanmar: helping to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition**
- **Investing in food security: FAO introduces new technology for African swine fever detection**
- **Laying the foundations of an operationalization plan for a safeguard information system, SIS, for REDD+ in Myanmar**

### Dear Readers,

Welcome to Issue #1 of FAO Myanmar newsletter of 2020!

At the beginning of the new era, the world is facing a huge challenge when the COVID 19 outbreak becomes a global pandemic. To overcome the impact of this rapidly evolving situation together with other existing challenges, in 2020 FAO Myanmar must enhance due diligence and adopt a three-pronged approach to ensure the implementation of the Country Programming Framework (2017 – 2022): i) continuing programmatic approach bringing all available expertise from all project teams to work as ONE Country Team to maximize the technical capacity for greater impact; ii) repositioning ourselves strategically adopting “Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus” principles and concepts in programming and identify areas where nexus programmes are needed; and iii) being more creative and innovative in programming, resource mobilization and partnership building.

While efforts are being made to achieve the above goals, we also opened a country level consultations with national stakeholders informing priorities of Asia and the Pacific Region for realignment of FAO’s support with the government’s priority which is to be discussed at the 35th Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference.

Myanmar is a vulnerable country in climate change threatening to agriculture and food system. FAO led the development of the Agriculture Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (AAPDRR) and we remain committed to support its implementation.

In addition, FAO and the other UN-REDD partner agencies, in collaboration with the Myanmar Government, are providing technical assistance to advance the creation of the Safeguard Information System. Through the national climate change vulnerability assessment and the application of practices and technologies, FAO supports the development of the coping strategies with the holistic approach for climate change adaptation in fisheries sector. In 2020 continuous efforts will be made to simultaneously strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability and equity with focus on climate resilience, value chain, land administration and nutrition outcomes of the interventions.

At last, I would like to inform the FAO Representation Office has moved to UN House in Nay Pyi Taw, the country’s political capital, as of 1st January 2020.

Enjoy reading our Newsletter! Stay Safe, Stay Healthy!

Xiaojie Fan  
FAO Representative in Myanmar

## Informal country level consultation for the 35th session of the FAO Asia and the Pacific regional conference (APRC) in Myanmar

FAO Regional Conferences are an official forum where Ministers and high-ranking officials from FAO Member States come together and discuss the challenges to provide Safe and Sustain Food and Agriculture Systems in the region. FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific is convened every two years to seek guidance from member countries on FAO's programme of work in the region. The 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC 35) will be a unique regional conference because of the introduction of the innovation and digital technologies that aim to improve food security and nutrition across the region. Besides, for the first time, FAO encourages member countries to hold pre-APRC country level consultations to engage the countries in APRC priorities consultation.

On 29 January 2020, the FAO Representation organized the informal country level consultation for the APRC 35 in Nay Pyi Taw, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI). The consultation brought together around 30 representatives from the government and non-government institutions, academia and FAO seeking for their inputs and comments to the priority areas for Asia and the Pacific Region related to state of food and agriculture, water scarcity, building sustainable and resilient food systems. "This is my first time to attend a consultation at country level to discuss regional priorities, and it is a good opportunity for us to provide country's inputs to the priority areas to be discussed at the APRC", said Dr Thanda Kyi, Deputy Director General of the Department of Planning, MoALI in her opening remarks.



Country level consultation for the APRC 35 in Nay Pyi Taw on 29 January 2020

Ms Xiaojie Fan, FAO Representative in Myanmar, highlighted the importance of country leadership and ownership during this consultation process as well as the implementation of the selected priorities. Proper alignment with national priorities will ensure the achievement of the regional strategic framework areas.

Ms Fan also presented the FAO Director General's Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) - a flagship initiative aiming to eradicate poverty (SDG1), end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms (SDG2) by accelerating agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development. She assured FAO's commitment in supporting Myanmar during the planning and implementation of the important Initiative.

The outcome of this meeting will be highly crucial for both the country and the region calling for joint efforts to discover the issues and challenges and to discuss how to leverage the partnership with the stakeholders for food security and nutrition.



Group discussion of participants in the APRC 35 Consultation Meeting

## Restoring and protecting the agriculture livelihoods of vulnerable communities through disaster risk reduction

Myanmar is prone to natural disasters and ranks among the top three countries most affected by weather related events which have led to massive displacement of people and the destruction of livelihoods, crops and other food sources. The country faces a great challenge to anticipate, prevent and cope with the increasing exposure to the high-risk. In order to support for addressing the challenges, FAO Myanmar led the development of Agriculture Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (AAPDRR) in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) and other concerned Ministries. FAO also committed to supporting the implementation of AAPDRR together with other development partners.

From 13 to 14 February 2020, FAO organized a workshop for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Sittwe, Rakhine State and DRR officials met to map priority hazards for Impact-Based Forecasting (IBF) and Early Warning (EW) intended to reduce the impact of disasters and risks to agriculture and food security in Rakhine State.



Group discussion of participants in the Early Warning and Early Action (EWEA) Workshop held from February 13 – 14, 2020 in Sittwe, Rakhine State

The workshop was organized under the framework of the European Union-funded Food and Nutrition Security Project, which aims to restore and protect the agriculture livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships in Rakhine State. The participants were DRR officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI), the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), the General Administration Department (GAD), the Department of Disaster Management (DDM), the Fire Services Department (FSD), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Convened in partnership with the MOALI, the workshop provided an opportunity for DRR officials to map hazard priorities to support State and community level EW systems (EWS), and to improve timeliness of quality food security information for better decision-making and activation of response mechanisms.

U Theik Soe, Rakhine State Director of the Department of Agriculture, underscored the importance of strengthened linkages between union- and state-level structures, which would go a long way to support actions to reduce the impact of disasters, in his keynote address. “We have a role to play in ensuring that forecasting information is made available to support the agriculture sector in our Rakhine State,” he added. The Director showed his enthusiasm by sharing his time and contributing suggestions and comments on group discussion during the whole workshop time.

The participants deliberated on priority hazards and sectors for Rakhine State during the workshop. Furthermore, mapped on the existing EWS in Rakhine State and key stakeholders that need to engage at various levels for higher impact and influence. Also, the gaps and challenges in the functioning of Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) were highlighted from diverse perspectives.

The Food and Nutrition Security Project in Rakhine State is anchored in the objectives of the Global Network Against Food Crises, which aims to develop data-informed and

evidence-based approaches; build capacities and provide knowledge to effectively prevent, prepare for, and respond to food crises; and ultimately contribute to longer-term recovery, development, and resilience-building efforts.

## Promoting good practices in climate change adaptation for Myanmar Fisheries Sector

Myanmar is highly vulnerable to climate change: according to global climate risk index 2019, Myanmar is ranked the 3rd most vulnerable country in the world. This is a serious threat to Myanmar’s sustainable development, particularly Myanmar Fisheries Sector, to which a country largely depends on fish and aquatic products for its food and nutrition security and economy. Lives are already vulnerable in many fishery-dependent communities because of poverty, and the broader threat posed by climate change to development and food security is increasing. To help people out of poverty and to prevent from descending further into it, communities need to have a better understanding on how to identify their own vulnerabilities. This will require the development of climate change adaptation practices, as well as disaster risk management and preparedness.

In order to address these challenges in Myanmar, FAO is implementing the GEF – funded FishAdapt Project, together with MOALI – DOF (Department of Fisheries), with the aim to enable inland and coastal fishery and aquaculture stakeholders to adapt to climate change by understanding and reducing vulnerabilities, piloting new practices and technologies, and sharing information.



Coordinating exercise for UAV Mapping with Department of Fisheries

Through this project, a national Climate Change vulnerability assessment is carried out in Yangon Region, Ayeyarwaddy Region and Rakhine State to identify the vulnerabilities of the communities to the impacts of climate change. This foundation work is crucial for setting the project on the path to develop the community – based integration plan of actions. Capacity development is the heart of the project and the project facilitates the forming of the implementing units in which each is composed of the

members from, institutional partners, mainly Department of Fisheries and the implementing partners, local NGOs. These units are trained to create the synergy and to achieve the goal of scaling up adaptation practices at the community level.



FishAdapt Project working together with the communities for vulnerability assessment

FishAdapt project harnesses the coping strategies with the holistic approach for climate change adaptation. Effective fisheries management has always been a challenge and the project also provides support on organizing fisheries and aquaculture management units to ensure the continued productivity of the resources by allowing the villagers to identify the issues and to find solutions themselves for EAFM/EAAM plans.

These form the basis for interventions ensuring community engagement into integrated plan of actions and offer a far greater chance of developing sustainable management plans by balancing ecological and human well-being through good governance.

U Zaw Min Naing (DOF Township Officer, Toungup, Rakhine State) said, 'The technical assistance and the trainings provided by FishAdapt project are really essential and effective for DOF staffs. It encourages us to harmonize with the fishers and fish – farmers to bring changes and make a difference in the communities when promoting good practices in climate change adaptation and fisheries management'.

FAO will continue its support not only to enhance the adaptive capacity of the fishing communities and the stakeholders but also to find a common solution together with our partners. Environmental sustainability will be ensured through positive impacts of the introduced climate change adaptation plans, fisheries management plans, technologies and approaches on a range of ecosystem services, which will be developed in local community user areas and in the longer term on larger areas through upscaling of best practices.

## The global agriculture and food security programme in Myanmar: helping to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition

### What is the GAFSP programme?

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) in Myanmar is a six-year program working together with the government to improve income, food and nutrition security. The project's approach is to simultaneously strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability and equity with focus on climate resilience, value chain and nutrition outcomes of the interventions targeted at small producers, brokers, traders and processors.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) are implementing GAFSP to create an enabling environment that reduces the incidence of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition among the rural poor. The program aims to contribute to improving income, food and nutrition security in the central dry zone (CDZ) of Myanmar covering Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway Regions.



Group discussion of participants in the project kick-off meeting in Mandalay

Approximately 25% of the population in the CDZ is under the national poverty line, and 50% are landless. The regions are exposed to high incidence of malnutrition and food insecurity resulting in high-level negative impacts such as stunting, wasting, anemia and other related morbidities due to the prevalence of basic, underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition.

### What are the challenges of promoting good agricultural practices?

The FAO's analysis of challenges to promoting good agricultural practices (GAPs) among farmers in the Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing Regions shows a myriad of factors that need to be addressed. For example, less awareness of farmers about modern and efficient crop production technologies, mounting water scarcity, uneven rainfalls, limited supplementary irrigation sources, poor irrigation infrastructure, low market return from crops

grown according to GAP standards, less incentivized GAP protocols, high incidence of insect pests and diseases and less efficient and poor quality inputs, which affects effective adoption of GAP by the farmers.



Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) with GAP crop farmers in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region

### What are the barriers to improving nutrition?

Thus far, the FAO's analysis of barriers to improving nutrition in the CDZ regions shows that low income, limited knowledge of optimal nutrition practices, less focus on nutrition sensitive agriculture, limited time availability for preparation of diverse and nutritious food and the influence of grandmothers, mothers and mothers-in-law are factors affecting the dietary diversity of women aged 15-49 years, PLW (Pregnant and Lactating Women) and young children aged 6-23 months. The situation has led to high prevalence of undernutrition in the targeted Regions. According to Myanmar Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey 2017-18, 23% of children under five years are suffering from stunting while the prevalence of anemia is 47% in pregnant, 33% among lactating women and 30% in women of reproductive age (15-49 years).



Nutrition situational analysis in Khat Lan Village, Natogyi Township

### What are the M&E training needs of regional partners?

Creating synergies and strengthening partnership is an important project mandate to support the MoALI in monitoring & evaluation (M&E) at the union, regional and township levels. An analysis of the existing M&E system at the regional level conducted by the FAO and partners shows significant gaps in terms of limited M&E expertise, scarcity of M&E staff, less efficient data management

systems, low level of M&E institutionalization and lack of sustainability measures in M&E systems.

## Investing in food security: FAO introduces new technology for African swine fever detection

African swine fever (ASF) is one of the most devastating diseases affecting pigs. The only way to control ASF is to reduce the virus load through strict farm and vehicle biosecurity, eliminate affected pig populations, and strictly regulate the transportation of animals and pork products from affected places.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working to support the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) of the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) to control ASF and to mitigate ASF its impact in Myanmar. Wherever it has occurred, ASF has had massive effects on pig production, livelihoods that depend on livestock, and food security. In response, the FAO provided ASF emergency supplies to support the LBVD. These include disinfectant, sprayers, personal protective equipment (PPE), and laboratory diagnostic supplies.

In August 2019, Myanmar's first outbreak occurred in Shan State, near the international border. A total of five ASF outbreaks were reported in Shan State. In March 2020, the first outbreak in Kachin State was reported, again, near the international border.

A key element of control is early ASF diagnosis. To confirm a diagnosis, LBVD field officers send samples to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories (VDL) in Mandalay or Yangon. To enable an accurate diagnosis away from the laboratory, the FAO provided novel technology in the form of the portable polymerase chain reaction (PCR) diagnostic system equipment and reagents.

As follow-up support, in February 2020, Research Officers from Lashio, Taunggyi, Kengtung, Muse, Myitkyina,



Dr Ken Inui, International laboratory specialist, conducts training on the use of portable PCR at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) in Mandalay

Myawaddy and Patheingyi veterinary laboratories participated in the training held in Mandalay and Yangon covering key aspects on how to use the portable PCR diagnostic tool.

Field testing exercises with hand-held portable PCR units were also carried out in Mandalay and Yangon. According to the participants, the introduction of the portable PCR will contribute to controlling the spread of ASF in Myanmar because the new technology allows for quick diagnosis within an hour instead of four hours by the usual real-time PCR method. There is a time-saving advantage for disease control and results can be obtained in the field, without transporting samples to the nearest lab.



FAO strengthens regional institutional capacity of the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD)

Early detection and accurate diagnosis of ASF, a disease that affects pigs, is considered critical because there is no vaccine or treatment and over 99% of infected animals die.

Besides the training, the FAO Animal Health (ECTAD) team met with senior LBVD officers in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss the PCR-related policy and potential application of portable PCR in ASF virus monitoring for ASF control in Myanmar.

FAO supports the government of Myanmar to improve animal health to make livestock production more productive and sustainable.

## Laying the foundations of an operationalization plan for a safeguard information system, SIS, for REDD+ in Myanmar

The Cancun safeguards are measures that have been agreed upon to manage the likely threats and dangers associated with reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Monitored through a Safeguards Information System (SIS), the framework complements the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD), whose goal is to reduce forest emissions and enhance carbon

stocks in forests while contributing to sustainable development.

The Myanmar Government is forging ahead to reduce forest emissions while addressing associated negative impacts that may affect the development of communities. In this regard, as a signatory and ratifier of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, the government has developed its approach to the safeguards and is moving towards the operationalization of the SIS.

The SIS was recently discussed at a two-day workshop in which representatives from government and civil society organizations met to discuss priorities, actions, and resources required for Myanmar to operationalize REDD+ and SIS.

The workshop, which was held from February 27 to 28, 2020, in Nay Pyi Taw, forms part of FAO's support to the government of Myanmar, which seeks to make agriculture, forestry, and fisheries more productive and sustainable.

The Director of the Forest Research Institute, Dr Thauang Naing Oo, opened the workshop, in which more than 30 participants deliberated on the draft SIS plan. Specifically, the participants examined gaps in existing information systems, institutional capacity needs, and performance measurement systems.



Participants of the Operationalization for the Safeguards Information System Workshop held from February 27 to 28, 2020 in Nay Pyi Taw

The successful implementation of SIS brings additional benefits, such as access to funds that are employed to help ongoing efforts to support sustainable management and use of forests.

To date, the Myanmar government has developed a draft National REDD+ strategy and submitted a Forest Reference (Emission) Level to the UNFCCC.

Also, the government is in the process of establishing a National Forest Monitoring System. It is expected to submit its first safeguards summary of information to the UNFCCC, demonstrating that Myanmar is well on its way to meeting some REDD+ requirements.

The finalization of the SIS operationalization plan is expected to guide the further establishment of Myanmar's SIS. Myanmar's REDD+ work is led by the Forest Department in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

- For more information about our work on safeguards in Myanmar and other countries, we encourage you to visit our UN-REDD Programme website Safeguards Hub.
- For more information about our work on REDD+ in Myanmar, we encourage you to visit the following information portals: [www.myanmar-redd.org](http://www.myanmar-redd.org) and REDD+ Programme on Facebook.

### Reflection from FAO Myanmar Team



Mr Jose Russell Herrera , Project Coordinator

I joined the FAO Emergency response program as Project Coordinator for the project "Improving food security and nutrition in Rakhine State" based in Sittwe, Rakhine State. The project seeks to increase the resilience of livelihoods to natural hazards and conflicts. Specifically, the aim of the European Union (EU) funded project is to restore and protect agriculture livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships in Rakhine State. Having worked in Rakhine State for the past three years with other organizations, I understand the challenges of working in a challenging and still evolving protracted armed conflict in Rakhine State. I do believe the project would help in further enhance community resiliency, and through partnerships, we can all contribute to improving the livelihoods and overall development of the communities. Working hand and hand with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation further add value to this project to ensure activities are supported and in-line with the trust of the government.

## Guidance note for Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) for UN personnel and dependents in Myanmar

**နာခေါင်းစည်းကို ဘယ်အချိန်မှာ အသုံးပြုကြမလဲ**

ဝ ဝက်လက်ဆေးရန် ဝက်လက်ဆေးရန် (သို့) ဆက်ပြော ချော့နှိပ်ရန်

၂ သင်္ဘောကိုင် ဝက်လက်ဆေးရန် (သို့) နာခေါင်းစည်းကို ဝက်လက်ဆေးရန်

၃ အချော့ပြန်ပါက လက်ဆေးရန် (သို့) ဆက်ပြော ချော့နှိပ်ရန်

၄ နာခေါင်းစည်းကို အသုံးပြုရန် (သို့) လက်ဆေးရန်

**နာခေါင်းစည်းကို ဘယ်လို တပ်ဆင်ရမလဲ၊ သုံးရမလဲ၊ ချွတ်ရမလဲနှင့် စွန့်ပစ်ရမလဲ**

၅ နာခေါင်းစည်းကို တပ်ဆင်ရန် (သို့) ဆက်ပြော ချော့နှိပ်ရန်

၆ နာခေါင်းစည်းကို အသုံးပြုရန် (သို့) လက်ဆေးရန်

၇ နာခေါင်းစည်းကို အသုံးပြုရန် (သို့) လက်ဆေးရန်

၈ နာခေါင်းစည်းကို အသုံးပြုရန် (သို့) လက်ဆေးရန်

**Corona ဝိုင်းရပ်စ်ကို ကူးစက်ခြင်းအန္တရာယ်မှ လျော့နည်းစေရန် နည်းလမ်းများ**

၉ အချော့ပြန်ပါက လက်ဆေးရန် (သို့) ဆက်ပြော ချော့နှိပ်ရန်

၁၀ သင်္ဘောကိုင် ဝက်လက်ဆေးရန် (သို့) နာခေါင်းစည်းကို ဝက်လက်ဆေးရန်

၁၁ နာခေါင်းစည်းကို အသုံးပြုရန် (သို့) လက်ဆေးရန်



**Contact information:**  
 FAO Representation in Myanmar  
 United Nations Building, No. 20-25 Kyine Tone Street  
 Zawana Theidi Quarter, Oattara Thiri Township  
 Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar  
[FAO-MM@fao.org](mailto:FAO-MM@fao.org)  
<http://www.fao.org/myanmar/en>