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Message from FAO Representative

Welcome to the last FAO Myanmar newsletter of 2018!

During the year 2018, FAO Myanmar achieved significant milestones in the sectors in which it has been working. In addition, the new Country Programming Framework (CPF 2017-2022) representing FAO's strategy of intervention in Myanmar for the coming years, was officially endorsed by the Cabinet on behalf of the Government of Myanmar in October.

In 2018, FAO continued to provide support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) through specialized technical assistance to the development and establishment of the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS). This was an important achievement for the agriculture sector.

Moreover, with FAO's technical and financial support, MoALI accomplished the development of the Agriculture Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (AAPDRR). It is also worthwhile mentioning that FAO collaborated with MoALI and MoNREC in establishing the first Climate Smart Agriculture Centre (CSAC) as the national CSA knowledge repository and catalyst. The latter should help farming and forestry stakeholders in building capacity to mitigate climate change and improve land condition.

In addition, FAO played a critical role in the development of Multi-Sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN). This vital multi-stakeholder collaboration will promote healthier and more productive lives that contribute to the overall economic and social aspirations of the country. Following MoALI's request, FAO and World Food Programme undertook a Food Security Field Assessment Mission in Rakhine State in May this year with constructive recommendations for future agriculture and livelihood development in Rakhine.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our Government counterparts, donors, development and humanitarian partners, for joining hands and allowing accomplishing important steps towards progressing in FAO's objectives of reducing rural poverty, helping eliminating hunger and making agriculture more productive and sustainable in Myanmar.

I wish you all a happy holiday season and peaceful and prosperous 2019.

Enjoy reading our Newsletter!



Xiaojie Fan
FAO Representative in Myanmar



On 16th October, Myanmar joined the global celebrations to mark the World Food Day 2018 with a ceremony in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) in the capital city of Nay Pyi Taw. The World Food Day is observed every year to raise worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for the need to ensure food security and nutritious diets for all. This year the ceremony was focused on the theme "Our Actions are Our Future. A #ZeroHunger world by 2030 is possible".

The ceremony was honored by the presence of Vice President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar H.E. U Henry Van Thio. In his official speech H.E. Vice President praised FAO's continuous support to food security and to sustainable development in agriculture and rural development sectors in Myanmar and promised to strengthen the cooperation with FAO in the future. "We need to work with heart and soul in order to produce enough food to feed the world's

Celebrating the World Food Day 2018 in Myanmar



"We need to work with heart and soul in order to produce enough food to feed the world's increasing population [...]. In doing so, assistance of FAO, our Government's right decisions, effective implementations of departments and cooperation of the people are needed to work in harmony."

- Vice President H.E. U Henry Van Thio

increasing population [...]. In doing so, assistance of FAO, our Government's right decisions, effective implementations of departments and cooperation of the people are needed to work in harmony," H.E. mentioned at the event.

The Union Minister of MoALI H.E. Dr Aung Thu, expressed his sincere thanks to FAO during his speech and called for further assistance. H.E. stated that, "FAO has been celebrating World Food Day all over the world annually to highlight the importance of food and nutrition for world communities [...]. We are closely cooperating with international organizations and institutions including FAO and I truly believe that, in accordance with this year's theme, our actions will entirely benefit - our nation, our citizens and our generation to come by having access to plenty of safe and nutritious food."

About three hundred participants attended the ceremony, representing government agencies, UN agencies, donors, international organization, NGOs and CSOs.



(Left to Right) Assistant FAO Representative, three permanent secretaries from MoALI, Union Minister of MoALI, FAO Representative, DG of Department of Fisheries, DG (Rtd) of Department Planning, and DG of Department of Planning.

FAO Representative Ms Xiaojie Fan, delivered the message of FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva. At that occasion the participants also viewed the World Food Day 2018 video. The video conveyed the message about food insecurity and malnutrition situation around the world and the factors affecting negatively to this situation as well as shared how FAO has been working in agriculture and food security sectors in order to help people survive and thrive.



Vice President and Union Minister of MoALI visited FAO's stand and observed with interest the images of activities and publications.

At the event, FAO had three stands providing information on its different projects and support to Myanmar. H.E. Vice President visited FAO's stands and observed with interest the images of activities as well as the publications. FAO's stands gained much attention and interests from the participants and media. The event was widely covered in the broadcast and newspapers in Myanmar.



A journalist posed in front of the FAO's stands with the FAO Myanmar gadgets.

Responding effectively to animal disease outbreaks

During an animal disease outbreak, people are in danger of consuming infectious goods and farmers to believe rumors. Consequently, irrational behavior is often observed due to false information, fear and panic. This causes demand shortage and stagnated production and consumption. Eventually, the economy is interrupted by the market shock as the public concerns usually rise more than necessary. In order to prevent and respond to animal disease outbreaks with minimal social and economic losses, it is important to have an effective risk communication strategy.

According to the Myanmar National Risk Communication Strategy for Public Health Emergencies, risk communication is the act of information exchange between people who are at risk and is an integral part of any emergency response. In this context, the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Disease of FAO together with Risk Communication experts from the Warning Project, organized a workshop on risk communication on 27-29 November under the USAID-funded Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT-2) program. The objective of the workshop was for Myanmar's risk communication focal people to understand the scope of risk communication and how it can be developed for the different communities pre and post the animal disease outbreak. The workshop's group simulation exercises encouraged participants to share their experiences and walk them through the process of strategic communication between the stakeholders. The workshop focused on building risk communication strategy for participants to efficiently communicate with the targeted audience regarding the disease prevention and outbreak situations.

The Government officials and academic professionals from the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD), Department of Public Health (DOPH), University of Veterinary Science (UVS), Myanmar Livestock Federation (MLF) and Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee (NDC) participated in this three-day workshop in Nay Pyi Taw.

"What I like the most about this workshop is that we realize there is a difference between the information and the message. Through the individual and group exercises during the workshop,



we get to know the way of sharing messages effectively and accurately. In addition, we get to learn about the important Dos and Don'ts in communicating with different audiences including the communities and media people. This workshop teaches us how to conduct our regular duties more systematically, precisely and effectively." - Dr May Win Shwe, District Officer, Northern District Yangon Region

Promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture Techniques and Practices to farmers

Funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF), FAO is implementing a five-year project on “Sustainable cropland and forest management in priority agro-ecosystems of Myanmar” aiming to build the capacity of farming and forestry stakeholders to mitigate climate change and improve land condition, by adopting Climate-Smart Agriculture and Sustainable Forest Management policies and practices. The project is being implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI).

The project promotes relevant Climate-Smart Agricultural (CSA) techniques and practices through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) models in five pilot townships in Chin State (Upland/Hill Zone), Ayeyawady Region (Coastal/Delta Zone) and Mandalay Region (Central Dry Zone). The FFS, one of the core activities of the project, is a learning process whereby a group of farmers come together and engage in a hands-on field-based learning process over a season/production cycle. FFS is a time-bound learning-by-doing activity and aims to solve problems related to cultivating crops. At the end of each FFS i.e. before the harvesting, a Farmer Field Day is organized. There, the FFS farmers share the activities and achievements with local community members, government’s agricultural workers and concerned stakeholders.



Demonstrating the threshing of paddy from Demo Plot at a Farmer Field School (FFS) site in Labutta Township.

On the 21th of November, FAO team co-organized the Farmer Field Day with the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and AVSI Foundation in Sit Kwe Village, Labutta Township where a demonstration plot on System of Rice Intensification (SRI) together with other CSA techniques was established. More than a hundred community members and representatives from Government departments, Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC) and AVSI Foundation attended the event. During the celebration, practical demonstrations were presented by FFS Committee and DoA staff. Farmers were very impressed by the demonstration of CSA techniques and showed great interest and commitment to replicate in wider areas in the coming monsoon season. At the end of the successful FFD distribution of green gram seeds, rhizobium packets and air-tight bags for seed storage took place.

FAO has already established 71 FFS sites in the five pilot townships mentioned above, formed FFS Committees, distributed inputs, and organized four batches of trainings of trainers (TOT) on “CSA and FFS Establishment and Operationalization”.

Bridging humanitarian and development assistances for rural communities in northern Rakhine

Rakhine State is rich in natural resources, it has fertile soil as well as the favourable agro-ecological conditions. The primary source of livelihoods for the population of Rakhine State is crop production followed by livestock raising, casual labour and aquaculture.

The new FAO Country Programming Framework for Myanmar (2017-2022) sets as one of its priorities to enhance resilience of rural communities to natural and human disasters. In line with this priority, the European Commission (EC) funded project “Improvement of food and nutrition security of vulnerable population in Rakhine State” that will operate in northern and central areas of Rakhine State to restore and protect agriculture livelihoods of rural communities.

By supporting crop, livestock and aquaculture productions through the delivery of quality inputs and technical assistance, the project will also contribute to achieve the second pillar of Myanmar Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) related to “productivity”.



EC delegation shared its understanding on the conditions and needs of the farming communities in Northern Rakhine.



By supporting crop, livestock and aquaculture productions through the delivery of quality inputs and technical assistance, the project will increase food availability and access well beyond the project cycle.

Acting as a bridge between humanitarian and development assistance (humanitarian-development-peace nexus), the project aims at protecting and restoring agriculture livelihoods of vulnerable communities from recurrent natural disasters and protracted conflict. It will introduce climate and disaster resilient agriculture techniques and small-scale multi-purpose infrastructure following Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR) standards. It also aims to increase the availability and access of food as well as nutrition security of women and children, particularly pregnant and lactating women with children under two years of age.

In this context and to support the deployment of the project, the EC Delegation in Myanmar (DEVCO and ECHO staff) joined FAO in a field mission to three villages in Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships early December. The field mission was also the opportunity for FAO to share its understanding on the conditions and needs of the farming communities in Northern Rakhine.

Significant advances in designing and planning of a National Forest Inventory (NFI) in Myanmar

A prime source of information about the state of the forests globally is the National-scale Forest Inventories (NFIs) at country level. In this context, FAO since its foundation in 1945, is helping countries in establishing and improving national capacities in collecting data on forests and monitoring the changes over time. Currently, FAO works in around 45 countries, including Myanmar, supporting the development and upgrading of their National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS). The objective of this endeavor is to enable countries to produce robust forest information in order to provide updated and reliable data for sound forest policy planning and evaluation as well as sustainable land and forest use.

The NFMS includes satellite based land monitoring systems (SLMS) and NFIs. Both are also crucial to develop the data needed for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) in the context of Climate Change policies and strategies, including Greenhouse Gas Inventories, REDD+, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and other reporting needs.

Through the UN-REDD Programme in collaboration with Ministry of Natural Resource and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC), FAO is supporting the upgrading and improvement of national forest monitoring capacities and the development of a new NFI system. FAO's main role is to provide technical advice, training and support in applying cutting edge methodologies and tools for forest inventory and monitoring in compliance with international standards.



Around 100 participants from Forest Department Offices (MoNREC) and MoALI, botanical experts from universities, and other stakeholders joined the workshop.

As an important step for planning and designing of NFI as part of a wider National Forest Monitoring System in Myanmar, a two-day "NFI Methodology Workshop" was organized in Yangon on 10-11 December, presented by nearly 100 experts from government offices at Union, State and Region levels, Yangon and Mandalay Universities, INGO/NGOs, private sector and other organizations.

Throughout the presentations and knowledge and experience sharing sessions, the participants discussed the design and NFI sampling approaches and the proposed data collection methodologies, reviewed the NFI objectives and purposes, as well as discussed many practical and operational issues of measuring forests in Myanmar. The workshop recommendations and conclusions will be used for further NFI planning including the upcoming field training and testing of proposed methodologies.

Reflection from FAO Myanmar Team



"I joined FAO Myanmar in September as Chief Technical Advisor and Team Leader for "FishAdapt: Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Fisheries and Aquaculture dependent livelihoods in Myanmar". This four-year project is funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) and being jointly implemented by the Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI). I am sure that having the opportunity of coordinating the work of our highly professional team of experts and together with the support of all our partners, this challenging project will successfully achieve all and each of its goals for benefiting to the fishers and aqua farmer communities of Yangon, Rakhine and Ayeyarwady, by increasing their adaptive capacity to the climate change and reinforcing their resilience."

- Mr Jose Parajua, Chief Technical Advisor (FishAdapt Project)

Contact Us

FAO Representative in Myanmar

FAOR Building
Seed Division
Compound (DoA)
Insein Road, Gyogon
Yangon, Myanmar

Mailing Address:
PO Box 101, Yangon
Tel: +95 1 641672
Fax: +95 1 641561

FAO-MM@fao.org
www.fao.org/myanmar

Upcoming Events

- » Signing and Launching of Country Programming Framework (2017-2022)
- » Assistant Director General of FAO's visit to the FAO Representation in Myanmar
- » Community-level Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments for Fisheries and Aquaculture Communities
- » Final Workshop of the project "Strengthening Capacity of Forest Research Institute Myanmar"
- » MyCoast Project Consultation Workshop
- » Training on EAFM (Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management) and EAA (Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture)
- » Training on Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW)