



FAO Myanmar Newsletter

Message from FAO Representative



Ms. Xiaojie Fan presented the credentials to State Counsellor H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

I joined FAO Myanmar in September 2016 and since then, I have been working to enhance programmes and activities under FAO’s Mandate and the Organization’s major areas of expertise with the overall goal of defeating hunger and ensuring sustainable food and nutrition security.

It was with great honour, I presented the FAO Director-General’s credentials to the State Counsellor H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 13 October 2016. The State Counsellor, who has a good understanding of FAO’s work in Myanmar, emphasized the importance of national efforts leading to the development of the agriculture sector and enhancing national food and nutrition security. Specifically, she highlighted the importance of sustainable agricultural development for improving household food safety and nutrition, as well as the urgent need to increase knowledge about environmentally-sustainable agricultural practices among farmers.

Now in 2017, we are continuing our work to ensure effective implementation of projects

and initiatives that will contribute to livelihood improvement and economic development in Myanmar. Our recent work has focused on improving food safety and nutrition, on climate change adaptation and mitigation through sustainable forest management and climate-smart agriculture, in promoting awareness of secure tenure, maximizing returns from livestock, providing emergency response interventions and building resilience to threats and disasters.

The achievement of these tasks would not be possible without strong partnership with the Government, development and humanitarian partners, international and national stakeholders.

I look forward to the challenges ahead and to positive outcomes, and I am confident that we will have many stories to share in forthcoming issues of the FAO Myanmar Newsletter.

Xiaojie Fan
FAO Representative in Myanmar

Spotlight

- » Tackling climate change through sustainable forest management
- » Improving farmers’ incomes through strategic livestock raising
- » Promoting home and school gardens for better nutrition
- » Raising awareness on the importance of secure tenure through introducing VGGT
- » Strengthening the livelihoods of vulnerable populations across Rakhine State

FAO Strategic Objectives

- Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
- Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
- Reduce rural poverty
- Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
- Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

Tackling climate change through sustainable forest management

Climate change is a global threat that poses major risk to developing countries like Myanmar. It affects natural resources-based livelihoods including forest-dependent communities and requires comprehensive mitigation and adaptation actions. Sustainable forest management is one of the key mitigation options to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, as forests are natural carbon sinks that absorb GHGs from the atmosphere. However, despite the significant role that forests play in climate mitigation, Myanmar's forests are increasingly challenged by overexploitation, inconsistent cultivation techniques and illegal logging.

To address these challenges and enhance climate change mitigation, FAO has been cooperating with Myanmar Government and UN Partners (UNDP and UNEP) to improve forest management. In this regard, FAO supported the Government in the development of Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap that aimed at reducing forest carbon emission and enhancing sustainable management of forest carbon stocks.

Furthermore, FAO engaged with partners to organize a series of technical workshops and trainings throughout 2016, which resulted in the development of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and Forest Reference Emission Levels (FRELs) guidelines. These workshops also facilitated the effective engagement of all stakeholders and helped to improve a common understanding on deforestation and forest degradation drivers.

A milestone has been achieved along the road of combating climate change marked by the launch of the Myanmar National UN-REDD Programme in Nay Pyi Taw on 27th January 2017. The launching ceremony was chaired by Union Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation H.E. U Ohn Winn, who gave opening remarks followed by speeches from representatives of FAO and UNDP.

Improving farmers' incomes through strategic livestock raising

Households throughout the Central Dry Zone of Myanmar raise cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens, for cash income. However, the ability of farmers to maximize returns from livestock is limited by a shortage of knowledge on husbandry techniques, weak market linkages and the presence of endemic diseases.

The LIFT-funded FAO project "Improving Farmer Livelihoods in the Dry Zone through improved Livestock Health, Productivity and Marketing", being implemented in partnership with the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, addresses these challenges in the short-term by developing and delivering extension and service "packages" on health and husbandry to households, while at the same time developing the kind of policies that will guide and sustain the sector into the future. The project has achieved two major policy outcomes: a census of livestock ownership in all households – about 240 000 households – that has now been accepted as the model for a national livestock census in 2017-18.



H.E. U Ohn Winn Union Minister of MoNREC gave opening speech during the UN-REDD National Programme launching ceremony

With clear commitment and direction from different partners and stakeholders, FAO is moving ahead in supporting the government to develop Myanmar's Satellite Land Monitoring System and web GIS portal, design and pilot a multipurpose National Inventory System and undertake REDD+ analysis.

"The UN-REDD Programme will support the Government of Myanmar through joint partnership and close collaboration of UNDP, UNEP and FAO, in ensuring more sustainable management of the country's forests by strengthening the country's national forest monitoring system. The programme is important to help the forest sector in Myanmar take advantage of this opportunity for leadership, building on the collaborative approach of three UN agencies working jointly with government and civil society counterparts," said FAO Representative in Myanmar Ms Xiaojie Fan.



"The national livestock census will form the basis for decisions by the government and private sector on investment in the sector for years to come. This includes the provision of services, education and training in the sector, as well as investments in the domestic and export supply chains," explained FAO Chief Technical Advisor Dr Murray Maclean.

It also facilitated the development of a policy to enable official recognition of Community Animal Health Workers who provide front-line animal health services to smallholders throughout the country. Extension packages on goat raising and bull management are at the pilot stage while those on pigs, chickens, cattle breeding are being developed.

The project is being implemented in four townships of Mandalay Region and two townships of Magway Region.

Promoting home and school gardens for better nutrition



FAO Myanmar is committed to work towards reconciliation of agriculture and nutrition-related interventions, as agriculture and food systems are crucial for improving diets and contributing to a greater reduction in malnutrition.

To achieve these efforts and with the consideration that under nutrition is widespread among school children as their nutritional status often deteriorates during their school years, FAO has started implementation of the project “Promoting an Integrated Home Garden and School Garden Approach for Food and Nutrition Security in Myanmar” in the selected urban and peri-urban areas.

With the overall objective of improving food production and promoting access to nutrient-rich food for school children and their families, the project envisages to target 2 300 people with children and women as primary beneficiaries. Furthermore, it addresses immediate factors of under nutrition, among which inadequate food intake, poor caring practices and environmental conditions in urban and peri-urban areas.

Raising awareness on the importance of secure tenure through introducing VGGT

FAO conducted the Third National Workshop to Promote the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) in Nay Pyi Taw on 15-16 February 2017. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC), through financial support from the UK Department of International Development. It brought together around one hundred participants from government, civil society, farmer organizations, academia, and served as a forum to fostering the dialogue and common understanding among multi-stakeholders on the VGGT and its potential uses in Myanmar.

In 2012, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines to promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty to support sustainable development. Since then, the Voluntary Guidelines are the key accepted reference point, setting out

“The Voluntary Guidelines will play an important part in answering the challenge of ending hunger and assuring food security of child, woman and man in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way,” said FAO Director General Graziano Da Silva.

“In addition to Zero Hunger Challenge, it is also important to build awareness on the utilization of nutrient-rich food to ensure healthy diets of Myanmar people,” said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Both, school and home gardens, in addition to producing nutrient-dense vegetables, can be good methods for transferring knowledge on nutrition, hygiene and environment, through learning-by-doing education, good nutritional practices and cooking classes. This two-fold intervention will have a positive impact on the improvement of child and household nutrition, with the sustained provision of diverse, safe and nutrient-rich foods from home and school gardens.

This project confirms FAO’s engagement in the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) Initiative.



principles and internationally accepted standards for practices on how responsible governance of tenure should be addressed. The secure access to land and other natural resources is central to FAO’s efforts towards improving food security and sustainability of rural livelihood. In this regard, FAO is working to legitimate tenure rights that positively impact on agricultural productivity and rural development from various aspects.

The MoALI, MoNREC and FAO Representative opening speeches stressed a common understanding of the importance of the VGGT guidelines and its wider application in Myanmar. As the final activity, all participants envisioned the country in five years with equal tenure rights through the use of VGGT.

Strengthening the livelihoods of vulnerable populations across Rakhine State

The livelihoods of farmers in Rakhine State, in which both the Rakhine community and Muslim minority coexist together, is extremely challenging. In this conflict-affected area around 47 percent of the population rely on agriculture for their survival. In particular, farmers are mainly engaged in the production of paddy rice during the monsoon season.

U Than Kyaw, a 48-years-old farmer, lives with his family in Pon Nar village, Rakhine State. As with other households engaged in the agriculture sector, the difficulties of U Than Kyaw's daily life are extremely complex. To begin with, similarly to 43 percent of population in the state, he lives below the World Bank's poverty line of US\$ 1.90 per day. Furthermore, his livelihood is made more unstable by the recurrent civil insecurity because of inter-communal violence between the Rakhine community and the Muslim minority. To compound it further, he is extremely exposed to the effects of natural disasters, most commonly floods. In fact, last year his household was affected by the floods that among others, destroyed his agricultural production, lowered income, caused food shortages and increased food insecurity. The floods had also a negative implication on his debt, as peasants often take loans to support their production at the beginning of each planting season.



"With most of peasants relying on subsistence paddy production to meet their food needs, boosting winter crop cultivation is critical to increase access to food during the lean season. Moreover, with this intervention we support diversification of agriculture production that helps to diminish negative impacts of the 2015 and 2016 floods on farmers' livelihoods and build their resilience," explained FAO Senior Resilience Officer Mr Andrea Berloff. "The provision of livestock allows to expand smallholders' incomes, likewise to increase the availability of animal protein in their diets."

U Than Kyaw received certified seeds, vegetable kit and tools

In the period following the disaster, as with many other villagers, U Than Kyaw faced a lack of resources to buy quality seeds and fertilizers to plant during the winter season. With crop production constrained by the lack of quality inputs, vulnerable peasants like him often struggle to produce enough food and, as a result, continue to remain in a cycle of poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity.

In order to address these challenges and build farmers' resilience to future shocks, the FAO assisted approximately 31 500 Rakhine people with the provision of quality inputs ahead of the winter crop season. This included

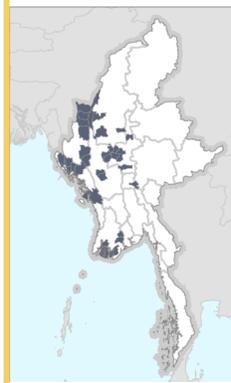
distribution of some 200 tonnes of certified seeds, 500 tonnes of fertilizers, livestock (goats, pigs and chickens), vegetable kits, tools, and the organization of trainings. This intervention is part of a larger project, funded by the Government of Japan, which will assist more than 50 000 flood and conflict-affected individuals in Rakhine and Chin States.

Despite significant progress in reaching vulnerable communities with critical livelihood and resilience building interventions, the FAO is seeking an additional US\$ 5.1 million in funding that will help it reach 87 000 farmers at risk of food insecurity this year.

Meet FAO Myanmar Team



Our Coverage



Project Areas

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