

United Nations Development Programme

Final Report

Independent Assessment Mission

Covering the period May 2007 to November 2008

of the

Human Development Initiative Myanmar

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. CONTEXT	9
3. CONFORMITY TO MANDATE.....	11
4. FOLLOW UP TO 2007 IAM.....	11
5. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION.....	13
6. RESPONSE TO CYCLONE NARGIS	14
7. HDI AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS.....	18
7.1 Self Reliance Groups	18
7.2 Community Based Organisations and Community Infrastructure	21
7.3 Microfinance.....	22
8. OTHER HDI COMPONENTS	25
8.1 HIV/AIDS	25
8.2 Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey	27
9. GENDER	28
10. MONITORING & EVALUATION.....	31
11. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS	33
12. RECOMMENDATIONS	34
Annex A. Project map.....	37
Annex B. Management Response to IAM 2007 Recommendations	38
Annex C. HDI Programme Budget in USD.....	47
Annex D. IAM Itinerary	49
Annex E. A List of Key Documents Consulted.....	52
Annex F. The Spider Web Diagram of Livelihoods Capitals.....	53
Annex G. Terms of Reference	54

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BSP	Basic Services Package
CBOs	Community-based organisations
CDRT	Community Development in Remote Townships
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO	Country Office
DEX	Direct Execution
EB/GC	Executive Board/Governing Council (UNDP)
ER	Early Recovery
ERC	Early Recovery Committee
EU	European Union
FM	Financial Management
GOM	Government of the Union of Myanmar
HDI	Human Development Initiative
HHs	Households
IAM	Independent Assessment Mission
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICDP	Integrated Community Development Project
ICER	Integrate Community-based Early Recovery
IG	Income generation
IHLC	Integrate Household Living Conditions Survey
Ks	Myanmar Kyats (ks 1,200 = US\$1: Nov 2008)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MF	Microfinance
MPG	Myanmar (HIV) Positive Group
MPP	Micro-project Proposals
MSF	Médecine Sans Frontières
NAP	National AIDS Programme
NGO	Non-government Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PLHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PONJA	Post Nargis Joint Assessment
PONREPP	Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness programme
PoP	Poorest of the Poor
SHG	Self-help Group
SPCD	State Peace and Development Council
SRG	Self Reliance Group
TCG	Tripartite Core Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNIAP	United Nations Inter Agency Project on Human Trafficking
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water and Sanitation Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

The UNDP programme in Myanmar is required by the Governing Council/Executive Board to be “clearly targeted towards programmes having grassroots impact in a sustainable manner...in the areas of primary health care, the environment, HIV/AIDS, training and education, and food security”. The EB has repeated this condition annually since 1993, given the continuing situation in the country, combined with the commitment to provide vital humanitarian assistance.

To this end, the UNDP has developed the Human Development Initiative, now in its fourth phase, and extended until the end of 2010. The overall budget for the programme in 2008 is approximately USD 22.3 million¹ and cumulative expenditures for the period 2003-2007 are approximately USD 56.7 million. HDI addresses livelihood support, micro credit, and social and productive infrastructure, as well as HIV/AIDS education and support at the village and Township level.

The EB requests the report of an Independent Assessment Mission each year to monitor the programme and ensure that it complies with EB directives. The IAM generally takes place between April and June, but was delayed in 2008 due to the priority response to Cyclone Nargis which struck Myanmar on May 2-3, 2008. The Mission took place in November, with a three member team, and Terms of Reference slightly modified to address UNDP response to Nargis. The IAM conducted field visits to four zones (Delta, Dry Zone, South Shan State and Mon-Kayin) and met with Country Office staff and key informants in Yangon.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE MANDATE

The 2008 IAM concludes that the HDI programme was in full compliance with EB directives. Projects addressed all of the issues identified, and worked consistently at the grassroots level—specifically, at the village level with Township level support and coordination. While government was informed in an open and transparent manner of all UNDP activities, it was neither direct beneficiary nor implementer of any of them.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HDI IV comprises the following projects:

- *The Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP)* integrates seven sectoral projects of HDI – III and is operational in 23 Townships in the Dry Zone, Shan State and the Ayeyarwady Delta. The core objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of poor communities to address the basic needs of the community particularly those of the poor and disadvantaged.

Following Cyclone Nargis, the ICDP developed and added the Integrated Community Early Recovery Component to address the emergency and recovery needs of ICDP communities in the Ayeyarwady Delta. This component will replace the ICDP in affected communities until they are able to reintegrate into the regular ICDP programme.

¹ 2008 budget figures given in this report reflect information available mid-November, at the time of the IAM

- ***Community Development in Remote Townships (CDRT) Project*** operates in border states: Kachin, Chin, Kayin/Mon, and Rakhine including northern Rakhine State to cover 26 townships. The main objective of CDRT is to strengthen the capacity of poor communities in selected remote border townships to address their basic needs through a participatory community development approach.

- ***Sustainable Microfinance to Improve the Livelihoods of the Poor (MF)*** focuses on disciplined and sustainable microfinance services to small women micro-entrepreneurs in selective poor villages, while also exploring opportunities for advocacy to institutionalize microfinance under a legal framework for the sustainability of this rural finance sector. Twenty-two townships are covered.

- ***Enhancing Capacity for HIV/ AIDS Prevention and Care Project (HIV/AIDS)*** refocused its objective in 2005 on strengthening the capacity of the Self-help Groups (SHGs) and on raising awareness of the villagers including young adults, adolescents and men to the risks of the HIV/AIDS.

- ***The Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA)*** has explored the extent, nature and causes of poverty in Myanmar through a survey involving 18,000 households throughout most of the country. Two reports; a Poverty Profile and MDG Relevant Information, have been approved by GOM, published in English and Myanmar, and disseminated through 16 workshops across the country. The reports provide government, UN agencies and other donors with urgently needed reliable and official information on which to develop poverty reduction strategies and programme interventions.

OBSERVATIONS:

The IAM found significant achievement of results from the various programme components. Particularly important has been livelihood support in the form of savings and loans programmes (Self Reliance Groups in ICDP, CDRT, and Microfinance) directed almost exclusively at women. Results include increased livelihood assets, income and consumption, and reduced vulnerability. In addition, programmes resulted in increased capacity, mobility and participation of women at the household and community level. While generally successful and with potential for sustainability at the household and community level, these programmes eventually hit a ceiling of capital availability and the lack of a national institutional/legal framework.

Community development efforts have also offered tangible results in the area of health through education and sanitation infrastructure (latrines, wells, water tanks), productive infrastructure such as small irrigation, soil conservation, compost preparation and a range of services such as agriculture/livestock extension, seed distribution, literacy training, etc. The programme is immensely varied as priorities are set by participatory planning processes at the community level. In most cases, this results in highly relevant projects; in others, the similarity of priorities (schools and bridges) suggested to the IAM that there may be cases of inadequate facilitation. Targeting is facilitated through village self assessment of the criteria for wealthy, middle, poor and very poor and (in ICPD) poorest. Projects have mainly assisted the poor and very poor; only in the past two years have programmes begun to find ways to meet the needs of the poorest.

HIV/AIDS programmes overlap ICDP and CDRT in some places in education and awareness raising at the village/township level, and also address livelihood, housing and other support for people living with HIV/AIDS. In the latter, it fills a unique niche that is also compatible with UNDP mandate and capacity.

Special mention should be made of the extraordinary achievements of the UNDP in response to Cyclone Nargis. Field presence in the Delta, the ability to mobilize human and financial resources, and the coordination role played by the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinators combined to launch a highly effective early recovery programme, in coordination with the government, other UN agencies, donors and ASEAN. The early recovery efforts are currently being consolidated at the programme level in coordination with the ICDP and at the national level through the Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) process.

CONCLUSIONS

Each of the HDI projects faces real limitations within a framework where there are scarce government resources dedicated to social services and rural development, and UNDP is restricted from working with what little support there is. This leads to an inefficiency of overall resource use on a national level, as well as raising serious questions about sustainability at the institutional level. The UNDP mandate restrictions also limit its ability to engage in policy discussions with government which could build on UNDP field experience and on the extensive Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment survey (IHLCA) to help develop a national poverty reduction framework. While the IAM understands the national circumstances that concern the Executive Board, it finds that the full potential of the UNDP HDI is limited by the current interpretation of the mandate

The main event change in the programme over the year and a half since the last IAM was the disastrous Cyclone Nargis which struck primarily the Delta and parts of Yangon. It provided a challenge in the form of a massive humanitarian response to badly hit project areas, as well as an opportunity to the international community to demonstrate good will and efficiency in support of the people of Myanmar. UNDP responded immediately with emergency and early recovery assistance, as well as contributing to international efforts such as the Post Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA). The emergency also led to unprecedented opening of the country – at least the affected areas – to international cooperation. UNDP participated fully in these activities and played a supportive role in the Tripartite Core Group composed of Government of the Union of Myanmar, ASEAN and the UN. There is considerable speculation about what this might mean for future international aid and cooperation in Myanmar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following a review of the Myanmar programme, the Governing Council (GC) adopted the Governing Council decision 93/21 of June 1993. In this decision, recognizing the critical basic human needs of the people of Myanmar, the GC decided that until such time that a new Country Programme could be approved, all future assistance “should be clearly targeted towards projects having grass-roots level impact in a sustainable manner, particularly in the areas of primary health care, the environment, HIV/AIDS, training and education and food security.” This decision has been renewed annually, following a required annual report by the Administrator based on an independent review assessing the extent to which UNDP activities meet the provisions of the relevant GC/EB decisions and the progress and challenges faced by the projects in their implementation.

The Independent Assessment Mission (IAM) is usually carried out in April/May. The 2008 IAM was delayed by six months due to Cyclone Nargis and the extensive emergency response to it. The terms of reference (see Annex G) were modified to include an initial assessment of UNDP emergency response particularly in terms of its mandate, and its integration in the HDI programme. Some of the evaluation questions regarding management, partnership and future directions were deferred until the next regular IAM expected to take place in April/May 2009. The TOR included three main areas: Review of Compliance; Review of Results and Performance, and; Review of Initial Cyclone response.

A three person Team composed of Gabriela Byron, Lars-Erik Birgergård and Glen Swanson visited Myanmar from November 3 to November 29. Team methodology included:

- Extensive document review before and during the Mission.
- Field visits to the Delta (Labutta and Bogale), the Dry Zone, Shan State and Mon-Kayin. Locations were selected to provide a range of programme interventions and contexts, including early recovery efforts specific to the Delta.
- Meetings directly with beneficiaries (SRGs, MF clients, Community organisations and leaders), and local community, township and area programme staff.
- Site visits to see community projects as well as assess the context in which the project worked.
- In the Delta, additional meetings with other international actors involved in relief and recovery efforts.
- Extensive interviews and meetings with Country Office staff in Yangon
- Meetings with key informants, particularly other donors and UN agencies.
- A request to meet with the Government Foreign Economic Relations Department (FECD) was unsuccessful.
- Report writing, feedback and editing took place in a concentrated period at the end of the Mission to ensure the report would be ready by the beginning of December.

The field missions and interviews were arranged with full and efficient assistance of the Country Office. Apart from a few minor changes in plans – including the replacement of the Kachin field visit with one to Mon-Kayin due to the cancellation of flights to the former, and a reduction in the number of villages visited due to logistical constraints – the programme was carried out as planned and without difficulty. In country writing and editing time was scheduled to address the time limitations in finalizing the report.

2. CONTEXT

Myanmar, situated in Southeast Asia and bordered by India, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, China and Thailand is administratively divided into seven States and seven Divisions. Of its total estimated population of 54 million, an approximately seventy-five percent live in rural areas (See Map. Annex A).

While reliable data on Myanmar is limited and inconsistent, the following data is drawn from the Myanmar Millennium Development Goal report (2005):

- Population: 51,853,100
- Poverty (No. of people living below \$1USD a day): 15 million (30% estimated)
- GDP per capita: \$1,027
- Life expectancy: 57.2 years
- Literacy rates: 85.3%
- Malnutrition: 7%
- Government funding for education: 0.3% of GDP
- Human Development Index rank: 132 of 177

The country has a fertile agricultural base supplied by four major river systems, with a predominantly agrarian based economy. In addition to agricultural, Myanmar is endowed with natural resources that include forestry, natural gas, various metals and gems and water. Even with this diversity, the country's population is principally dependent upon agriculture and farm related activities, providing livelihoods to more than 65 percent of the people. Nationwide, agriculture accounts for an estimated 55 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The UNDP Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment, with its sample survey in 2005 of more than 18,000 households, concluded that an estimated 10 percent of the population are currently suffering from food poverty while an estimated 32 percent are living below the overall poverty headcount index line: That is to say that they suffer from inadequate food, nutrition and essential non-food items.² In addition there is a significant proportion of the rural population who are landless (30 percent) with an additional 37 percent with less than 5 acres.³

Myanmar receives \$2.9 USD per capita of ODA. Within the region, Cambodia and the Lao PDR received \$38 USD and \$49.9 USD per person in 2005, respectively.⁴ Remittances to Myanmar from nationals working abroad are not significant and have declined from the level of \$316 USD million in 1999/2000 to \$109 USD million in 2005/06.⁵

While little information on the public sector budget is available in Myanmar, information from government official statistics and information on the government investment programme shows that a significant portion of public investment (around 22 percent) is allocated to large-scale infrastructure projects, which include bridges, hydro power dams, the construction of

² Integrated Household Living conditions Survey in Myanmar: Poverty Profile. Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and UNDP. 2007. P.39. In addition, the IHLC survey reports that almost 70% of all family expenditure is on food (p. 56) suggesting vulnerability to the increase in food prices. Fortunately, this does not appear to have happened following the damage of Cyclone Nargis.

³ Agricultural Sector Review Investment Strategy. FAO.2004.

⁴ Table 18. Flows and aid, private capital and dept. Human Development Report. 2007/2008.

⁵ Table 38 of IMF, Myanmar – Statistical Appendix, 20 September 2006. Background information to the IMF Staff Report on the 2006 Article IV.

regional roads and other large-scale public projects.⁶ Government investment in education amounted to \$1 USD per capita and \$0.3 USD per capita for health services 2002-05.⁷

The UNDP through the Human Development Initiative (HDI) is involved in local level development as part of their ongoing humanitarian assistance programmes to address sustainability of livelihoods of the poor. This is in context of the weak technical capacity of technical departments of government services in health, education, agricultural research and extension, livestock and small-scale fisheries. Together with relatively low government investment and recurrent budget, this has weakened the capacity of local level institutions to provide effective and efficient development services in response to the needs of the population.

It is important to note that in addition to the severely restricted relations imposed by some countries, multi-lateral and multinational organisations, the population of Myanmar has recently suffered from a series of disruptive events in 2007 and the devastating effects of Cyclone Nargis (May 2008) within the period under assessment. For the UNDP Country Office, these events have also caused considerable disruption of its activities, including a senior management transition and the significant redeployment of staff and resources.

Cyclone Nargis struck the Ayeyarwady Delta region of Myanmar on May 2nd and 3rd 2008. This Category 3 storm resulted in torrential rains, winds of up to 200kms per hour, and a storm surge of 3.6-4 metres extending many tens of kilometres inland, in all affecting 50 townships, in Yangon and Ayeyarwady Divisions. Officially nearly 140,000 people lost their lives and 2.5 million people were severely affected, losing family members, livelihoods, homes and property. Humanitarian relief efforts immediately focused on early recovery support to provide emergency assistance and to support early recovery initiatives of affected communities. This is now being expanded into longer-term recovery initiatives.⁸

At the time the Cyclone the HDI had more than 500 staff and project personnel working on three projects throughout the Delta.⁹ UNDP project staff and their families were among the victims, as were many beneficiaries. Projects were either suspended or shifted into emergency and early recovery activities. However, the UNDP presence on the ground also allowed it to respond almost immediately.

6 From: Myanmar Economic Management and Poverty Issues. UNDP Yangon (Myanmar). 3rd April 2007.

7 Source: Department for International Development: [Http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/capburma.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/capburma.pdf)

⁸ Source: Integrated Community-based Early Recovery Framework (ICERF).

⁹ From: Integrated Community-based Early Recovery Framework (ICERF). A Programme Framework for Cyclone Affected Areas of Myanmar.

3. CONFORMITY TO MANDATE

The IAM reviewed the consecutive Governing Council/Executive Board (GC/EB) decisions since 93/21, reviewed the project documents of the HDI, and incorporated specific questions on mandate compliance in its interview formats. As a result of our research, the Team concludes that there is diligent compliance with the mandate, at all levels of the organisation.

The IAM concludes that mandate interpretation is generally on the conservative side to ensure that there is no accidental misunderstanding or possible infringement, given that mandate interpretation seems subject to variations. The HDI programme works at the grassroots level in the areas of primary health care, the environment, HIV/AIDS, training and education and food security, as specified in the Governing Council/Executive Board Decision 93/21 and reconfirmed annually.

Programmes generally inform and coordinate with government at the township level. UNDP cooperated directly with government in the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (IHLCA), which by prior agreement, was undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. Even in this case, interaction with government was limited and resource use strictly monitored.

The IAM also noted that indirectly through the representation of the UN system by the Resident Coordinator (RC), the UNDP participates in the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) along with representatives on a rotational basis from the UN system, and representatives from ASEAN and the Government of the Union of Myanmar. The RC participates in his capacity as representative of the United Nations system. The TCG is a body for coordination of the international humanitarian response to the survivors of Cyclone Nargis.

The IAM also notes that strict compliance with the mandate has forced the UNDP to incur otherwise avoidable operational inefficiencies including a tendency to parallel service delivery, limits to institutional sustainability, and general underutilization of its potential. While acting as an effective implementing agency, the UNDP is severely restricted in taking advantage of its extensive grassroots knowledge and experience to engage in policy discussions on the UNDP's primary global niche, poverty reduction and the MDG.

4. FOLLOW UP TO 2007 IAM

Several of the recommendations given by the 2007 IAM were in support of concerns and ideas already entertained by the HDI. Successful action has been taken on many of the recommendations as is briefly summarized here. The recommendations and the Management Response with comments by the present IAM are given in Annex B.

The key aspects addressed since the last IAM in 2007 include:

- The decision to bring the HDI projects implemented by UNOPS under UNDP's Direct Execution (DEX) modality, to increase coherence. Auditing of these projects is presently undertaken with the intention to implement the transfer at the end of December.
- The concerns that the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) and Community Development in Remote Townships (CDRT) project had failed to reach the poorest of the poor had been voiced by the 2006 IAM. At the time of the 2007

IAM management was already in the process of conceptualizing modes and content of interventions to remedy this shortcoming. This work has progressed during the period up to the present IAM and resulted in the design of a strategy and an activity, which is already widely implemented.

- Several previous IAMs and donor reviews have expressed considerable concerns over the weak M&E system for HDI. In particular, the concern has focused on the virtual lack of other than anecdotal information on impact. The 2007 mission put strong emphasis on the need to address this issue.

The present mission is pleased to notice the significant steps that have been taken during the past period to decisively address the issue of M&E. The main focus of efforts has been to fill the void of impact information. To this end an impact study has been undertaken for the Microfinance (MF) Project (end of 2007). Furthermore, a quantitative household survey, 15 SRG case studies and a participatory impact assessment study are near completion. The design of these studies meets with required standard to provide reliable data.

The IAM wishes to congratulate the HDI for these achievements.

- The HIV/AIDS project has responded to the recommendation to focus its activities more explicitly to areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence and to high risk groups. Furthermore, the awareness and training activities have been modified to separate the communities on gender and age/marital status when interacting with them.

There are a number of points made by the 2007 IAM that may require further attention. These include the following:

- There is still room for improvement of operational project monitoring for management purposes. The formats used for the quarterly reports for CDRT and ICDP are not as informative as they ought to be for management purposes. More useful reports are produced at township level.

Furthermore, there seems to be a strong case for reviewing the overwhelming amount of data that is generated in the ICDP and CDRT projects and critically assess their use with the view to free resources at all levels, and particularly at Community Facilitator level, for other tasks.

- The MF project management and the managements of the ICDP and the CDRT projects have chosen not to take action on the recommendation to link SRGs with the MF project. As argued elsewhere in this report the present IAM does not find the arguments provided for this stance fully convincing.
- The 2007 IAM expressed concern, as did the 2006 IAM, regarding the lack of a clear policy on the level on support to be provided over time to a village. The 2007 IAM recommended that intensive support should be provided for no more than 3-5 years, where after a significantly reduce support level should be maintained to ensure continued access to 'old' villages. The ICDP and CDRT projects still lack a clear policy and operational modalities in this direction.

Bearing in mind the significant stress that events in 2007 and more recently Cyclone Nargis in 2008 placed on the programme at all levels, the IAM notes with appreciation the efforts that the programme has made to respond to the recommendations of the 2007 IAM.

5. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

UNDP's Human Development Initiative (HDI) has been conducted under very close Governing Council oversight since 1994. Originally targeted to cover 24 townships (3,900 villages), the projects under HDI's four phases have been designed and implemented to address the basic humanitarian needs of rural poor communities by supporting their sustainable livelihoods, including income generating activities and improving access to the basic social services such as primary health care, basic education, small village infrastructure, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS preventative information.

HDI's fourth phase (HDI-IV) began in early 2003 in the 24 original areas and was expanded from March 2005 to a further 40 townships bringing the total target to 64 (as per EB Decision 2005/3). HDI was active in 7,432 villages in 64 townships before the cyclone. After Cyclone Nargis regular activities were temporarily suspended in some 1,200 villages. In 2007 HDI-IV was extended for the period 2008 -2010. Including the budget for 2008, the accumulated cost for the programme is USD 79 million with \$62.8 USD million from TRAC funds and \$16.2 USD million available from additional donor resources. For details see Annex C. In addition, in 2008, UNDP has contributed to activities related to Nargis with \$2.6 million and other sources with \$6.2 million, most of which has been channelled through ICDP/HDI. HDI-IV is scheduled to end in December 2010.

While a distinct sectoral approach characterized earlier HDI phases, the key difference of HDI-IV is its adoption of an integrated approach that aims to provide a more decentralized, community-driven development process. HDI-IV has had six component projects, three of which provide broad support for community development and microfinance. The other three projects provide support in HIV/AIDS and research on poverty and the agricultural sector. The agriculture survey project has been completed. There are thus five operational projects on the ground.

Currently, HDI-IV projects comprise the following:

- The Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) is operational in 23 Townships in the Dry Zones, Shan State and the Ayeyarwady Delta. The core objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of poor communities to address the basic needs of the community particularly those of the poor and disadvantaged. An Integrated Community Early Recovery (ICER) programme component has been added to the ICDP to address early recovery to the Cyclone Nargis affected Delta area, and expected to continue until 2010.
- Community Development in Remote Townships (CDRT) Project operates in border states: Kachin, Chin, Kayin/Mon, and Rakhine including northern Rakhine State to cover 26 townships. The main objective of CDRT is to strengthen the capacity of poor communities in selected remote border townships to address their basic needs through a participatory community development approach.
- Sustainable Microfinance to Improve the Livelihoods of the Poor (MF) focuses on disciplined and sustainable micro-finance services to small producers in selected poor villages in 22 townships.¹⁰ Operations were suspended in three of these townships after the cyclone.
- Enhancing Capacity for HIV/ AIDS Prevention and Care Project (HIV/AIDS) provides awareness raising training in selected areas with high HIV prevalence and to people living with AIDS in selected urban and peri-urban areas. In all 71 villages have been reached in townships both within and outside CDRT/ICDP areas.

¹⁰ ICDP and the MF project overlap in 11 townships.

- The Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA) has undertaken, published and disseminated a major household survey focusing on mapping poverty. It has also undertaken a nationwide vulnerability study that is yet to be approved by the GOM and published.

6. RESPONSE TO CYCLONE NARGIS

The UNDP responded rapidly to Cyclone Nargis, drawing on both its experience and installed capacity in the Delta, and its role in coordinating the Early Recovery Cluster under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Under the IAM ToR, the team has been asked to address the compliance of Nargis response to UNDP mandated activities in Myanmar with particular attention to type of intervention, targeting and empowerment of women. In addition, the Team was requested to identify how the response was integrated into the management of the HDI programme. (See TOR, Annex G) The Team notes that UNDP also plays a critical role in the process of interagency coordination at various levels, which at times is and/or should be closely related to its own programme and institutional framework.

The UNDP's immediate response to Nargis was highly effective due in large part to its extensive presence on the ground in the Delta region based on programming with ICDP and Micro Finance. Approximately 500 field staff and 40 field offices (including NGO partner PACT offices) were already located in the Delta, with 23 offices with 338 staff and project personnel in the most affected townships of Bogale, Ngapudaw, Mawlamyinegyun, Labutta and Kyaiklat. These were able to respond almost immediately to the humanitarian emergency. UNDP staff was able to assist in the distribution of urgently needed items such as water, food, plastic sheets, medicine and clothing, in close collaboration with other UN Agencies. In the first critical weeks and months of the emergency, UNDP was also able to re-deploy human and financial resources from other programmes around the country with considerable efficiency and little disruption to those ongoing programmes. It should be noted that many staff participated in emergency rotations on a purely voluntary basis.

Emergency response was also assisted by the establishment of a Disaster Task Force several days before the cyclone, although it was not expected to make landfall in the Delta and Yangon. By May 9th, the first flash appeal for \$187 million was launched, and within 9 days of the cyclone, a BCPR SURGE team to support the Country Office was activated. Within days of the cyclone, the UNDP announced a plan to begin re-directing HDI funds designated to the Delta for cash-for-work projects in order to provide immediate resources for destitute families, to facilitate cleanup, and to support farmers to meet the upcoming planting season.¹¹ Plans were also made with the MF programme to return client savings as requested, re-organize MF groups, refinance clients who could begin livelihood activities, and prepare processes for writing off outstanding loans in the three most affected townships (Labutta, Bogale, Mawlamyinegyun).¹² A revised appeal was made in July for \$482 million USD, of which \$52 million was for UNDP early recovery work.

At the same time, the Resident Coordinator (RC) and Humanitarian Coordinator¹³ were involved in efforts to facilitate the entrance of international assistance to aid the victims. The government was slow to approve international aid, and initially denied approval for accompanying international experts – an arrangement unacceptable to donors who had

¹¹ May 9, 2008, letter from UNDP to the GOM.

¹² May 22, 2008, letter from UNDP to the GOM.

¹³ Prior to Nargis, the Humanitarian Coordinator and Acting Resident Coordinator were the same person. Following the arrival of the new RC, the HC occupied the single role. With his recent departure, the two roles were again combined in the RC.

concerns about government ability to deal with an emergency of this size. Following a meeting between General Than Shwe and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon during his visit to see the cyclone affected areas, the GOM agreed to the latter's appeal to approve visas for international experts.¹⁴ On May 25th, there was agreement to form the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) with three representatives from the Government of the Union of Myanmar, three from ASEAN, and three from the United Nations, including the Resident Coordinator.

The TCG played a key role in facilitating access, delivering relief supplies and coordinating with the government. On May 31st, the TCG launched a thorough assessment of relief and recovery needs (Post Nargis Joint Assessment – PONJA), supported by BCPR and involving staff of the Government, ASEAN, the World Bank, UN, and NGOs. It was also agreed that applications for visas to work in the Delta would go directly to the TCG, enabling it to streamline the process and approve hundreds of required visas in a short period of time.¹⁵ Within the TCG, UNDP was a key player in data collection, analysis and writing of the PONJA, providing 7 CO staff and 3 consultants, and in supporting ASEAN in overall coordination of the TCG.

The TCG also oversees the process of developing a Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) to guide recovery activities for three years starting in May 2009. The process includes seven working groups (Livelihoods, Health, Education, WASH, Shelter, Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction) preparing a proposal to be ready by January 2009. Besides support to the process from UNDP/BCRP, the Country Office contributes significant human resources to the process and co-chairs two of the clusters; Livelihood and Disaster Risk Reduction. A total of 8 CO staff and consultants were provided by the UNDP.

Through the office of the RC, the UNDP undertook coordination of the IASC cluster on Early Recovery, including the network of focal points for early recovery from each of the clusters, and the preparation of a draft strategic framework (October). The cluster system was also initiated at the township level, to be coordinated through UN-OCHA offices. The process has demonstrated some weaknesses: For example, there is one cluster for agriculture and another that includes early recovery and all non-agricultural livelihoods – a division that does not make sense in the Delta.¹⁶ (The PONREPP working groups take a more holistic approach, viewing livelihoods as one theme). In addition, the coordination of the ER cluster was located in the office of the RC, effectively distancing it from UNDP operational planning and leaving the resulting strategy isolated from the ICER/ICDP strategy. A decision has recently been made to return cluster coordination to the CO through the Country Director. At the time of the IAM, the cluster level draft strategy was still under discussion by cluster members at the IASC level.

Coordination among clusters and between national and township levels has been complicated and somewhat problematic especially at the early stages due to the prevailing sense of urgency, lack of experience at the national level in disaster response, and the complexity of the cluster structure. For example, where two agencies work in the same village, there were occasions when each set up their own committees. In addition, coordination at the Yangon level was not always synchronized with coordination at the township level. The IAM heard of an example where at the Yangon cluster level, it was agreed that an NGO would distribute seeds and tillers to an area where the UNDP had been approved at the township cluster level.

¹⁴ UN News Service, Press Release, May 24, 2008

¹⁵ According to the 2nd TCG Press Release, July 2, 294 visas were approved between 9-30 of June

¹⁶ Agriculture is an integral component of the livelihoods of the vast majority of the population, although those with little or no land have mixed livelihood strategies that combine agricultural labour with other forms of income generating. Given the mixed nature of livelihood strategies it makes little sense from the perspective of the target population to separate them.

However, there is general agreement that these issues were more prevalent in the beginning and have been sorting themselves out with time and accumulated experience.

At the coordination level, the UNDP has been able to make considerable contributions to the incorporation of gender in early recovery efforts, following concerns that gender had generally been overlooked in the early emergency phase. In particular, gender was absent and there was no gender expertise in the SURGE planning team. UNDP has participated fully in subsequent activities at the cluster level, particularly in the area of Protection of Children and Women. Also, two UNDP gender specialists participated in the Cluster's Rapid Assessment of Women's Livelihoods in the Labutta area of the Delta in August and have provided gender assessment and revision of cluster and PONREPP working group proposals. This provides a valuable opportunity ensure that rebuilding better includes gender planning.

Concurrent with its support to coordination activities, the UNDP was developing an operational strategy for early recovery based on its presence in five affected townships of the Delta, and its prior experience with ICDP and Microfinance projects. Apart from the most immediate emergency response, the UNDP developed Early Recovery Basic Service Package (BSP) guidelines by June to fully utilize its field presence. Its objectives were to support affected communities to repair critical social infrastructure, to support affected families to generate income to ensure food security and to rebuild community cohesion and participatory decision making through working with village committees.¹⁷ Cash-for-work was provided for clearing and repairing village infrastructure, grants were provided for shelter and for livelihoods (agriculture and fishing) with community organisation to decide who would be prioritised, and to take responsibility for collective equipment (e.g.; such as tillers).

UNDP BSP was generally effective, although given the emergency situation and need for haste as well as the lack of emergency experience at the country level, there were bound to be some lessons to learn. Among the factors for success were the general approach to infusing cash into the economy to support its re-activation and the revival of livelihoods. UNDP was in a position to distribute goods provided by other agencies, but did not engage in large scale procurement except for the distribution of tillers which made small farmers able to plant the monsoon crop before it was too late.¹⁸ Other early responses included the revival of fishing through conditional grants for the local purchase of boats and nets, restocking of small livestock and, cash for work programmes (generally community rehabilitation) to provide a source of income for landless labourers. In addition, shelter grants were provided for rebuilding or repairing housing.

The provision of shelter and livelihood grants not only provided some options to beneficiaries, but helped to revive the local economy by providing work to local people who build the boats, make the nets, and prepare local materials for house construction. UNDP assistance targeted poor and landless survivors through livelihood grants as well as cash for work, which also benefited small and medium agricultural producers with labour to ensure the monsoon planting season was not lost.

At the level of client satisfaction, a community feedback survey¹⁹ was carried out in October-November to assess a number of areas of community satisfaction, including fair distribution, appropriateness and timeliness of response, and role of Early Recovery Committees (ERC), among others. In general, the survey concluded that UNDP carried out its Phase I activities

¹⁷ UNDP Guidelines for Early Recovery Basic Services Package (revised June 26, 2008).

¹⁸ Procurement is a recognized specialization of other UN agencies, and UNDP wisely avoided duplication.

¹⁹ Myanmar Survey Research, UNDP Myanmar Community Feedback Survey (Ref No. 032/08 UNDP/MYA) Nov. 17, 2008. Although this study is just completed, the UNDP is aware of the issues surrounding ERCs and is taking measures to address them.

properly and efficiently, although some improvements could be made. It found a small number of problems with the distribution of goods, usually at the level of the ERCs with some favouritism or exclusion.²⁰ In community consultations, women and men were not consulted separately. UNDP listened to village requests, but was not always able to respond, especially when resources were scarce; delivery of goods was usually, but not always timely. Finally, disaster diminished the community sense of wealth ranking: Even the wealthier lost their homes and loved ones in the cyclone and needed assistance.

The Basic Services package (BSP) was an initial response to cover urgent needs and to last as long as needed, depending on the recovery level of the village. It was to evolve into the Integrated Community Early Recovery Framework (ICERF), drafted in July, which for the first time articulated the integration of its emergency response with its existing ICDP structure. This approach was used because the ICDP was an existing and approved structure that could be quickly adapted, and did not need to go through the time consuming process of government approval. In addition, many ICDP (and MF) villages were among the severely affected and would not be able to continue business as usual. The strategy resulted in a substantively revised ICDP programme document (November 24, 2008) incorporating an Integrated Community Early Recovery Component. The main contribution of the document besides updating the July strategy has been to identify its place in and relationship to the ICDP.

While the ICER is a component of the ICDP, operationally it reports through a separate management chain to the Deputy Country Director for Programme. Although this is standard practice for CO project management it has implications for the transition from ICER to regular ICDP programmes, which is expected to take place on a case by case basis, as villages are ready for it. Horizontal coordination mechanisms between the two programme areas will be essential to ensure that the transition for villages is seamless and well planned, and that activities in ICER adequately prepare them for regular programming without sacrificing necessary early recovery measures. Establishing these mechanisms should be a priority when the two permanent Project Managers are in place.²¹

Although it is still early in the process, the IAM has some concern about apparent confusion between an emergency response and tools and approaches of ICDP. For example, new SRGs were apparently established as a means to channel resources into villages, under time pressure and without the processes for building group cohesion. The IAM also heard that new SRGs in badly affected areas were expected to contribute savings to the common fund (admittedly modest at 100 kyat –USD\$0.10 - per week). Emergency Recovery Committees were selected by the communities under time pressure perhaps without due community process. In short, HDI tools may have been used out of context, leading to concerns that aside from perhaps not being optimum for the circumstances, they may prove compromising to the basic CBO and SRG concepts if/when regular ICDP processes are resumed. This is of course perfect hindsight. The IAM understands that the best efforts were made to facilitate early recovery processes, and that the CO is aware of these issues and prepared to address them.

The IAM found some management issues that may prove a challenge to the Country Office and should be monitored: None of the short-term SURGE advisors have yet been replaced by medium-term personnel, leaving a critical gap in follow up, and a stress on all other managers. In general, staff shortages, long hours and stress appear to be common – including working weekends and getting things done “just on time”, as well as a shortage of time for coordination meetings and even more so for strategic thinking. Working at this pace seven

²⁰ Although this study is very recent, the UNDP office is aware of some of these shortcomings and has made efforts to address them.

²¹ In ICER, an acting project manager is in place, due to be replaced by a more permanent one in December.

months after the cyclone is approaching the unsustainable. Although outside of the IAM mandate, it would be useful to have an independent assessment of the management process in Post Nargis activities, including the use and integration of the SURGE team and the overall impact of staff redeployment for Nargis issues. While the UNDP has an internal process to assess the SURGE response, the IAM suggests assessing a longer timeline and a broader scope including the overall impact on CO human resources.

On a more strategic level, the significant changes in Myanmar's relationship with the international community over Nargis relief and recovery may have implications for future work throughout the country. For now, it is not clear whether the experience will encourage a greater general opening to foreign cooperation, or a return to business as usual at the end of the life of the Tripartite Core Group. The quantity and quality of the international community's humanitarian response will undoubtedly be a factor.²²

7. HDI AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

7.1 Self Reliance Groups

Self-Reliance Groups (SRGs) are a principal instrument of the HDI for improving livelihoods in communities. The SRG is both a vehicle for empowerment, and a means for promoting various local economic initiatives and individual members' household needs by establishing savings and credit funds from which members can borrow.

SRGs are predominately functioning well and are a good mechanism for community engagement. The savings and loans schemes are relevant and are adequately addressing issues that relate to food security and income generation. Furthermore, the SRGs are seen by the IAM as effective at mobilising women's groups and increasing their active participation in villages, as well as supporting other vulnerable groups in these communities.

One predominate lesson learned from the SRG experience within the HDI is that such groups are strongest and have a greater opportunity of attaining sustainability when the members can exercise management of their capital and their inputs themselves. Effective and potentially sustainable SRGs are those that are relatively small, have a simple structure and have clear working routines. These fundamental attributes should be the defining characteristic of SRGs throughout the HDI.

Mature SRGs can be identified within the CDRT and ICDP as those that are active and performing well in repayment. Figures presented by ICDP and CDRT indicate that such mature SRGs comprise a larger majority of the SRGs. In turn, these mature SRGs are now less dependent upon local moneylenders with higher interest demanding loans. SRG funds are used for income generating activities such as purchasing and raising poultry and pigs, village trading (shop-keeping), as well as addressing immediate household needs such as emergency medical treatment, school fees, purchasing food, among others.

This need to recognise mature SRGs gives a strong argument for a review and reconsider of the current criteria that is used to evaluate the status of SRGs.²³ Presently a broad range of attributes are applied to rank these groups performance. With careful attention, these can be

²² According to most recent UN-OCHA funding tracking, total commitment to November 18 was \$291,761,771 or 62% of the amount appealed.

²³ This refers to the criteria as identified in the following document: "Main Criteria for Assessing the Self-Reliance Groups." UNDP. Myanmar. Undated. And, "Self Assessment Criteria for SRGs Strategic Questions to be Asked." UNDP. Myanmar. Undated.

refined to identify which of the many SRGs can be considered mature and capable of sustaining their primary activities, either independently or with some backstopping from the field teams.

The criteria for evaluating maturity may focus on those SRGs which report a strong rate of repayment; regular savings and a high rate of fund turnover, demonstrating the commitment and motivation of members in maintaining the group's loan capital.

It is suggested that in respect to this new criteria it will be possible to surmise that the HDI currently has currently a high number of well functioning, mature SRGs and that they in turn should be given the opportunity to let go and continue to function with support by the HDI field staff and facilitators. This reduction of support to selected mature SRGs would allow rolling out to new villages within project townships without increasing the project workload.

Generally there is concern that training modules provided to the SRGs are currently too numerous and careful review and consideration should be given to simplifying this process to better meet the capacity and needs of members. There is also a need to consider reducing the bookkeeping responsibilities by creating a simplified format such as that currently being demonstrated in the Mon State within the CDRT Project. The ICDP requires 14 record books for each SRG; while the CDRT SRGs are required to manage five sets of books.²⁴ The CDRT has made progress in reducing these to two records, plus the members' passbook. This initiative should be applied more broadly to all SRGs.

Training should aim at encouraging the SRG groups to transfer acquired skills to other group members. This is especially relevant to bookkeeping tasks, often allocated to one individual. Transferring these skills among group members would in turn ensure less risk of the group failing in areas of high migration where individuals have been successfully trained in a basic accounting only to move away. It would also further generalize capacity development in the community.

Currently SRGs are being restored in the Delta area, rebuilding groups that have lost members and their savings, and expanding service by providing additional small grants to the very worst hit groups to enable them to quickly start-up income generating activities. The IAM cautions that this approach may need further consideration, as there is an implicit risk that such efforts could undermine the fundamental purpose of the SRGs which may not be an appropriate mechanism in a disaster recovery context. Furthermore, a savings and loans scheme may well be thrown askew by introducing soft loans and grant dispersals. To that end, those worst hit areas may best be supported through mechanisms other than the SRGs. The timing of the reintroduction of saving and loans schemes needs to be managed with care and sensitivity.

Targeting Poorest of the Poor Groups

The SRGs have become the predominate instrument of both the ICDP and the CDRT to address livelihoods in supported HDI communities. While this mechanism addresses women identified from the wealth ranking as poor, very poor and poorest, the previous IAM found that the SRGs still did not include many from the very poorest categories. Reasons given included that they are not able to attend meetings and contribute to savings, as they are often working outside of the community as casual labourers or simply unable to save any funds. To this end, the Poorest of the Poor (PoP) groups were established to address the needs of these persons and as of mid-2007 the HDI initiated its Poorest of the Poor Strategy.

²⁴ As reported to the IAM team in village visits and documented in the report "Progress on SRG Case Studies (Draft)". UNDP. 31 Oct. 2008. P. 15.

The main objectives of the PoP strategy are as follows:²⁵

- To improve socio-economic conditions of non-SRG PoPs;
- To link PoPs with SRGs and bring them to the mainstream of community development.

The PoP strategy addresses those who have been left out of the regular SRGs and provides a range of support including welfare and micro-grants for house construction, support to school children and income generation including micro-business, farm implements, renting small plots and so forth.

Livelihood grants are a mechanism for providing funds to individuals that are repaid back to the PoP group, thus refurbishing their common group fund. While similar to SRGs, the PoPs aim to augment the economic and social situation of its members, as well as to be a conduit for support and training by ICDP and CDRT facilitators. In addition, the PoPs are more flexible and address the specific needs and aspirations of the PoP members.

Funds are provided as Micro-project Proposals (MPP) providing grants for welfare, income generation and inputs for capacity building are provided to members of the PoPs. Grants and loans are also provided for families with school children, the provision of farm tools and other direct grants (which have included energy efficient stoves, compost-making, latrines and rain water collection cisterns, among others).²⁶

Currently within the ICDP, a total of 160 POP groups have been formed in 20 townships covering 1,457 households. A total of Ks. 129, 142,722 (\$100,476 USD) were allocated for shelter renovation, homestead garden activities and small scale micro-business grants were supported during 2007-2008.²⁷

Concurrently, within the CDRT assistance is provided to vulnerable households through existing CBOs in villages willing to work with the PoPs. CDRT has supported 33,384 PoP HHs. This assistance is equivalent to 27.5 % of total HHs within the CDRT project area²⁸.

SRGs present in the same community as PoPs are encouraged to support these poorest groups. In some cases this has been through technical assistance (bookkeeping) lending support to house construction and other activities. The PoP strategy also envisions a logical merger of the PoPs into existing SRGs or graduation into regular SRGs as they gain skills and improve their general situation. Unfortunately this view does not adequately address the issues of the poverty and social exclusion and it may be highly optimistic to believe that these well functioning SRGs would generally be receptive to bringing in these new members. In addition, there is the question of how these PoP members would merge with SRGs. In that situation SRGs may be understandably reluctant to share their accumulated common fund with new members that have not contributed to its growth. For others the PoP strategy envisions that these PoPs may graduate into SRGs in their own right.

Overall the PoP groups have made an impact on addressing a range of households that were beyond the SRG structures.

²⁵ The Poorest of the Poor Strategy: Integrated Community Development project. Revised March, 2007.

²⁶ The Poorest of the Poor Strategy: Integrated Community Development Project. Revised March, 2007. Page 4.

²⁷ Reported by UNDP PowerPoint Brief entitled "CDP Progress Reporting Jan 2003 Sept 2008. Integrated Community Development Project. MYA/01/001, UNDP."

²⁸ Reported by UNDP PowerPoint entitled "Brief on Community Development for Remote Townships. MYA/01/002."

7.2 Community Based Organisations and Community Infrastructure

While the SRGs address livelihoods, both the ICDP and the CDRT programmes have undertaken a broad range of activities and projects to provide services and infrastructure at the community level, and to strengthen the capacity of the communities for broadly based self-governance. The governance capacity is developed in large part through community organisation to assess and prioritize its social and infrastructure needs and then to implement and follow up on them.

Poor communities targeted within the HDI programmes frequently lack both the social and productive infrastructure and services needed to support men and women in their pursuit of sustainable livelihoods at the household level. As insufficient resources are available from government budgets to provide for the education, health and rural infrastructure development needs of remote villages, villagers are more dependent on mobilising their own physical and social resources. This is evident in the monitoring 'spider diagrams' showing impact of livelihood capitals in communities, including the overall deficits among natural, financial, physical human and social capitals. (See Annex F for further details on this methodology).

While the HDI places a high priority on livelihoods, and therefore livelihood infrastructure and services (agriculture and livestock extension work, seed production, compost, soil conservation, irrigation, etc.), it also recognizes the importance of social elements including education, health, and literacy in contributing to productive communities.

The overall range of projects supported is broad. These include social and health infrastructure with school buildings/furnishing, clinics, latrines and bridges as well as social services with support and training for literacy, health and sanitation training, among others. These understandably contribute towards improving the quality of life and the health of communities.

In addition other activities include soil conservation (soil stabilisation bands, contour tilling), seed distribution, composting, irrigation and so forth. Other community-based services include fire prevention training, as well as local village agriculture and livestock extension workers. Together these support HHs in pursuing sustainable livelihoods.

Project initiatives also support community governance through the establishment of village-based committees and CBO training. There is also encouragement for agriculture and livestock groups as well as SRGs to support the establishment of PoP groups and lend assistance to them when possible. Support to CBOs has also been an effective means to enhanced community planning and organisational capacity, community work more widely distributed, and increased democratization by providing a voice of women and the poor.

The IAM notes that the current approach has some disadvantages, including a tendency towards fragmentation of activities that require a more consolidated approach to bring these complementary activities into line. Furthermore, there is a tendency to over-train these CBO, beyond the initial needs to execute these activities. Similarly there is a tendency for the CBOs to be overburdened with bookkeeping, as identified among other community groups (SRGs and agriculture and livestock groups). Lastly, while the IAM lacked the time to fully explore this, there was a sense that these various community initiatives may not fully acknowledge nor articulate with traditional decision-making within the community.²⁹

²⁹ The IAM found cases where village elders and other groups were well integrated into the project processes, and others where they were not.

The IAM maintains a position presented in earlier missions that the establishment of ad hoc credit committees, as in CDRT, for agricultural activities and livestock may not be sustainable, as they were established with external capital, no internal savings, and little group preparation or training in fund management.³⁰

Generally the shift of activities towards livelihoods has been sound; the increased ratio of livelihood to infrastructure in ICDP has increased and is now 50/50. In CDRT the ratio has decreased over a three year period and is expected to be 65/35 as reflected in the annual budget.³¹

Emphasis has been put on training to provide the skills to conduct recordkeeping and planning. The aim of this training support is to enable these groups to become competent in undertaking the various social and physical infrastructure activities being promoted.

Planning has been useful, and the IAM has seen encouraging evidence of communities independently planning their own activities without support of the HDI. This is a clear indication that planning skills have been appropriate and transferable to new initiatives.

But these CBOs share a similar problem evident among the SRGs with regards to training and bookkeeping; which is challenged by the low levels of literacy, and augmented by the complexity of the record keeping process. To their credit a number of communities have reported to the IAM that the various bookkeepers are supporting one another to address this taxing issue.

7.3 Microfinance

The Micro Finance Project (MFP) has continued and expanded its successful operations since the last IAM in April 2007. During 2007 the number of households covered increased by 51,893. In the first half of 2008 an additional 20,727 new clients were reached bringing the number of households benefiting from the services provided by the MFP to more than 350,000. The performance indicators normally used for a micro-finance operation are all highly favourable. The rate of repayment over several years has surpassed 97%. The level of operational self-sufficiency is 211% and the project is approaching financial self-sufficiency having reached 75% (October 2008).³²

However, these figures hide the effects of Cyclone Nargis. Before Nargis there were 103,000 active clients in the Delta. After Nargis the MFP suspended all operations in the affected Townships and the number of active clients fell by nearly 80,000. To ease the burden on these clients, the MFP decided to release all savings of affected members. In all about \$1.2 million USD have been disbursed. To ease the liquidity problem caused by such large payouts UNDP injected some \$680,000 USD to the loan fund. Loans to the tune of \$2.9 million USD are overdue in the affected townships. An assessment of this part of the loan portfolio is presently undertaken to provide a basis for loan rescheduling and write-offs. Given the limited reservations made for write-offs in the past, there are reasons to expect that write-offs in the Delta area will affect the capital base of the MFP. The Director of the MFP estimates that only a quarter of the amount outstanding will be recovered and only over a relatively long period. The expected loss will affect the capacity of the MFP to expand its activities unless

³⁰ It may be noted that as reported in discussion with a number of villages that the IAM visited, that training in bookkeeping was not sufficient to address the challenges of low literacy rates often present.

³¹ The IAM understands the livelihoods figure to include SRGs, livestock and agricultural credit groups, seed distribution groups, composting groups, soil conservation groups, small irrigation projects and so forth.

³² Operational self-sufficiency is the ratio between operational income over operational costs expressed as a percentage. These figures are adjusted for inflation and cost of capital.

new additional capital can be found. The capital injection of 1 million USD that will be provided by USAID through UNDP in early 2009 is therefore highly welcome and timely.

In the period from the last IAM in 2007 the MFP has undertaken an impact study of its operations.³³ This study is a response to recommendations by earlier IAMs and concerns by funding agencies that verification of impact has been lacking.³⁴ The impact study meets with high design standards. In the study various variables are measured for clients and compared with measures of the same variables for non-clients. The study shows, among other things, the following:

- Clients raised their assets by 22% as compared to non-clients over the past 2 years;
- Clients also increased their expenditure by 18% as compared to non-clients in the same period (reflecting less pressure to sell at harvest time to raise cash);
- The business growth and expansion brought about a shift in the ratio among client businesses from agriculture to businesses such as trading, services and small scale processing;
- Clients were significantly less dependent upon money lenders than non-clients. On average those clients taking credit from money-lenders borrowed 26,000 Kyats (\$22 USD) from moneylenders and non-clients 64,000 kyats (\$53 USD).
- Women clients reported a significantly larger increase in their influence in household decision-making, their status in the community and in their level of self-confidence than female non-clients.

These changes have been brought about by a financial service operation that provides loans that average no more than \$37 USD while adhering to the business principles of a sustainable finance institution. This is a highly commendable achievement.

The MFP is still faced with the fundamental problem of non-sustainability in the absence of a legal institutional framework for microfinance institutions. Presently the MF project is implemented under the legal framework of the UNDP/GOM agreement on HDI. Should this agreement come to an end the MF project would not be a legal entity of any sort or form and would be open to restrictions, disruptions, taken over or simply face closure. There have been no developments on this legal limbo since the last IAM. Furthermore, the MF project has yet not reached (100%) financial self-sufficiency required for long-term sustainability.

Several IAMs and donor review missions have recommended that the MFP should provide loans to the many SRGs that find their common funds too small to meet their credit needs. Such loans should be provided on business-like terms as any other MFP loans and SRGs should be regarded as corporate clients. Such a loan is a loan to the common fund of an SRG that subsequently on lends it to group members. By providing such loans the graduation of savings and lending SRG by linking them to a financial institution, which generally is hard to achieve, can be realised. The fact that the SRGs and the MFP are part of the same programme offers a unique opportunity to link the two. Whereas the idea has met with positive reactions over the years from the projects concerned, ICDP, CDRT and MFP, no action has been taken.

A number of arguments were offered to the IAM to explain this situation. Firstly it was pointed out that the MFP and the CDRT by design operate in different townships. Government restrictions on the expansion of the MFP into new CDRT townships have excluded any attempt to offer MF services to SRGs. However, this is not the case for ICDP,

³³ Impact Study of Microfinance Project, UNDP/UNOPS (Myanmar), August-September 2007.

³⁴ Up to 2006 the MFP relied on (extensive) client satisfaction surveys. Useful as such surveys are, they do not provide reliable evidence on impact.

where there is considerable overlap at township and also at village level. Secondly, it was argued that fund limitations have prevented the MFP from servicing SRGs. As the MFP has significantly expanded its operations over several years, it stands to reason that the funds allocated to this expansion could have been directed to service SRGs. Based on these arguments the IAM maintains that the choice not to integrate the operations of the MFP and the SRG activities in the ICDP is a missed opportunity in the HDI Programme.

The IAM suggests that the MFP needs to review its portfolio of 'products'. To offer three different types of loans on very similar conditions for income generating activities and two types of loans for social purposes could be expected to confuse clients. That this is the case was confirmed during the field visits. MF clients simply have difficulties understanding what is offered. From the borrowers' point of view it would be a lot easier, if there was *one* loan for IG activities and *one* loan for social needs. A major client complaint, as also noted in the impact evaluation study,³⁵ is the limit of 160,000 Kyat on loans intended for IG activities. A limit of 300,000 or even higher was frequently requested. Clients were either not aware of the possibility to borrow so called enterprise loans with collateral (rather than with group liability as a substitute for collateral) up to a maximum of 500,000 Kyat. These types of large(r) individual loans are questionable from a policy point of view as larger loans will reduce the number of clients that can be served favouring more resourceful clients. Furthermore, when such resourceful clients leave the groups it will make them weaker. Hence, in its direct lending to individuals through MR – client groups, it is suggested that the business loan products may be removed from the portfolio and that the loan products are limited to one loan for IG activities with a maximum of say 300,000 Kyat (\$250 USD) and one loan for social needs. In addition the MF project should develop a loan product for SRGs.

As the loan fund is limited, it is unlikely that all ambitions implied in these proposals can be met in full. There are competing options with trade-offs. For instance, an increase of the maximum amount for the IG loans to 300,000 Kyat would require significant loan capital and may preclude a simultaneous introduction of a loan to SRGs on a large scale. A thorough analysis of the options and the trade-offs would be required as a basis for final decision making. It should be noted that the analysis is a technical matter, which should be the responsibility of the project. The decision on which needs to meet and to which degree, given a capital constraint, is a policy decision that should be taken by the HDI management.

There is also a case for revising the policy on savings deposit. The compulsory savings that clients have to make in conjunction with borrowing seems to be understood by the borrowers as a payment to the project. Clients do not perceive these savings as their money and when asked they cannot indicate if and how it can be accessed. Given the loan service performance of clients in the project, compulsory saving for credit risk reduction seems unnecessary as other effective risk reducing mechanisms are in place.³⁶ Furthermore, a savings deposit service is known worldwide to be in strong demand among poor people. Income smoothening through savings is a must for rural poor with large seasonal variations in income streams. Whereas there are always informal credit providers, there are almost never informal deposit service providers. Consequently poor people are forced to hold cash at home under unsafe conditions and under risk that it is used under the pressure of omnipresent dire consumption needs. However, to be of use a deposit service for poor people *must* permit unrestricted withdrawal.

The MF project has a profoundly important additional reason to revise its savings deposit policy and vigorously market such a service. If the MF project will be transformed into a formal financial institution of some sort, it can no longer depend upon donor fund

³⁵ Impact Study of Microfinance Project, UNOPS/UNDP Myanmar, August-September 2007.

³⁶ There are also a number of other risk reducing measures of which the ladder with increased maximum size of a loan, joint liability and peer screening are the most important ones.

contributions to its loan capital. The key source of capital should be savings. The project should prepare for this situation. Furthermore, an increase of the loan fund would give the MF project capacity to develop and market its loan products as suggested above.

8. OTHER HDI COMPONENTS

8.1 HIV/AIDS

In the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS noted that the HIV epidemic in Myanmar has shown a decline. HIV prevalence among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics showed HIV prevalence of 1.5% in 2006 from 2.2% in 2002. This has been attributed to the intensified interventions by many NGOs and UN agencies.

Currently there are an estimated 250,000 HIV infections in Myanmar; 80,000 of whom are in need of antiretroviral treatment, and of which 15,000 are currently receiving ART. Almost two-thirds of people living with HIV/AIDS are under 24 years of age.³⁷

As a co-sponsor of UNAIDS, the UNDP's main contribution to the national response is to provide technical assistance in the areas of human development, gender and rights based approaches. The National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS in Myanmar includes the UNDP fulfilling the main role to address the social and economic impact of the epidemic among people living with HIV and the education awareness needs of the general population through its coverage of the HDI.

The HIV/AIDS project provides support to communities for initiatives to prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS, reducing the impact of the disease and mobilising resources and supporting key development dimensions of the HIV epidemic in Myanmar. To reach this objective the project has focused on two concurrent activities; the first addresses HIV/AIDS education awareness and the second provides support to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA).

For the first pillar, the project has provided training to existing SRGs for dissemination of HIV education messages in selected villages throughout the HDI area as well as in other high-risk areas. This has increased the outreach of HIV education, especially among rural women. While this has been effective, there is a risk that the project is training its own health awareness workers at both the community and township levels which may be duplicating other HDI efforts that also address health. The project should give more careful consideration to merging these education initiatives.

In turn, this would then allow the HIV/AIDS project to utilise its resources for HIV/AIDS education awareness beyond the HDI area.³⁸ This will require the HIV/AIDS project to work more closely with their HDI partners in guiding the necessary HIV/AIDS education awareness as well as supporting the follow up needed.

Within these community HIV/AIDS education awareness campaigns, the volunteer based HIV/AIDS education awareness activities are effective and benefiting the community by drawing together men, women and community youth. Given the sensitivity of this topic and its relevance to sexual behaviour and health, it has been appropriate for these training. Within these community HIV/AIDS education awareness campaigns, the volunteer based HIV/AIDS

³⁷ UNICEF World AIDS Day statement, 2008

³⁸ An agreement has been reached with the UNDP in Myanmar and the GOM that allows the project to work beyond the initial HDI area and enter into new high-risk areas.

education awareness activities are effective and benefiting the community by drawing together men, women and community youth. Given the sensitivity of this topic and its relevance to sexual behaviour and health, it has been appropriate for these training sessions to deal with these groups separately, addressing their specific concerns. The HIV/AIDS education awareness campaign has also been distributing condoms and instruction on their use, as well as supporting access to HIV testing.

In response to earlier critique, the project has now reached beyond the initial CDRT and ICDP footprint and has targeted areas of potential high risk. While the project has attempted to identify these high-risk areas, there is a question of how effective this has been carried out. In some rural areas the project still focuses on areas of low prevalence of the disease. The project should continue to provide HIV/AIDS education awareness with more targeted focus on rural areas at high risk.

In one case, where the HIV/AIDS project established a village community fund, the IAM noted the following observations: Firstly, as the village itself had no PLHA residents, this fund was not supporting individuals impoverished or vulnerable as a result of being HIV positive. Secondly, the funds were distributed among members for agricultural use. To avoid being a precedent, more care is needed to ensure that such support is properly implemented, as there is a risk of it becoming a common development fund. This is an example of the need for closer cooperation and communication among other HDI projects, as this community fund now falls more in line with the CDRT activities.

The second pillar of the HIV/AIDS project focuses on support to PLHA as well as their non-positive spouses. Significant success has been demonstrated on the effectiveness of helping PLHA and their families in coping with their conditions, managing their health and developing skills to re-establish viable incomes. Emphasis has also been put on establishing mechanisms to provide care and support to patients in hospitals, suffering from inadequate attention resulting less from prejudices than from insufficient human resources to attend to the special need of these individuals.

This range of activities has been carried out by the project establishing Self-help Groups (SHG) to assist both HIV positive persons as well as non-positive spouses. These groups have a broader mandate than the more limited saving and loans schemes of SRGs found elsewhere in the HDI, and include provision of psychological help, motivation, health care and so forth.

Through their work in urban and peri-urban areas, the project has also been supportive of the establishment of a consortium of SHGs that has evolved and expanded to become the Myanmar Positive Group (MPG). To date the MPG has become a significant, vocal grassroots organisation representing the interest of a specific group of individuals throughout Myanmar society and mobilising other PLHA.

In other areas, the HIV/AIDS project has attempted to address the increased vulnerability resulting from Cyclone Nargis and the movement of youth into the greater Yangon area. Due to limited funds, support to the cyclone victims has predominately been for the provision of some housing grants as well as limited food distribution to surviving women who are head of households and HIV positive.

The HIV/AIDS project has also been an active supportive participant in the formulation of the government's National AIDS Programme, 2006-2010, launched by the Ministry of Health with a broad base of contributions from numerous national and international aid organisations. In this strategy, the HIV/AIDS project has agreed to address three of the 13 strategic directions identified: Livelihoods, capacity building at the local level, and HIV/AIDS education awareness. These three have been implemented without support to government offices or agents, and directly aimed at community beneficiaries.

In addition to the above, the HIV/AIDS project has recently undertaken a series of pilot activities. Two of these build upon the gains made by the MPG by building linkages between the MPG and cyclone survivors and using the MPG for increasing HIV/AIDS education outreach to PLHA. The third pilot activity focuses on livelihoods in the urban and peri-urban areas, and extending the impact of the SHGs.

These pilot activities include the following:

1. Assistance to the Nargis Cyclone affected HIV positive people. After the cyclone, the HIV/AIDS project worked with the Myanmar Positive Group (MPG) to identify the immediate needs of PLHAs in Yangon. A significant number of PLHAs had lost their homes and had their livelihoods disrupted, and in collaboration with the Phoenix Self-help Group the project assisted in rebuilding homes and distributing rice, oil and beans.
2. The HIV project is currently supporting the MPG to conduct a series of treatment workshops, throughout the SHGs. The aim of these workshops is to educate PLHAs about antiretroviral treatment and to reduce the incidence of resistance to antiretroviral drugs.
3. Complementing treatment programs with livelihood assistance: Building upon above experience allowed the HIV project to better appreciate the needs of PLHAs and it conducted focus group discussions with people living with HIV and found that quite a number of them do not have access to SHGs. The major reason is that they feel isolated as a result of their social status (low education, low economic status) and that they do not have time to interact with SHGs as they use their time seeking odd jobs to feed their families. The project then associated with MSF-Holland and Aide Médicale Internationale (AMI); two INGOs providing antiretroviral treatment programs in Myanmar, to address the livelihood needs of the patients. The project is now providing assistance to 25 AIDS households referred by the two INGOs. It is also working in partnership with the MPG network of positive women to provide livelihood assistance to an additional 25 women-headed and AIDS affected households. This complementary activity is working well, treatment compliance is successful, and supportive livelihood programs are in place.

Lastly, the project will establish linkages with a joint UNDP and United Nations Inter Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) which has recently been prepared and accepted to “Address Human Trafficking and HIV/AIDS through Safe Migration and Vulnerability Reduction Initiatives.” This 12-month project is to be carried out to integrate these issues in the HDI programme area to address migration with high risk of HIV/AIDS and with high rates of human trafficking. In addition to advocating to local authorities about these migration issues, the project will also undertake capacity training to HDI staff on risk factors related to migration, and focus on HIV prevention through education awareness.

8.2 Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey

The IHLCA survey was conducted by UNDP, UNOPS and IDEA International (Canada) in collaboration with the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development. The project was designed to collect and analyse household data, in order to meet the urgent need for good quality information at the household level on which to develop both appropriate policy and effective programme interventions. The studies represent the first reliable, official and shared assessment of poverty for government and donors alike, on which to base policy and/or programme planning.

The purpose of the project is to contribute to well-informed, pro-poor decision-making in order to improve living conditions for the poor in Myanmar. Its immediate objective is to assess the living conditions and poverty situation of the Myanmar population. Two outputs were envisioned:

1. A nation-wide integrated household living conditions assessment.
2. Awareness raised and consensus reached on the priorities for improving household living conditions.

The GoM has now approved two of the IHLCA reports: the overall *Poverty Profile*, and *MDG Relevant Information*. These reports have been translated into Myanmar and shared through a series of 16 National Dissemination Workshops across the country between August and December of 2007. It is not clear how much the lack of data on poverty has hindered the development of national policies on rural development and poverty alleviation, but the publication and dissemination of this information removes this as an obstacle. While the IAM is unaware of any systematic monitoring of the survey's use, a brief internet search indicates reference to it, donors have commented on its value, and it has been cited in recent documents such as the Post Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA).

Several tasks remain incomplete. A third and fourth publication, the Vulnerability Study, and the Technical Report have been completed but as yet remain to be published. Plans to update the IHLCA survey have been stalled because no suitable modality has yet been found to mobilize the government survey teams. And finally, the GOM wishes to carry out a Purchasing Power Parity study which the UNDP has agreed to support if the government is still interested in pursuing this after being fully briefed by the World Bank of the complexities and technical requirements of the study. Discussions are currently underway between the UNDP and World Bank, and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

The IHLCA survey and accompanying processes are particularly relevant to the UNDP in building on and informing its extensive grass roots experience. In addition, it provides a model for possible follow up, not only in updating the general survey, but in addressing possible thematic surveys. However, mandate interpretation inhibits UNDP undertaking even policy dialogue, and to the knowledge of the IAM, no one has taken on the logical follow up of engaging the government on pro-poor policy discussions based on the information provided. In any other country this would be the natural role of the UNDP in its central mandate of supporting national capacity to meet MDG targets. While awareness raising has probably been attained through the dissemination process, there is no clear process for reaching consensus on the priorities for improving household living conditions.

9. GENDER

Men and women have equal rights under the law in Myanmar. However while legally and theoretically women have the same rights as men, they are not able to enjoy these due in large part to the imposition of conservative cultural beliefs and practices in conjunction with a dearth of legal accountability mechanisms.

In spite of persistent problems, gender based discrimination in Myanmar does not appear to be highly visible or extreme. While men are generally seen as breadwinners, and women are responsible for managing the home, gender roles are not rigid. At the level of poor households men and women have to pool their efforts for survival. It was reported by both women and men that there is considerable joint planning and decision making in their households, although men are more likely to prevail in bigger decisions, whereas women are almost unquestioned involved in the small day to day ones. The lesser visibility of gender-based power differences does not take away from the triple burden on most women in terms of productive and household (reproductive) tasks as well as community level commitments.

Further barriers include the lack of women's access to appropriate (reproductive) healthcare, and disadvantages in relation to mobility and access to credit, productive assets, markets, information etc. Due to cultural reticence, the issue of gender based violence is almost never discussed, and is probably significantly under-reported. Myanmar is also an ethnically diverse country with culturally different gender traditions.

Within the UNDP there are considerable efforts to address gender equality and women's empowerment. Programme documents address gender objectives at a general level: Gender awareness will be promoted, women's practical needs and their unpaid reproductive work will be considered, separate consultation with men and women at the village level will take place and sex disaggregated data will be collected.³⁹ The HIV/AIDS programme incorporates a gendered analysis and proposes to give special attention to women and girls, including female sex workers, PLHA and their families, and adolescent girls in border areas. UNDP staff at the CO level identifies empowerment of women as a programme objective, although the concept is not articulated in a policy and strategy and integrated into programme plans. Therefore, it is unlikely to be uniformly shared or understood by all staff.

The strength of the MFP, the ICDP/CDRT through the SRG components is that they specifically target women: almost all SRG members and 97% of MF participants are women. Project interventions are specifically focused on the establishment of savings and loan programmes which while supporting women's economic empowerment, do not in themselves necessarily promote gender equality.⁴⁰ However, two recent impact studies of SRGs (in the ICDP programme) and the MF programme identified significant empowerment of women and positive changes in gender relations.⁴¹

The SRG study found that women benefited from SRG participation considerably beyond its livelihood effects, including greater decision making input and participation in income generation activities, more self confidence and self esteem and increased status in the family and the community.⁴² Even levels of domestic conflict were anecdotally reported as declining, as poverty and disputes over scarce resources are a source of conflict. The report identified five principal areas that can form the basis of women's empowerment resulting from SRGs: decision making, voice, knowledge, social mobility and social status.⁴³ The mission was able to verify some of these conclusions: Experienced SRG and MF members were informed, and more vocal and articulate in community meetings than other women. In addition, there was evidence of men's respect for women's achievements, and deferment to them in terms of household finance management and bookkeeping in community activities.

Given the traditional division of roles between women and men, new responsibilities could increase the heavy responsibilities that women already have, even if the status increase was considered useful. However, as in past IAM mission visits there appears to be a sharing of at least some household chores, particularly while women are busy with meetings. Women reported that the rewards were well worth the efforts. To be fair, community work projects

³⁹ CDRT and ICDP Prodocs.

⁴⁰ Accumulated experience with credit programmes elsewhere shows that where gender power relations are highly unequal, men can appropriate the benefits of credit, leaving women the responsibility. Also, women's economic contribution to the household does not necessarily guarantee them greater decision making power or autonomy.

⁴¹ Smith, Reid, "A Hen is Crowing: A gender Impact study of Two UNDP Community Development Programs". July 4, 2006; U Thein Myint & U Kyaw Thu, "Impact Study of Microfinance Project", UNDP/UNOPS, Aug-Sept 2007.

⁴² Smith, p. iv

⁴³ Ibid, p.57. It should be noted that not all are a result of direct SRG primary activities (savings and loans). Knowledge in health and productive skills as well as literacy contributed to women's confidence and ability to find a "voice".

and CBOs also raise the work commitment of men, and the project has only recently begun to consider changes for men as element of a gender approach.

The UNDP has also begun some novel work with men in the CRDT programme in Kachin in order to address men's initial mistrust of women's groups.⁴⁴ While the IAM did not have the opportunity to visit these programmes, it recognizes it as an important initiative.

A women's empowerment approach is not as consistently applied in the other programme aspects, although this is difficult to assess. Disaggregated data on other activities (such as training) are not systematically collected at the village and township level, and the use of the household as the basic level of analysis obscures gender differences among other that might occur within the household. Training community development and Township facilitators to understand the ways that gender norms impinge on SRG members' ability to make and implement choices would improve their capacity as managers and problem solvers. One group of community and township facilitators noted that they had just completed their first ever gender training session, addressing the most basic concepts. They were clearly interested and motivated, perhaps not least because the majority of staff at the township level are women.

The HIV/AIDS programme effectively addresses gender in its analysis and objectives. However, it is difficult to assess gender in the implementation and output stage of the prodocs, where it virtually disappears. The job description of the Agency Project Manager includes to: "advocate, introduce and maintain" a gender sensitive approach/balance in programme implementation. As a management responsibility, this can be further developed and monitored in his/her work plan.

In the light of some loose ends, the IAM team was pleased to note the implementation of the Gender Trust Fund/HDI gender initiative, based on plans made at the end of 2006 and scheduled to start in January 2008. Among its objectives are the analysis of selected gender issues and gender impact, capacity development of all UNDP staff to improve the mainstreaming of gender in all areas, and the integration of gender into the knowledge management capacity of the CO. Given the already strong foundations laid for gender in the HDI programme as well as demonstrated commitment (\$250,000 USD of the total of \$400,000 USD is from HDI funds) this initiative has good potential for consolidating a gender strategy in the HDI programme.

The programme has suffered some delays. A locally hired gender consultant helped to fill the gap as the gender specialist waited for her visa, finally granted in June.⁴⁵ Since then, priority has been directed to incorporating gender in the Early Recovery Programme as well as the PONREPP and cluster work, particularly in the Protection of Women and Children. Staff capacity development was given priority in the Delta region (see section 5), although it has begun elsewhere through the hiring of a local gender specialist.

A fourth objective of the Trust Fund project is to strengthen the UNCT Gender Theme Group and specifically to develop a joint UNIAP-HDI project on anti-trafficking in persons and gender. This project is only recently underway. The IAM recognizes this as a critical issue identified under CEDAW, and an appropriate area for UNDP both due to work in border areas and to the regional nature of the problem.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Smith, op cit p. iv: the study suggested that there were cases of men's mistrust of the groups and worry about losing control hindered women's participation. However, in most case s (not all) resistance is temporary.

⁴⁵ For the present time, this limits her ability to work in other parts of the country.

⁴⁶ The project document received by the IAM combined trafficking, unsafe migration and HIV/AIDS that specifically targets interventions towards people "whose behaviour exposes them to higher risks

10. MONITORING & EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an inherently difficult aspect of any project anywhere. What is desirable is generally not feasible. In the HDI these difficulties are compounded by the structure of the programme comprising five projects as well as the diversity of activities and scale of operation. Whereas satisfactory financial reporting and monitoring has been in place for a long time as has input monitoring, data collection and reporting on results and impact has been largely lacking. A series of IAM and donor missions have raised this issue and with increased emphasis urged the HDI to take action.

The present IAM notes with satisfaction that a concerted effort has been made in the past year to strengthen the M&E system. The prime focus has been the design and implementation of an impact monitoring system. The Micro Finance Project has undertaken an impact study, which fulfils high design standards.⁴⁷ Hence, for the first time, there is solid evidence on the impact of the financial service operations. It is commendable that observations and measurement are not limited to economic variables but also include social dimensions with emphasis on women's status at household and community level. Some of the key findings are summarized in the section on the Micro Finance Project (section 7.3).

The system for impact monitoring for the ICDP and CDRT projects has three elements. The first element is a quantitative household survey using standard statistical methods for determination of sample size and selection of units for observation. In the absence of baseline data the survey uses control units for observation.⁴⁸ Data collection has been completed and a draft report is expected at the end of January, 2009. The present intention is to repeat the survey in three years time.

The second element of the design for impact monitoring of the ICDP and the CDRT is a series of 15 case studies of SRGs. This is commendable as a start, but it would be desirable to increase the number of such studies bearing in mind the very large number of SRGs in the two programmes and the diverse conditions under which they operate. Data collection for the 15 case studies has been completed and a draft report is expected at the end of December (2008).

The third element of the impact monitoring system consists of participatory assessments using two techniques, namely Johari's Window and Participatory Capital Assessment (the spider web). A draft report is expected to be completed by the end of December.

All three components of the impact monitoring plan for ICDP and ICDT provide for gender disaggregated data.

The HIV/AIDS project benefits from baseline studies undertaken in certain locations by predecessors to the present project. Whereas this causes attribution problems, these baseline studies make it possible to observe change over a relatively long period (1996 and onwards). The project intends to conduct annual surveys in all townships where it operates.

for (HIV/AIDS) infection (especially migrant workers, transport and trucking workers, etc) and indirectly toward serving their families and communities" One of the 6 items on the work plan refers specifically to actions with victims of trafficking.

⁴⁷ Impact Study of Microfinance Project. UNOPS/UNDP (Myanmar), August-September 2007.

⁴⁸ In 2006 ICDP and CDRT designed and implemented major household surveys that were supposed to provide baseline data. However, the survey design did not meet with required standards and failed to adequately deal with the issue of attribution when selecting variables for observation. Hence, these surveys failed to serve the intended purpose.

The systems for operational monitoring still leave room for improvements. Time has not made an in-depth analysis of the extensive systems used possible. However, the observations made would seem to permit some general comments on three aspects. The first aspect relates to the formats of reporting. The second aspect is concerned with the focus of operational data collection. A third aspect relates to the scope of data collection and reporting.

The (quarterly) reports produced by ICDP and CDRT hardly provide sufficient information for management purposes. The tables used in the progress reports by the two projects have the following format.

#	Activity	As of December 2007		As of June 2008	
		#	# Benef. hh	#	# Benef. hh

There are several problems with this format. Firstly, a calculation is needed to find out what has been achieved in the reporting period (here January-June). Secondly, since there is no information on what was planned for the period, it is not possible to determine what the information given in the last two columns tells in terms of performance and progress. Thirdly, the aggregated information from the start of the project (2002) hardly tells anything. The IAM was informed that there are figures on planned activities but these figures are not included in the report. It is suggested that the format be changed to provide figures showing what has been planned and what has been achieved. The format can provide for such information for the reporting period only, or for the reporting period and accumulated form the beginning of the year. The information on aggregate achievement from the start of the project is redundant and should not be included in periodic operational monitoring reports.

The narrative in the operational monitoring reports is purely descriptive adding little to the information contained in the tables. The format should include a headline requiring those reporting to include analytical elements. For instance, in each section or sub-section there could be a headline “problems encountered in the period and measures taken to solve them”.

Monitoring focuses on input. For a number of activities this is adequate as output information (rather than impact information) would not add anything. For many activities, however, monitoring of outputs would add information. Hence, there are reasons to review where monitoring of outputs would be justified when taking the cost of such a focus into account.

In spite of intentions expressed in the project documents, the project level reports for the ICDP and CDRT do not consistently disaggregate information by sex. Generally the unit of monitoring is the household, which may make invisible any changes relating to women or men, or the relations between them.

From casual observation it seems that the CDRT and ICDP collect an overwhelming amount of information. This is done at high costs in terms of staff resources, not least at community facilitator and township level. A brief review of the reports compiled at township level leads the IAM to suggest that there is a strong case to critically assess the value of the extensive data collection that is presently made. There are reasons to believe that a significant share of these data and the reports are found to be redundant without use. A reduction in data collection and reporting could free staff resources, particularly at community facilitator level, for work with the communities.

11. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The current extension of HDI-IV covers the period 2008-2010. There seems to be a general consensus that a new or modified programme should be formulated and replace HDI if not by name but possibly in terms of content. The formulation of such a programme will take place in a period where recent events may offer opportunities for breaking new grounds.

The Nargis response has provided a unique opportunity for the international assistance community, including UNDP, to interact with the GOM in a common effort. Both sides have been further exposed to their different modes of operation. Personal and organisational interaction has contributed greater understanding. International agencies have been given the opportunity to demonstrate sincerity, capacity and capability on a broad front. What the wider and immediate implications of the opening for trustful cooperation in a time of crisis will mean for development efforts country wide post-Nargis is open for speculation. Still there are reasons to suggest that the Nargis experience implies a step forward in finding modes of constructive cooperation between the government and the international aid community. As UNDP by its presence came to play a key role, particularly in the early aftermath of the cyclone, the capacity and capability displayed by UNDP hopefully has contributed to strengthen its standing with the GOM, despite the mandate conditions set by the Executive Board.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the mandate for the UNDP-Myanmar has turned to be somewhat elusive. The series of annual EB decisions since 1993, virtually the same in wording from year to year, in fact impose very few restrictions on UNDP. The decisions only state that assistance from UNDP should be clearly targeted towards programmes having grass-roots level impact in a sustainable manner, particularly in the areas of primary health care, HIV/AIDS, education, food security and environment. Different parties make different interpretations of the mandate and interpretations vary over time under influence from the wider political context. However, on the whole the interpretations seem to have been strikingly on the conservative side.

The implication for the possibility for UNDP to provide effective support for sustained development has been significant. The present HDI programme is operated as a mega-NGO with limited constructive cooperation with the administrative structure of the Myanmar state. There are two aspects of this situation which are particularly problematic.

Firstly, as presently operated the HDI service delivery, capacity building and promotion of processes of change at household and community level are unsustainable.⁴⁹ In operational terms this simply means that if UNDP funding and implementation of the HDI programme comes to an end, project activities or parts of them that are not institutionalised in any permanent structure/process will collapse.

The second serious concern is the apparent and significant loss of efficiency as long as HDI cannot engage with government administrative structures at local (township) level. At this level there are cadres of technical staffs who are seriously underused for lack of operational funds and incentives to perform.⁵⁰ Primarily this is a major loss of resources for the nation, translating into poor or non-existent service delivery to the population. From the HDI perspective efficiency losses are also significant. The two community development projects,

⁴⁹ The IAM team recognises individual and community levels of sustainability which have been achieved to some extent. The former includes knowledge, skills and assets of individuals that will remain after projects end; the latter include self-sustaining organisational capacity such as mature SRGs or other committees no longer reliant on outside support.

⁵⁰ For instance the DSA for a township civil servant is the same as in 1993, 15 Kyats (1.25 US cent), which hardly is an incentive to leave the office.

ICDP and CDRT, support a wide range of activities requiring a likewise wide range of technical skills for successful design and effective implementation. Furthermore, the project activities are geographically dispersed nation-wide. For cost reasons it is not possible for the projects to hire technical staffs as would be required. In many of the areas there are notable limitations in the private sector to fill the gaps through ad hoc contracts. However, in most cases there is the technical competence and underused capacity in township department offices of agriculture, health, education, etc. The possibility to engage this resource would decisively increase the quality and impact of the HDI programme. Furthermore, it would increase the probability of sustainability.

It is interesting to note that the interpretation of the mandate has failed to make a distinction between different dimensions of the Myanmar state. The administrative structure has been lumped together with other dimensions and this undistinguished whole has been referred as 'the government'. Others, including the EU, make a distinction. While not working with ministries at central level, support to service delivery can be provided to technical line departments at township level. As argued above, there is a strong case for a reassessment of the mandate in this direction from a development and poverty reduction point of view.

The roadmap to democracy outlines a clearer distinction between different elements of the state and indeed provides for the establishment of a legislature. Furthermore, it is foreseen that the leadership of the executive structure will be transferred to civilian position holders. These developments may further reduce the contradiction between *not* supporting the junta and assisting a poverty stricken population to a better life.

For the future role of UNDP in Myanmar and for the future role of the HDI, the interpretation of the mandate will determine the space within which UNDP can position itself strategically. Having established this space, alternative options to translate a strategic position into interventions and activities can follow. In this phase the potential of the different projects and activities of HDI to contribute to the achievement of strategic goals for UNDP in Myanmar should be assessed in relation to other options. This analysis may result in modifications of the HDI programme. Part of the process may include studies of particular elements of HDI or project components to complement the timely impact studies and to provide a basis for formulating exit strategies should the conclusion be that not all activities, components or projects in the present HDI programme should be continued.

These observations have a bearing on the recommendations that are given below. Activities for which the remaining life-span *may* be only two years should not be burdened with recommendations that take time to implement and/or make little difference for the limited time they will be continued.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

In general the IAM finds that the HDI programme makes substantial contributions to human development for a large number of individuals and communities across the country. While generally positive about the programme, especially given its external constraints, the Team offers a number of focused recommendations with an intention to contribute suggestions for improvements arising from our external perspective. A large number of recommendations do not necessarily reflect an opinion that a programme is poorly designed or not performing well. In all programmes, including very good ones, there is scope for improvements. However, when offering recommendations it is essential to explicitly reflect on what a programme management realistically can respond to. Furthermore, the programme management should see the points for what they are, namely recommendations, and judge these on their relevance and feasibility. In this spirit the IAM offers the following

recommendations for consideration. Where applicable, reference is made to the relevant sections in brackets.

Crosscutting issues

- ❖ A reassessment of the EB mandate for UNDP Myanmar should focus on two aspects in particular. Firstly, there is a strong need for a policy dialogue with the GOM for which UNDP is uniquely placed. The dialogue may focus on disaster prevention and response as well as poverty alleviation in view of the MDGs. Secondly, very significant gains in the impact and sustainability of HDI activities would result, if provisions were made in the mandate to facilitate the mobility and motivation of technical staff at local (township) level to cooperate with the HDI at community level. (11)
- ❖ As a matter of high priority and urgency the UNDP should initiate a process that would lead to the formulation of a new or modified programme to follow after the current phase of the HDI.
- ❖ Having assessed the relevance of different activities or projects in the present HDI in relation to a strategic positioning of UNDP's future role in Myanmar, exit strategies for activities and projects that do not fit in relation to such a strategic positioning should be developed and implemented. In projects and components that will be phased out no activities should be initiated that cannot be completed prior to the exit date in 2010.
- ❖ A gender policy and strategy should be formulated for the HDI programme in order to ensure there is a shared understanding, commitment and objectives for gender equality. (9)
- ❖ As effective programme delivery requires sophisticated understanding of community participatory planning, organisational and gender concepts and methodologies, the programme should further enhance its efforts on capacity building for local staff (township and village level). (7,8,9)

CDRT and ICDP

- ❖ Criteria should be revised for assessment of SRG maturity to the following; ability to manage the books, performance in loan repayment and savings. Only backstopping at request should be offered SRGs that have proven themselves in relation to these criteria. (7.1)
- ❖ The book-keeping system for the SRGs should be significantly simplified drawing upon the experience of such a system in the CDRT. (7.1)

Microfinance

- ❖ The MF project should provide funding to mature SRG groups in townships that overlap with ICDP in order to ease the constraints on the capacity of the common fund to meet members demand for credit. (7.3)

- ❖ A strong case can be made for the revision of the MF loan product portfolio and the policy on savings deposits in order to reduce confusion among clients, provide an improved savings deposit services and expand the loan capital.(7.3)

Monitoring and evaluation

- ❖ The number of SRG case studies should be increased to adequately reflect the variety of experiences. (10)
- ❖ Operational monitoring data collection and reporting should be revised with the view to improve relevance for management purposes, increase reporting on outputs rather than inputs and to significantly reduce the overwhelming amount of data collection at present. (10)

The Integrated Community Early Recovery Component

- ❖ In view of the transitory nature of the ICER/ICDP programme at this time, management should carefully monitor the following:
 - The experience of villages that make the transition from ICER to regular ICDP programmes with particular attention to the strengths and weakness of SRGs and ERCs
 - Arrangements for coordination of the programme planning process between the ICER and the ICDP, particularly at the level of the Project Managers.
 - The adequacy of staffing to meet the challenges of ER at all levels of implementation. (6)

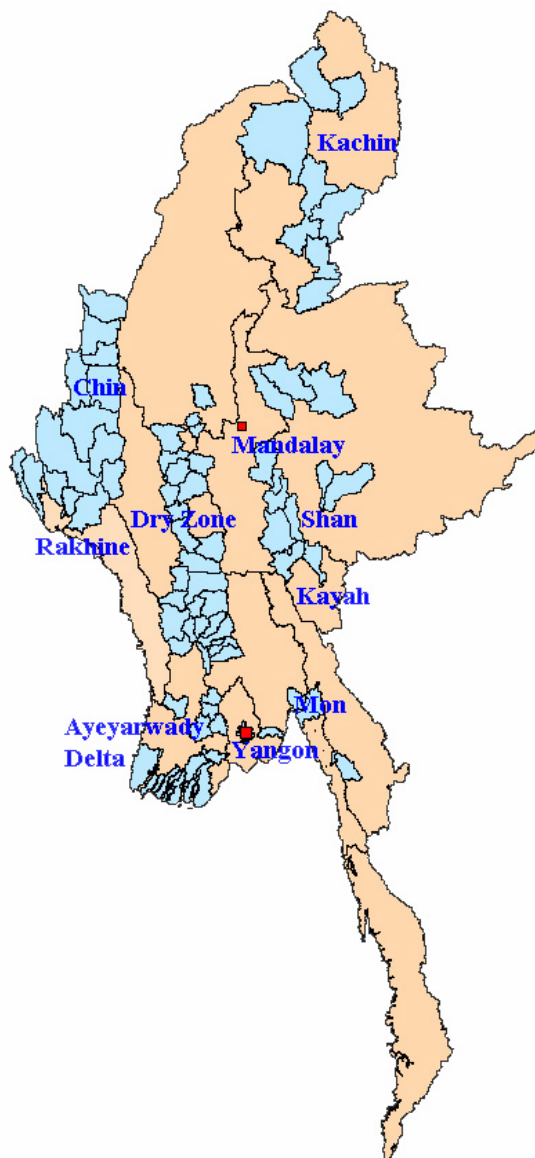
HIV/AIDS

- ❖ The HIV/AIDS programme should focus on training of trainers in the CDRT and ICDP to take over the responsibility for awareness raising activities in the two project areas and wrap up such activities in other areas, freeing resources to expand current achievements in peri-urban areas. (8.1)

Annex A. Project map

The following map⁵¹ illustrates the locality of the current HDI activities, in 61 townships in 6 different regions throughout Myanmar.

The Southern Shan State includes nine townships. The Dry Zone comprises fourteen townships, and the Ayeyarwady Delta has ten townships. Another three regions comprise an additional 27 HDI townships: Northern and Eastern Rakhine State (6 townships), Chin State (9 townships), and Kachin State (7 townships), Mon State 4 and Kayah (1).



⁵¹ Sources: <http://www.mm.undp.org/GEO/Geograph.html>

Annex B. Management Response to IAM 2007 Recommendations

UNDP Management Response to IAM Report of June 2007			
Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>1. Strategic Management</p> <p>UNDP Myanmar needs to establish a new Country Office position of “HDI Programme Manager” under the DRR (programmes) with direct operational responsibility for ICDP and CDRT and the scope to provide support to integration of lesson learned between all HDI projects.</p>	<p>1.1 All community-focused HDI projects to be brought under one management, under direct execution by the UNDP country office.</p>	<p>1.1 Approval from HQs obtained to execute CDRT, HIV and IHLCA projects under the Direct Execution of UNDP and MF project under the NGO Execution. An audit arrangement has been initiated to audit the UNOPS executed projects, as a prerequisite for the handing over process from UNOPS to UNDP. The audit will be undertaken between 27 October and 15 December 2008. Technical evaluations for HIV, MF and IHLCA projects have been planning. Suitable consultants have been identified and visas have been requested to the government authority concerned. UNDP Myanmar has restructured its organisational structure by putting all community-focused HDI projects under one programme unit that is supervised and coordinated by one Assistant Resident Representative.</p>	<p>1.1 We notes that their transfer of CDRT, HIV/A and IHCLA under Direct Execution and MF under NGO execution is well under way. The plan for transfer is well designed. The delay in the process due to Nargis will not make the transfer at the end of December possible but is foreseen to take place in the first quarter of 2009. The organisational and management structure. for the program-me is still under discussion.</p> <p>We reiterate the recommendation from IAM 2007 to establish a unified management structure for all HDI projects, not only CDRT and ICDP, with a professional rural development expert as programme director to which the project directors report in order to ensure synergies and streamlining of activities.</p>

Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>Gender and Vulnerability</p> <p>2.1 HDI efforts in HIV/AIDS should focus on the most vulnerable groups amongst others (returned migrants), rather than introducing education programmes in CDRT and ICDP villages, where in many cases contact with the outside world is very limited. Where awareness sessions are held, provide separate sessions for women, for men and for youths.</p> <p>2.2 The risk that men may play a dominant role with regards to loans obtained through their wives from SRGs be monitored and addressed adequately.</p>	<p>2.1 HIV project will emphasize coverage of high prevalence areas in and outside of HDI programme areas. The HIV project operates by contextualizing AIDS as a development issue, as recommended by the Mid term Project Technical Review of 2004. Contextualizing HIV and AIDS as a development issue allows it to address the potential threat of the disease before HIV and AIDS can ravage the community, deplete its resources and adversely affecting the gains from the community development initiatives.</p> <p>2.2 SRG formation has been facilitated carefully, step by step by project staff (community development facilitators) and it takes up to 6-9 months for a community group to reach maturity or stabilization level or graduation level. Awareness raising and sensitization is also crucial for attitudinal and behavioural change of such men in achieving harmonious relationship between men and women.</p>	<p>2.1 The HIV project continues to implement a community volunteer outreach education and community capacity enhancement programme in 71 selected HDI villages where HIV and AIDS pose a threat to the communities (These villages are migration affected areas.) The outreach education that started in 2005, involves volunteer women (aged 25 and above) and girls (aged 15-24) who were trained to addresses gender related HIV vulnerabilities of women and girls through peer education. In 2007, the HIV project included a programme for men and young men. The project encouraged HIV positive women to take a bigger role in the outreach education programme and has hired four HIV positive women to oversee the outreach programmes in the field.</p> <p>2.2 ICDP and CDRT projects have focused more on monitoring Common Fund management as well as loan and repayment management of SRGs. UNDP CO has been implementing a Gender specific project in support of promoting gender equality in the HDI projects. Training for project staff and community members is part of the outputs of the project. Its aims to address inharmonious relationship of men and women both at SRG and community levels. There will be an extensive training sessions in the project townships in November and December 2008.</p>	<p>2.1 The HIV/AIDS project has taken steps to refocus its activities to areas of high prevalence and to populations at particular risk. The project management is advised to look into the project's comparative advantages in focusing on awareness activities or activities in support of HIV positive persons.</p> <p>2.2 Field observations we have made do not suggest that this is a problem.</p>

Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>2.3 Carefully monitor the impact that the new 'unorganised' credit channels have in the communities and to address possible negative impact on SRGs and on the improved status of women.</p> <p>2.4 With respect to special activities for the most vulnerable, the poorest of the poor, the IAM calls for great care so complement and not undermine or replace existing social safety networks that traditionally exist in most villages for the poorest and most vulnerable women, men and families. Instead HDI needs to have a clear understanding of those other services.</p>	<p>2.3 The IAM recommendation is well-noted. An evaluation of the CBO/committee modality will be part of an evaluation plan for elements of the community development projects.</p> <p>2.4 Greater attention shall be paid to improving tools and processes for prioritising household and village level needs for improving livelihoods and mitigating vulnerability of the poor.</p>	<p>2.3 The CBOs under CDRT have been closely monitored by project staff. CBO training manual was developed by the project (12 modules including group development, establishment of rule and regulation, role& responsibility of committee and group member, fund management, etc.) which later training was organised for all CBOs. So far there has been no problem found for this issue.</p> <p>2.4 Conceptual framework for vulnerability has been developed (Jan 2008). Related tools and instruments have also been developed to prioritize villages by intensity of vulnerability and to identify the most vulnerable households. These tools have been field-testing and subsequently finalizing for wider application in the HDI programme in 2008.</p> <p>PoP Strategy and special assistance packages to respond to priority needs of PoP members were developed in 2007. Lessons learned are being incorporated in revision of the strategy and reflected in the project strategy for ICDP and CDRT for the extension phase. In addition to this the strategy for most vulnerable group has been drafted by the project and piloted.</p>	<p>2.3 There appears to have been no negative impact on the status of women, as a number of women report access to these loans.</p> <p>2.4 Considerable progress has been made in this area. The IAM notes also that efforts have been made to address the poorest in the post Nargis recovery through cash for work for those without land or other productive assets</p>

Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>3 Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>3.1 Regular monitoring information is needed on progress, performance and results at different organisational/operational levels, including beneficiary level. An information needs assessment at those different levels should be made the starting point for design; critical scrutiny of “needs” should be made to maintain simplicity and reduce cost; Variables and data must permit aggregation between projects and geographic areas; A good strategy would be to give due visibility to the lowest staff level achievement against work plan targets.</p> <p>3.2 On time recovery rate needs to feature more prominently in operational monitoring for ICDP and CDRT in order to initiate actions to correct poor repayment performance of the SRGs.</p>	<p>3.1 The M&E activities of ICDP and CDRT to be coordinated, with actual data collection and information gathering beginning in the early 2007. A conceptual and operational basis of an IM system to be in place by 2008.</p> <p>3.2 CDRT has conducted training workshops covering clusters of SRGs. The cluster forum served as learning forum for SRGs. In the cluster workshop each SRG presented and shared the information about their status which including the repayment status has enabled them to share their experience, interact with other groups and learn from each other. Later each group has established their action plan for further follow up or further action which including the improvement of repayment rate of their own group. It has been reported that the SRG cluster workshops were effective and very helpful in improving the status of many SRGs after joining the cluster workshop. Through this approach the SRG networking has slowly</p>	<p>3.1 Framework for M&E and Learning system developed in June/July 2007. M&E comprises two components: (a) Operations Monitoring – to track progress and achievements in terms of activities and outputs on a quarterly (and for some projects on a six monthly) basis; (b) Impact Monitoring – to assess outcome and impact of project interventions with data to be collected from field surveys and focus group discussions using household level questionnaire and participatory monitoring instruments (including client surveys). Progress to date is satisfactory although impact-related data collected was delayed due to interruption in field-level project activities following the protests of Sep-Oct 2007</p> <p>3.2 SRG cluster level workshops now being practiced in all townships (In ICDP, SRG village level workshops have been practiced, while cluster level workshops are being planned). Training also provided to SRGs as needed and staff intensively monitor on this issue. Impact questionnaire for household level information on impact has been redesigned, using fewer indicators and collecting the information at household level (of sample SRG and LG members). 2007 Development Results (Interim Report) completed first week of Feb 2008. Final report to be prepared during 2008 when impact-related data and analysis are available.</p>	<p>3.1 Decisive steps have been taken to address the weaknesses of the M&E system. A solid system for impact monitoring is now in place. An impact study of the MF activities is already produces and a series of three impact studies related to the ICDP a CDRT will be available shortly. The programme is congratulated for these achievements. Less attention has been given to the systems for operational monitoring in CDRT and ICDP where there is room for considerable improvements.</p> <p>3.2 Such information including information on loans overdue is presently reported at township level. However, this information is lost in the aggregation to project reports.</p>

Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>3.3 About 10 case studies should be available to show impact of the SRG/CBO groups on their communities and additional case studies on some of the members (suggested 2 per group) and especially the reported benefits to the family.</p> <p>3.4 Impact evaluation should be addressed in two ways: client satisfaction surveys that are understood and usable by villagers as well as sample surveys.</p> <p>3.5 Regarding satisfaction surveys we recommend: (1) there should only be a few very closely related questions against one indicator; and, (ii) the spider web should not be a part of the revised M&E system.</p> <p>3.6 There is a need for a thorough modification in the questionnaires and methodology being used for collecting information for impact assessment; the present baseline surveys undertaken by</p>	<p>established itself within cluster, township and between townships.</p> <p>3.3 Under the M&E system, Purposive Studies are to be conducted throughout the year on specific development issues identified, as well as Lessons Learned and Stories from the Field as “knowledge pieces” that provide insights of field staff and beneficiary communities about the HDI project/programme activities.</p> <p>3.4/3.5/3.6 A local consulting firm is engaged to assist the UNDP HDI Monitoring Group to conduct field surveys and data/information gathering for a maximum of two months, December (2007) - January (2008). The consulting firm provides survey specialists and data analysts at a cost of approximately US\$20,000, while field level data collection is done by the HDI project field staff. Sample surveys and focused group discussions with beneficiary communities are conducted to collect development outcome and impact related information and insights into effectiveness of intervention activities</p>	<p>3.3 ICDP and CDRT projects have taken action on closer monitoring and tracking of SRG common fund management including lending activities. 10 case studies of SRG are included in IA 2008 by consultant.</p> <p>Impact related data and information has been collected in the sample townships. UNDP is working on a mechanism to develop a structural linkage between of the HDI M&E m and the UNDP corporate results reporting system.</p> <p>3.4 Under the guidance of Policy Unit, formats and methods of operations and impact monitoring agreed. Discussion on transparency monitoring has been done with ACs and TCs. Needs to be checked periodically. Both elements included in revised impact assessment currently being done with MMRD and Policy unit.</p> <p>3.5 Two participatory tools - CDRT spider web assessment and Johari Window – are being used in the currently conducting impact assessment.</p> <p>3.6. See # 3.2 above.</p>	<p>3.3 The decision to increase the number of case studies to 15 is welcome. It is hoped that this is only seen as a start of further SRG case studies to get a better representation of the diversity of conditions under which SRGs operate.</p> <p>3.4/3.5 The choices regarding what specific methods to use for impact monitoring and evaluation seem well founded. The problem with the spider method is the appropriate-ness of using it by villagers for self-evaluation on their own.</p>

Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>ICDP and CDRT do not have the design that will serve the intended impact monitoring and should therefore not be followed up with repeat surveys.</p> <p>3.7 The strategy of channelling credit to 'informal' and 'unorganised' committees to further extend credit facilities at community level should be carefully re-examined. We are concerned about the discipline of these groups, the chances of eroding discipline among the co-located SRGs and that it is the relatively better off segment of the communities that is cornering larger benefits at the cost of poor SRG members.</p>	<p>3.7 The performance of the committees will be carefully assessed and will be subject to an evaluation. This will include the dynamics between SRGs and the Committees. Results will lead to any necessary adjustments being made, before being replicated on a broader scale.</p> <p>We should include an evaluation of this in the policy unit evaluations or project evaluation as well, though we haven't done to date.</p>	<p>3.7. HDI assistance package is developed in response to expressed needs of the target beneficiaries including the PoP group members. Such assistance comprises a combination of income earning support, small capital grant and micro credit, primary health care and nutrition, basic education including non-formal education, HIV/AIDS awareness.</p> <p>Reflected in project strategy of ICDP and CDRT for extension phase ICDP does not have a plan to channel credit through CBOs, for now. But we are considering to link up with MF – detailed work-out meeting is to happen at an appropriate timing. Although the fund is provided through CBOs/committee but the target beneficiaries are all targeted at C & D category (poor and poorest). The CBO capacity building training module has been developed in CDRT. TOT training were conducted for project staffs and training for CBOs were conducted in all townships and all CBOs have been closely monitored.</p>	

Issues and Recommendations of IAM 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>4 Area of Integration</p> <p>4.1 HIV/AIDS should concentrate on high risk areas in and outside the HDI programme delivery areas.</p> <p>4.2 Where shifting cultivation is prevalent, the IAM would suggest that experience from different countries in the region is inventoried for guidance.</p> <p>4.3 We recommend against a “rights based approach” to programming the HDI as it will not yield a useful dialogue for HDI at any level. We would support “rights based results” as a rallying point for staff and to motivate the needed improvements in M and E.</p> <p>4.4 It is recommended that regular exchanges are organised between UNDP and the various INGOs. This will maximise the scope for synergy for the generally common causes. UNDP should take the lead by informing the relevant INGOs about their preparedness to cooperate and synergise.</p>	<p>4.1 HIV project will emphasize coverage of high prevalence areas in and outside of HDI programme areas.</p> <p>4.2 Increased emphasis will be given to leveraging technical expertise of UN agencies (such as FAO) and INGOs having presence in Myanmar.</p> <p>4.3. Further articulation of the proposed approach is required in order to operationalise it.</p> <p>4.4. Partnerships with other UN agencies to be forged; with UNHCR in northern Rakhine; with UNODC in Wa region. Similar cooperation and partnerships with international NGOs to be promoted in relevant areas and townships.</p>	<p>4.1 Reflected in extension phase of HIV project A proposal to expand to high prevalent areas outside HDI has been discussed with the project counterpart, but was advised by NAP to just concentrate and intensify activities in existing sites.</p> <p>4.2 ICDP provides awareness raising session when providing A1 stove to the community, mentioning the negative effect of shifting cultivation and the importance of environment conservation. CDRT has subcontracted with local NGO to carry out environmental awareness raising and education and training in project villages particularly for new villages.</p> <p>4.3. UNDP management to seek clarification from Review Mission Leader.</p> <p>4.4. “Partnership mapping” is being developed by the projects in townships where the projects are active. These include information on who (UN agencies, INGO/NGOs, bilateral donor projects) is doing what in each township, complementarities between their activities and HDI activities, comparative advantages and possibilities for cooperation.</p>	<p>4.1 Within the restriction noted under ‘action initiated’ the project reports a concentration of efforts to areas with high prevalence and populations exposed to high risk.</p> <p>4.2 The programme has taken no action on this recommendation. We see this as a wise decision as it is unclear how and to what extent the projects concerned could address the complex economic, social and cultural issues invariably</p> <p>4.3 The apparent confusion surrounding this recommendation from 2007 remains.</p> <p>4.4 As this issue was not included in our ToR, we are not in a position to make a comment.</p>

UNDP Management Response to IAM Report of June 2007	UNDP Management Response	Action Initiated	2008 IAM Comments
<p>5 Planning Mechanisms</p> <p>6.1 Replace the PRA methodology with a methodology that involves the following steps: 1) livelihood mapping at household level (clustering households on the basis of common resource base and sources of livelihood) and identification of constraints (including indebtedness) to improving income and food security, 2) identification of opportunities for agriculture diversification, extension and productivity improvements, 3) community level identification of one or two infrastructure investments of high priority and 4) community decision on how to prioritise between activities identified in steps 1 and 2 and the infrastructure activities identified in step 3.</p> <p>6.2 The planned additional focus on the Poorest of the Poor should be based on their own perceptions and needs for support they require, and take into account any existing social safety networks that have supported the poorest individuals and families so far. Given that they have very little in common, little time and no money to spare and no scope for risk</p>	<p>6.1 The HDI projects have used PRA and needs assessment (at village level) to determine needs of poorer groups in poor villages. Support has indeed been provided to enable the poor to have access to a combination of the livelihoods assets. What may be needed is to improve the PRA process to ensure that HDI support is dynamically responsive to evolving needs of the poor in HDI villages.</p> <p>6.2 HDI experience with PoP group formation will be tested and support strategies to reach our assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable will be developed.</p>	<p>6.1 The PRA process and tools were reviewed by staff during annual workshop, to improve response to needs of poor at household level.</p> <p>6.2 Community Development projects have developed PoP strategy and pilot tested assistance. Outcomes were reviewed in Jul 2007 and PoP further fine-tuned.</p> <p>There may be an existing social network (e.g. monastery feeding the destitute) in some villages, but not much support in terms of livelihood development, credit, sustainable housing programme, etc.</p>	<p>6.1 While the PRA continues to be an effective and relevant technique to establish prioritised needs at the community level, the IAM notes the same weakness identified in the 2007 IAM: the focus invariably tends to be on communal needs rather than household and individual (gender disaggregated) needs. Participants tend to separate their needs from "community" ones (rather than aggregate individual priorities to identify community ones)</p>

<p>taking, the formation of special PoP groups is not recommended. After analysing the different causes of their extreme poverty (old age, disability, frequent migration, natural disasters, death of spouse, exclusion from community, etc.) specific support activities need to be designed which complement, rather than replace, any existing social safety network (e.g. temple, church, rich merchant, school).</p>		<p>Conceptual framework and tool for targeting most vulnerable households will further strengthen targeting PoP/Vulnerable. This will be done in 2008.</p>	
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Annex C. HDI Programme Budget in USD

Annex-C- HDI Programme Budget (in US\$) HDI-IV (2003 - 2008)

	HDI- IV (2003 - 2007)		Total 2003-2008	2003 Expenditure	2004 Expenditure	2005 Expenditure	2006 Expenditure	2007 Expenditure	2008 Allocations
1	Integrated Community Dev. Project		25.331.099	2.688.966	2.529.455	4.445.318	5.667.360	6.472.346	3.527.654
		c/s – Italy	5.422		5.536	(114)			- 0
		c/s -UK/Dfid	300.000						300.000
		c/s-SIDA	1.172.100						1.172.100
		Gross	26.808.621	2.688.966	2.534.991	4.445.204	5.667.360	6.472.346	4.999.754
2	Nargis Early Recovery								
		c/s-UNDP BCPR	2.600.000						2.600.000
		c/s-Dfid/UK	2.177.437						2.177.437
		c/s-Aus	959.693						959.693
		c/s-Norway	690.488						690.488
		c/s-UAE (Khalifa Zayed Foundation)	750.000						750.000
			7.177.618						7.177.618

	HDI- IV (2003 – 2007)		total	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 allocations
3	Community Development for Remote Townships		19.114.884	1.943.521	1.676.730	4.823.242	3.541.988	4.072.239	3.057.164
		c/s – Australia	3.376.611	108.681	109.329	529.066	519.449	580.562	1.529.524
		c/s – UK	2.552.767			482.066	925.886	199.906	944.909
		c/s – NZ	359.975			108.065	54.326	184.828	12.756
		c/s – SIDA	3.091.397			625.380	726.714	1.200.063	539.240
		Gross	28.495.634	2.052.202	1.786.059	6.567.819	5.768.363	6.237.598	6.083.593
4	Enhancing Capacity of HIV/AIDS		4.111.515	569.705	429.911	482.426	868.922	943.719	816.832
		c/s – Japan	297.059	157.046	97.239	(24.913)	13.522	954	53.211
		Gross	4.408.574	726.751	527.150	457.513	882.444	944.673	870.043
5	Micro-Finance		8.776.816	500.581	1.161.111	1.311.816	1.479.719	1.493.907	2.829.682
6	Integrated Household Assessment		2.631.890	440.048	1.201.134	429.103	210.331	21.341	329.933
7	Agricultural Sector Review		736.307	290.812	425.692	19.803	- 0	- 0	- 0
		Total Gross	79.035.460	6.699.360	7.636.137	13.231.258	14.008.217	15.169.865	22.290.623
		Cost Sharing	16.860.849	265.727	212.104	1.719.550	2.239.897	2.166.313	11.729.358
		Total HDI - IV	62.174.611	6.433.633	7.424.033	11.511.708	11.768.320	13.003.552	10.561.265

Annex D. IAM Itinerary

Programme for the Assessment Mission (3 November – 28 November 2008)

Date & Time	Programme	Arrival			Participants/ Accompanied by	Place	Remarks
		GWB	GLS	LEB			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ms. Gabriela ByronMr. Glen SwansonMr. Lars Birgegaard	03 Nov. 2008	31 Oct. 2008		29 Nov. 2008		
					29 Nov. 2008		
					29 Nov. 2008		
Monday, 03 November 2008							
09:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Meeting with responsible staff for logistics arrangement/office/etc.		X	x	AL, HTTPW, MGM	UNDP	
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Meeting with Senior Management		X	x	RR, CD, DRRs	UNDP	
11:30 a.m. – 13:30 p.m.	Briefing on HDI and discussions on “Follow up to Recommendations” of last year Assessment Mission Report		X	x	RR, CD, DRRs, ARRs, Advisors, PMs, JPO, APMs	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	Postponed
14:30 – 17:00 p.m.	Review of documents by mission members		X	x			GWB arrival
Tuesday, 04 November 2008							
09:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Project briefing: ICER, ICDP and CDRT	x	X	x	DTF (selected), DD, AM, RI, HTTPK, MMK, AL, AK, PJ	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	
12:30 – 13:30 p.m.	Meeting with Senior Management	x	X	x	RR, CD, DRRs	RR’s Office	
14:30 – 16:00 p.m.	Project briefing: MF	x			DD, HTTPK, UTAP, PACT	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	
	Project briefing: HIV/AIDS		X		DD, MMK, PR, JD	MMK Office	
	Project briefing: IHLCA project	x			MHY, SR, NL, HTTPW	UMHY Office	
16:00 – 17:00 p.m.	Meeting with HDI DEX Service Center	x			DRR(O), JNNL +	DEX Office	Postponed
	Meeting with Communications Unit		x		JW, CT, NNA	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	
	Meeting with Internal Oversight Unit	x		x	PM, MS, NGH	Oversight Unit Office	
16:00 p.m. onwards	Discussion on HDI extension 2008-2010	x	x	x	Advisory Group of UNDP	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	Postponed

wednesday, 05 november 2008							
08:00 – 08:30 a.m.	Meeting with US Ambassador Open Open	x	x	x	CD	US Embassy	CDA will meet
13:30 – 14:30 p.m.	Meeting with Country Representative of World Vision (INGO) Open Open	x	x	x		World Vision Office	Country Rep. will meet
thursday, 06 November 2008							
08:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	HIV/AIDS site visit in Yangon	x	x	x	HIV/AIDS project RR, CD, DRRs	Project site in Yangon UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	
13:30 – 15:30 p.m.	Meeting with UNICEF/IOM/FAO/UNAIDS/WFP/UNFPA/UNOPS(3D Fund)	x	x	x			
16:30 – 17:30 p.m.	Meeting with Japanese Ambassador	x	x	x		Japanese Embassy	Mr. Mitsuji Suzuka (Counsellor) Ms. Natsuko Ito (Third Sec)
Friday, 07 November							
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Meeting with British Ambassador and Dfid personnel						Postponed
Friday, 07 November to Tuesday, 11 November: Field visits to the Delta, Dry and Shan areas							
Wednesday, 12 November							
09:00 – 12:00 noon	Discussions on “Follow up to Recommendations” of last year Assessment Mission Report	x	x	x	CD, DRRs, ARR, Advisors, PMs, JPO, APMs, PACT	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	
12:00 noon – 13:30 p.m.	Discussion on M & E system	x	x	x	MHY, SR, SC, LS and M&E team	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room	
15:00 – 16:00 p.m.	Meeting with DEX Center	x	x	x	SM, DD, JNNL	SM’s Office	
Thursday, 13 November to Saturday, 15 November 2008: Field Visit to Mon and Kayin)							
Sunday, 16 November: Document review Report writing, preparation for presentation							
Monday, 17 November: Document review, Report writing, preparation for presentation							
Tuesday, 18 November							
11:30 – 12:30	Meeting with Dfid						
15:45 – 16:45	Meeting with DRR(P) at DRR(P)’s Office						
16:45 – 17:45	Meeting with RR of UNDP at RR’s Office						
Wednesday, 19 November 2008							
09:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Preparation for presentation on findings, d	x	x	x		UNDP	
13:30 - 17:00 p.m.	Presentation of summary to the Advisory Group and	x	x	x	Claire (NY),	UNDP 3 rd Floor	

DTF of UNDP

Advisory
Group and
DTF

Meeting
Room

Thursday, 20 November 2008

Report writing, additional staff consultation

Friday, 21 November 2008

Report writing, additional staff consultation

Saturday, 22 November 2008

Report writing

Sunday, 23 November (Report writing)

Working lunch with Claire

Sunday, 23 November to Wednesday, 26 November 2008 (Writing the final report)

Thursday, 27 November 2008

10:30 a.m. on wards	Discussions on the draft final report with Advisory Group and DTF of UNDP Myanmar	x	x	x	RR, CD, DRRs, Advisory Group and DTF	UNDP 3 rd Floor Meeting Room
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16:00 p.m. onwards	Revising the report based on discussion	x	x	x		
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Friday, 28 November: Submission of the final report

(There will be a final report submission session in UNDP in the afternoon.)

Saturday, 29 November 2008

Departure of mission members (tentative)

Annex E. A List of Key Documents Consulted

UNDP project documents and presentations

CDRT, ICDP HIV/AIDS, IHLCA, ICERF/ICER Micro Finance, Gender Trust Fund Programme documents, including reports.

CDRT. MYA/01/002. UNDP PowerPoint Brief. 2008.

ICDP MYA/01/001. UNDP.” UNDP PowerPoint Brief

UNDP/TCG updates on Early Recovery

The Poorest of the Poor Strategy: ICDP. Revised March, 2007.

Progress on SRG Case Studies (Draft). UNDP. 31 Oct. 2008

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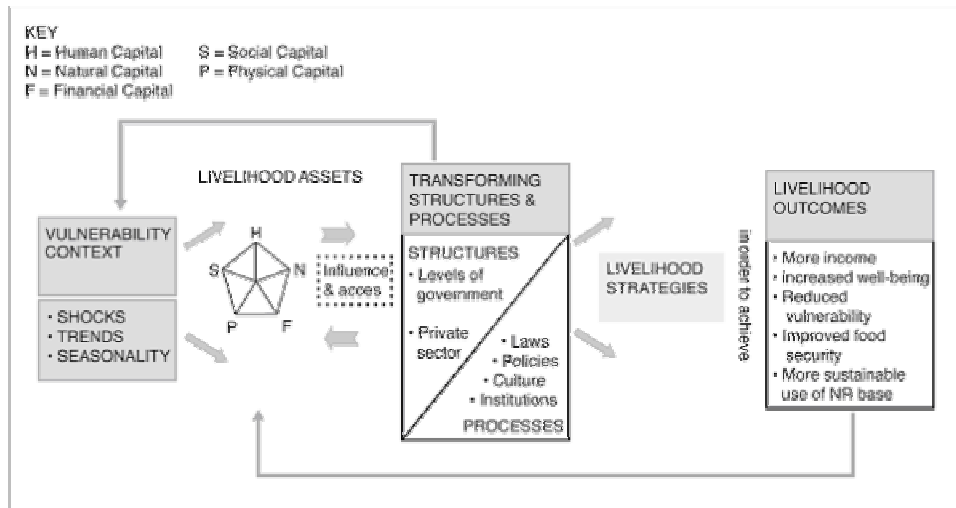
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Annex F. The Spider Web Diagram of Livelihoods Capitals.

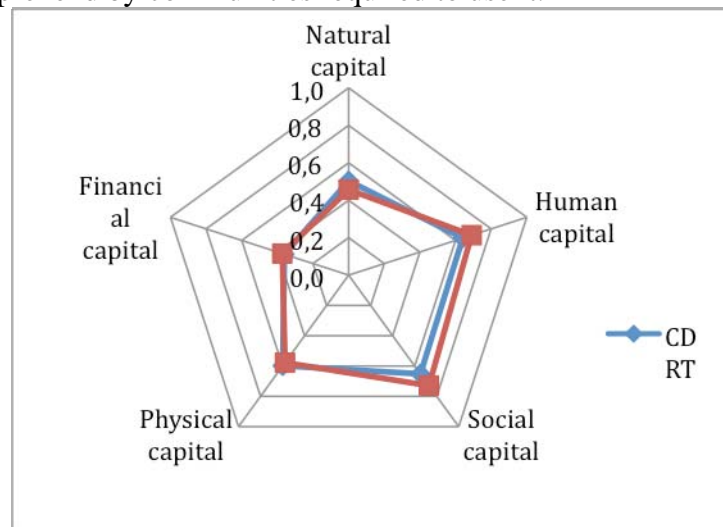
The Spider Web technique emerges from the Sustainable Livelihoods model as an instrument by which communities can track current levels of capital and compare to future results. The Sustainable Livelihoods model identifies five types of assets that form the core of livelihood resources and include financial, human, natural, physical, and social capital. Together these comprise the basic core elements of livelihoods.

The livelihood assets and their respective capitals are depicted in the following model through the pentagon.



Source,; <http://www.dfid.gov.uk>

The Spider Web is utilised by HDI as a visible representation for communities to monitor and track their achievements and progress. While useful to this end, there is concern that the Spider Web technique used to display the data may have limitations, as it may be difficult to comprehend by communities required to use it.



Annex G. Terms of Reference

Independent Assessment Mission Human Development Initiative: Phase IV November 2008 in Myanmar

Country Situation

Myanmar is situated in Southeast Asia. The country covers an area of 676,577 square kilometres with extensive borders with China on the north-eastern side, India and Bangladesh on the north-western and western, Lao PDR on the eastern side, and Thailand on the south-eastern to southern borders of the country. Myanmar's estimated population of 54 million is settled in 14 states and divisions of the Union's administrative structure. Seventy-five percent of the country's population live in rural areas. Myanmar is endowed with natural resources including agricultural land, forestry, natural gas, various metals and gems, and water resources. With abundant agricultural land, the country's economic structure is primarily dependent on agriculture and farm related activities that currently provide livelihoods to more than 65 percent of the population. Agriculture accounts for 55 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), followed by services and industry accounting for 32 percent and 13 percent of the GDP respectively.

Myanmar is a highly fertile agricultural country fed by four major river systems, and the economy is basically agrarian. The largest share of the agricultural production is rice, with other important crops being beans and pulses, cotton, sugarcane, edible oil crops, maize and tobacco. Myanmar still has considerable forest coverage and is among the world's largest exporters of teak and other hardwood. Mineral resources of the country include natural gas, lead, petroleum, silver, tin, zinc, and precious and semi-precious gems, such as jade, rubies and sapphires. Artisanal products include gold and silver work, lacquer-ware, silk, and wood carvings. The Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA) project of UNDP has carried out sample survey of over 18,000 households in 2005. It found that approximately 10 percent of the population are in food poverty and some 32 percent live below the overall poverty line, i.e. deprived of inadequate food, nutrition and essential non-food items.

The poverty situation, particularly in the rural areas, has drawn the attention of UN agencies and international non-governmental agencies (INGOs) which are presently focused on providing basic needs and humanitarian support to people living in extreme poverty conditions in the rural areas. A few INGOs have limited support programme in the peri-urban areas of Yangon.

UNDP Assistance

Official Development Assistance to Myanmar was suspended immediately following the events which took place in 1988. Since then, the UN system has been one of the main sources of funding. Given the ongoing concern by the international community on the country situation, project activities are largely focused on humanitarian assistance. In 1992, the UNDP Governing Council (currently known as the Executive Board) directed that the UNDP country programme be held in abeyance, pending a review of UNDP assistance to Myanmar by the UNDP Administrator.

Following the results of the review, the Governing Council (GC) subsequently adopted the Governing Council decision 93/21 of June 1993. In this decision, the Governing Council,

recognizing the critical basic human needs of the people of Myanmar, decided that until such time that a new Country Programme could be approved, all future assistance “should be clearly targeted towards projects having grass-roots level impact in a sustainable manner, particularly in the areas of **primary health care, the environment, HIV/AIDS, training and education and food security.**” This decision continues to be in effect, having been reaffirmed by subsequent Executive Board decisions throughout the following years. In addition, the GC/EB decisions also called upon the Administrator to report annually to the Executive Board on the extent to which UNDP activities meet the provisions of the relevant GC/EB decisions and the progress and challenges faced by the projects in their implementation.

In line with the above mandate, UNDP projects and activities have been formulated and implemented since 1993 in strict compliance with the guidelines set out in the relevant decisions. Individual projects are coordinated within a programmatic framework entitled the “Human Development Initiative (HDI)”. Projects have been implemented by specialized United Nations Executing Agencies with the exception of one major project under the current HDI Phase IV, which is being implemented under the Direct Execution modality by UNDP.

The following table provides information on the various phases of the HDI, as reflected by the relevant Board decisions:

Programme Resources: Human Development Initiative (HDI)			
Mandate	Programme Period	No. of Projects	Total resources (approved by EB)
Governing Council decision 93/21	1994-1996 (HDI Phase I)	15	\$25.5 m
Executive Board decision 96/1	1996-1998 (HDI Phase II)	10	\$52.076 m
Executive Board decision 98/14	1999-2001 (HDI Phase III)	11	\$50.0 m
Executive Board decision 2001/15	2003-2005 HDI-Phase IV	6	\$22.0 m
Executive Board decision 2005/42	2006-2007 Extension of HDI-Phase IV	6	\$22.0 m
Executive Board decision 2006/31	Initial approval for 2008-2010 Extension of HDI-IV	5	-
Executive Board decision 2007/36	2008-2010 Extension of HDI-IV	5	\$ 24.1

In March 2005, the Myanmar Government agreed to the proposal to expand the HDI programme to 40 additional townships, which was then endorsed by the Executive Board. Geographical expansion commenced in March while continuing assistance in the 24 on-going townships under HDI Phase IV.

In September 2006, the Executive Board requested UNDP to continue with the HDI IV programme taking into account the findings of the most recent independent assessment mission. Decision 2006/31 also approved, in principle, the extension of the current phase of the Human Development Initiative for the period 2008-2010. The recent Executive Board decision 2007/36

endorsed the proposed programme focus during the three-year extension (2008-2010) of HDI Phase IV, which consists of five projects:

- Community Development in Remote Townships project (CDRT),
- Integrated Community Development project (ICDP)
- HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care project
- Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA)
- Microfinance project

Compliance with Mandate

As required by the GC/EB mandate, annual independent assessments and reviews of HDI projects have been carried out since 1994, and findings summarized in the Administrator's annual report to the Executive Board. These assessments and reviews focus on *(a) the extent to which UNDP assistance to Myanmar continues to meet the provisions of the relevant decisions, including GC decision 93/21; and (b) the progress and challenges in the implementation of project activities of the Human Development Initiative*. The last independent assessment mission covered the period June 2006 to April 2007.

The 2008 Assessment Mission was initially scheduled to take place for a period of three weeks (including travel time) beginning the second half of April 2008, with additional time post-mission to allow finalization of the report by the middle of May 2008. In view of Cyclone Nargis and the requirement to concentrate as a matter of priority on immediate relief and early recovery, the time frame of the mission has been delayed to the 4th quarter of 2008.

Objectives and Scope

In line with the Executive Board's directive, the mission will assess compliance with the mandate in the implementation of HDI Phase IV projects during the period May 2007 – June 2008, with a separate section of the report to briefly review mandate compliance in responding to the humanitarian emergency caused by Cyclone Nargis in May 2008. This will enable the Administrator to provide a comprehensive report to the Board to meet the requirements of the mandate for the year 2008.

Major Issues to be addressed

The assessment mission will be expected to examine the following major issues:

Review of Compliance:

- Are the directives of the Governing Council and Executive Board decisions being closely followed?
- Are the projects addressing the basic human needs of the target beneficiaries in the project areas in the areas mandated in GC decision 93/21, namely, primary health care, the environment, HIV/AIDS, training and education and food security? Differentiate the analysis for men and women as much as possible.

- Has appropriate follow-up action been taken to implement the recommendations made by the HDI 2007 Assessment Mission as well as additional assessments?

Review of Performance and Results:

- How has the focus of targeting the most vulnerable in HDI programme areas been changed and how has assistance thus far been organised to assist the most vulnerable, including the poorest of the poor?
- Are current monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and procedures adequate to measure results in a gender disaggregated manner and ensure transparency and accountability of project activities? Is there an adequate flow of information to the beneficiaries to empower them to hold projects accountable to deliver timely, effective and efficient (cost-effective) assistance?
- Are there mechanisms in place within the projects to provide remedies for individuals/groups (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) who have concerns with project inputs/outputs, processes or staff?
- What specific progress has been made to strengthen capacities to evaluate the impact of the programme and share HDI findings with various stakeholders?
- How has gender been addressed in the HDI? What has been the impact of the programme been on gender equality and the advancement of women?
- What are the challenges and constraints being faced by HDI in its implementation in light of the current operating environment? How are these being addressed?
- Examine whether the programme adequately integrates gender, HIV/AIDs, environmental sustainability, disaster risk management and risk reduction and the rights-based approach in the relevant interventions.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses in ensuring sustainable livelihoods in the current programme.
- What plans and exit strategies should exist to ensure HDI initiatives leave behind sustainable benefits for the targeted communities?

Post-cyclone Emergency and Early Recovery Assistance:

- Are the measures implemented to assist victims of Cyclone Nargis consistent with the substantive mandate for UNDP's activities in Myanmar – particularly with respect to intervention typology, beneficiary targeting, and women's empowerment?
- How have the post-cyclone related activities been integrated into the management structures of the existing HDI programme?

Outputs from the mission

The mission will provide a draft report (minus annexes) in the prescribed UNDP format to the Country Office for discussion and comments at least three days prior to the departure of the Team Leader from the country. The draft report will also contain an Executive Summary of the findings, mission activities, major findings and conclusions of the mission and challenges and lessons for the future.

The mission team will present the initial findings in the draft report to the country office team three days prior to departure, which will allow the country office to provide initial feedback. The mission team will then make a second presentation to the country office team at the end of the three-week in-country assignment based on the feedback received on the initial findings. Additional debriefing sessions with other stakeholders may be organised, time allowing.

The Team Leader, in consultation with the Country Office and RBAP, will be responsible for finalizing the Mission's report after receipt of comments from the UNDP Country Office and RBAP on the draft report – and no later than 28 November 2008. The final report will be submitted to the CO and RBAP. RBAP will ensure that the final document meets the requirement of the Executive Board without compromising the substantive aspects of the report.

Methodology and Approach

The review process will be carried out through a combination of desk study of materials and documentation (to be made available prior to, and during the review exercise), and consultations with primary beneficiaries, project staff, NGOs, UN agencies, donors and line departments of the various government ministries where possible. Visits will be organised to project sites in prior consultation with the mission to allow for interaction with communities in HDI townships. The mission team is expected to take up the following tasks:

- review of the five projects still operational in 2007, including project documents, progress reports, results reports and other materials;
- travel to indicated project sites and villages to meet with beneficiaries and implementing partners;
- review of activities aimed to address synergies and potential for a more coordinated effort;
- review of gender equality considerations in HDI;
- review of the implementation of the expansion and extension plans;
- preparation of draft report and presentation to key stakeholders; and
- finalization of the report, based on feedback from stakeholders, especially CO and RBAP HQ.

A list of reference documents and a work plan of the mission, including draft field mission itinerary will be prepared in due course.

Composition and responsibilities of the mission

The mission will be comprised of a Team Leader and one member who will be independent international consultants. The Team Leader should have significant experience in programme/project evaluation (preferably in the Asia and Pacific region) and demonstrate good knowledge about the country. Prior experience and exposure to the special circumstances governing UNDP assistance to Myanmar would also be beneficial. An additional member of the team may be identified by UNDP's donor partners.

The Team will have overall responsibility for undertaking the assessment, drafting the report and coordinating the various inputs and thus be responsible for formulating the findings of the assessment. Under the guidance of the Team Leader, the other member of the mission will be responsible for providing the Team Leader with written inputs to the assessment report.

Implementation arrangements

The mission will be briefed by the UNDP Country Office upon their arrival in Yangon.

The mission members will receive overall guidance and direction from the UNDP Resident Representative and Country Office senior management to enable the mission to meet the objectives and scope and the issues to be addressed in the TOR, as stated above.

The UNDP Country Office will provide logistical and administrative support to the mission as needed. Appropriate staff, including project staff, will be designated to work with the mission as needed. The CO will also ensure that all relevant data, material and documentation are made available to mission members.

The Team Leader and the Resident Representative will agree at the beginning of the mission on a schedule of briefings on the progress of the assessment exercise, consultations on preliminary findings and a mechanism for validation of these preliminary findings with key stakeholders.

The Team Leader, as previously mentioned, will provide a draft report to the Resident Representative at least three days prior to the team's departure to allow for substantive feedback and consultations by both parties to be reflected, as appropriate in the final draft document.

Timing and Duration

The full duration of the above mission will be for a period of 21 working days during November 2008. An additional 4 working days (home-based) prior to the in-country mission will be required for both the Team Leader and the Mission member for document review. Up to 6 additional working days for the Team Leader and up to 5 working days for the Mission member after the in-country mission will be required to finalize the full report. The final report must be submitted by the Team Leader not later than 28 November 2008.