

# Myanmar Climate Change Policy

## Draft 1 – March 2017

**Important Note :**

- This document is the first draft of the National Climate Change Policy of Myanmar. The language is based on the annotated draft outline and the comments received from the consultations and workshops in December 2016 and February 2017, which included the MCCA Technical Working Group, and high level representatives of States and Regions participating.
- The present Draft 1 has been prepared by MCCA (IIED, UN Environment, UN-Habitat) with MoNREC in February/March 2017
- At this national consultation, the participants adopted officially the outline of the Policy, which is followed in this draft 1.
- The present Draft 1 is submitted to MoNREC, the MCCA TWG and PSC for their comments and improvement
- Detailed explanation and rationale for the Climate Change Policy are provided in endnotes under Annex I. They will be removed from the final version.

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## Preamble<sup>1</sup>

Due to its exposure and sensitivity to current and projected weather patterns, Myanmar is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and highly exposed to severe natural weather events such as heavy rains, storm surges, severe droughts, floods and cyclones, which have increased in intensity and frequency over the last 60 years.

Findings from the international scientific community, notably the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirm that global temperatures are increasing as a result of the release of anthropogenic greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and projects that this trend is likely to continue and increase in the coming decades.

In Myanmar, the most recent climate change projections confirm these increasing temperature trends; extreme temperature and precipitation events such as heatwaves, droughts and floods; the likelihood of intense tropical cyclones; sea level rise; salinity intrusion; a further shrinking monsoon season among others effects.

The impacts resulting from these changes will affect all vital sectors of Myanmar's society and economy. For example, some 85 per cent of the rural population relies on climate-sensitive sectors for their livelihoods, and millions of people are concentrated in regions exposed to the impacts of climate change, including the Delta and Coastal Regions. Sea level rise poses significant challenges to coastal communities and livelihood assets including coastal ecosystem and ecosystem services. Adverse impacts of climate change cut across sectors and societies. For instance, impacts on agriculture are likely to reduce contributions to GDP growth and affect the livelihoods of both small-firm households and agricultural labourers

Therefore, failing to mainstreaming climate change into Myanmar development agenda will prevent the country from achieving its social and economic sustainable development objectives.

Recognizing this fact, Myanmar requires a robust policy instrument that ensures all sectoral investments and development plans fully acknowledge and address the challenges posed by a changing change. The National Climate Change Policy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (The Climate Change Policy) is formulated and adopted to this end.

*The purpose of this Climate Change Policy is thus to provide long-term direction and guidance for government, civil society, and the private sector to undertake and promote climate change actions in adaptation and mitigation in Myanmar; integrate climate change considerations into Myanmar's national priorities and across all sectors in an iterative and progressive manner; and to take decisions to create and maximise opportunities for sustainable, low-carbon, climate-resilient development, ensuring benefits for all.*

The Climate Change Policy contains guiding principles, policy recommendations, and measures for implementation which will enable Myanmar to achieve its guiding vision: to be a climate-resilient, low-carbon society that is sustainable, prosperous and inclusive, for the wellbeing of present and future generations. The Climate Change Policy also involves the adoption of a *Myanmar Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2030*. With these instruments the country aspires to become climate resilient as well as develop in a low-carbon manner.

The Climate Change Policy reaffirms Myanmar's commitment to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. It is grounded of the 2008 Constitution of the Union of the Republic of Myanmar, National Comprehensive Development Plan, Myanmar National Sustainable Development Strategy, and other relevant policies and legislation, notably the National Environmental Policy.

Based on the above, the Government of the Union of Myanmar:

1. Recalling the pertinent provisions of its Constitution, National Comprehensive Development Plan, Myanmar National Sustainable Development Strategy, and other relevant documents instruments such as the National Environmental Policy, and other relevant legislation and policies;
2. Recognising the need for future policies and legislation to integrate climate change considerations and be consistent with this Policy;
3. Remaining committed to Myanmar's overarching goal of striving for the ultimate benefit and prosperity of Myanmar's people, and ensuring to the greatest possible extent that the quality of life of the people of Myanmar and opportunities for sustainable development are not compromised;
4. Reaffirming its priority to protect and conserve Myanmar's natural environment, and recognising the whole value of the environment<sup>2</sup>;
5. Noting the findings of the scientific community, including the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that global temperatures are increasing due to the release of anthropogenic "greenhouse gases" (GHGs) into the atmosphere and predictions that this trend of warming of the atmosphere is likely to continue and increase;
6. Noting also the domestically, regionally and globally observed and projected short- and long-term impacts of climate change in Myanmar;
7. Noting with serious concern that Myanmar is disproportionately impacted by both rapid- and slow-onset effects of climate change, due to its multi-dimensional and acute vulnerability and limited capacity to respond and cope<sup>3</sup>;
8. Concerned that climate change has significant implications on Myanmar's achievement of social and economic development<sup>4</sup>;
9. Recognising that climate change exacerbates inequalities and can fuel conflict;
10. Recognising that women and girls in Myanmar are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts due to their roles and responsibilities and their unequal access to resources, opportunities and rights, and that their knowledge, experience, participation and leadership at all levels are vital for developing effective climate change responses;
11. Recognising the need to take urgent action to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to climate change;

12. Emphasising the need to take short-, medium- and long-term actions to respond to Myanmar's continuously changing climate and evolving social and economic circumstances, building progressively on previous actions and continuously learning from experiences;
13. Recognising that effective planning and action needs to be taken at the national, sub-national and local levels, by all segments of society, including the private sector and civil society, and requires wide coordination and strong partnership across sectors and ownership by the whole of government, including States and Regions;
14. Recognising that taking ambitious mitigation actions, despite Myanmar's negligible contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, is needed to achieve low-carbon development and green growth on a path to sustainable development<sup>5</sup>;
15. Reaffirming Myanmar's commitment to the United Nations sustainable development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals and its principle to leave no one behind, and that action on climate change needs to be consistent with national social, economic and environmental development goals<sup>6</sup>;
16. Affirming its commitments to cooperate under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement and participate in future global decision making processes, to the fullest extent possible<sup>7</sup>;
17. Noting its commitment to prepare, communicate and maintain periodic nationally determined contributions to the global effort to tackle climate change, and report on their actions as appropriate under the UN climate change process<sup>8</sup>;

Adopts this policy in order to guide national action to address climate change.

## Vision<sup>9</sup>

Myanmar's vision is to be a climate-resilient, low-carbon society that is sustainable, prosperous and inclusive, for the wellbeing of present and future generations<sup>10</sup>.

## Purpose<sup>11</sup>

The purpose of this Policy is to provide long-term direction and guidance to:

- Take and promote<sup>12</sup> climate change action on adaptation and mitigation in Myanmar;
- Integrate climate change considerations into Myanmar's national priorities and across all sectors in an iterative and progressive manner; and
- Take decisions to create and maximise opportunities for sustainable, low-carbon, climate-resilient development, ensuring benefits for all.

## Guiding principles<sup>13</sup>

In actions to achieve the purpose of this Policy, Myanmar will be guided, *inter alia*, by the following guiding principles:

- **Sustainable development**

Develop sustainably to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future and a fair and equitable society;

- **Precaution**

Take cost-effective measures to avoid, minimise and protect from environmentally harmful consequences where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage even if there is a lack of scientific certainty<sup>14</sup>;

- **Prevention**

Take anticipatory action to prevent or worsen environmental damage before it occurs by avoiding, prohibiting or controlling threatening activities<sup>15</sup>;

- **Environmental integrity**

Protect and conserve the natural environment and recognise its complete and intrinsic value, whether tangible or non-tangible, economic or non-economic, to the natural, cultural and spiritual heritage of Myanmar<sup>16</sup>;

- **Shared responsibility**

Encourage, support and embrace the common and shared responsibility of all people for the protection, conservation, and equitable sharing of benefits and resources of the environment;

- **Inclusiveness**

Engage all people and communities and their diverse social, economic and cultural perspectives in decision-making and action, by supporting and embracing their participation and contributions without discrimination, in order to equitably share the benefits and opportunities of low-carbon, climate-resilient development<sup>17</sup>;

- **Good governance**

Adopt transparent, participatory, and responsive processes to ensure that decision-making at all levels is inclusive, equitable, and accountable to all people in Myanmar, in accordance with the rule of law<sup>18</sup>;

- **Climate justice and equity**

Protect the right of all the people of Myanmar, in particular the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised segments of society, including indigenous peoples, all ethnic groups, local

communities, women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to live in a healthy environment and a fair, equitable and sustainable society;

- **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

Promote gender equality and women's equal rights through strengthening gender-responsive climate change policy concerning adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology development and transfer and capacity-building, and ensuring the full and equal participation of women in decision-making.

## Policy recommendations<sup>19</sup>

To achieve the purpose of this Policy, the Government of the Union of Myanmar will:

### **Food and water security**

Maintain growth and productivity of food systems, including in the agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors, through climate-resilient responses in order to ensure food security and protect the livelihoods of the people of Myanmar;

Promote and provide opportunities for resource-efficient and low-carbon approaches in the agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors<sup>20</sup>;

Adopt and implement efficient water management practices in Myanmar, particularly in climate-vulnerable states and regions, including mountainous areas, flood-prone areas, delta regions and dry zones;

### **Healthy ecosystems**

- Promote sustainable natural resource management, protect biodiversity and enhance the resilience of ecosystem services in order to ensure and maintain healthy ecosystems, recognising their contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and Myanmar's high dependence on the quality and availability of ecosystem services;
- Adopt environmentally sound technologies and good management practices to improve and maintain forest, water, land, coastal ecosystems and air quality in the face of future climate change impacts;

### **Low-carbon and resilient growth**

- Ensure that the energy, transport and industry sectors, including infrastructure, are well-integrated, reliable, sustainable and resilient to current and future climate change impacts, recognising that they are vital to Myanmar's economic growth;
- Decouple Myanmar's continued growth from increasing greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the global climate change mitigation effort through sustainable, low-carbon energy, transport and industrial systems, while ensuring that Myanmar's social and economic development needs are met<sup>21</sup>.
- Promote and prioritise sustainable and renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, in order to meet Myanmar's growing energy needs and ensure energy security in a low-carbon manner<sup>22</sup>;
- Ensure equitable access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all as a pathway to inclusive and sustainable development and eradicating poverty<sup>23</sup>.
- Ensure that urban and inter-city transportation networks and infrastructure are sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient for all modes of transport, in particular for mass transit<sup>24, 25</sup>;

- Increase the productivity and resource-efficiency of the industrial sector through low-carbon growth and by developing competitive and innovative green industries, recognising the relative importance of this sector for Myanmar's economy<sup>26</sup>;

### **Resilient urban and rural settlements**

- Ensure human settlements are climate resilient and incentivise low-carbon approaches, while promoting long-term inclusivity, liveability and economic development in rural and urban areas, recognising the interdependencies<sup>27</sup> between urban and rural areas and the potential impact of climate change on rural-urban migration, food security and water supply;
- Ensure that rural and urban planning and disaster risk management fully address current and future climate-related risks and opportunities, and regularly assess and mitigate these risks in a timely and equitable manner through inclusive and participatory processes which take into account and strengthen local knowledge and capacities;

### **Wellbeing**

- Ensure that the national health system takes steps to be aware of and respond in a timely and equitable manner to new and increasing health risks arising from slow- and rapid-onset impacts of climate change;
- Take actions to scale up and strengthen disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction systems to prevent, mitigate, prepare for and respond to increased risk of climate-related natural hazards and to prevent and reduce loss and damage, at all levels;
- Take actions to scale up and strengthen social protection for all people, and in particular for the most vulnerable, to prepare for and recover from slow- and rapid-onset impacts of climate change;

### **Knowledge and awareness**

- Ensure that the education and technology sectors, including infrastructure, are made resilient to climate change impacts, recognising that climate change has direct and indirect effects on social and economic development in Myanmar<sup>28</sup>;
- Take actions to raise awareness around climate change of all people on low-carbon and climate-resilient development and sustainability through education at all levels, in particular at the primary and secondary education levels, and professional development<sup>29</sup>;
- Ensure equitable access to education for all as a pathway toward inclusive and sustainable development<sup>30</sup>;
- Incentivise investment for the use of technologies in Myanmar that enable low-carbon climate-resilient development, and support local innovation and solutions, recognising that addressing climate change require developments in all aspects of education, science and technology<sup>31</sup>;

## Measures for implementation<sup>32</sup>

### **To implement the Policy Recommendations, the Government of the Union of Myanmar will:**

Adopt and implement laws and regulations to further enhance the implementation of actions under this policy, as appropriate<sup>33</sup>;

Adopt and implement short and medium-term strategies and action plans on climate change on a regular basis taking into account national circumstances and international commitments<sup>34</sup>;

Amend existing policies and/or adopt new policies in relevant sectors to further enhance the implementation of actions under this policy, as appropriate<sup>35</sup>;

- Establish or strengthen existing institutions for the overall coordination, promotion, support, facilitation, and monitoring, evaluation and review of actions and results as necessary, in order to enable the effective implementation of climate action, at a high level<sup>36</sup>;

Allocate sufficient financial resources from the national budget to implement climate actions across all sectors<sup>37</sup>;

Ensure climate-sensitive budgeting in all sectoral plans, and encourage the allocation of adequate sectoral finance to complement resources from the national budget<sup>38</sup>;

Incentivise and promote local and international investment in low-carbon and climate-resilient development;

Ensure that all investments are consistent with low-carbon and climate-resilient development<sup>39</sup>;

Facilitate access to international finance and mobilisation of domestic finance for climate change, including by establishing an institution or mechanism to coordinate climate finance, and strengthening institutional capacities to absorb and manage funds, as relevant<sup>40</sup>;

Undertake and support capacity building activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of relevant stakeholders necessary for effective and gender-responsive climate action, in a continuous, progressive and iterative manner, and establish new institutions and/or a capacity-building framework, as relevant<sup>41</sup>;

Promote, facilitate and provide financial resources for research, the collection, analysis of and access to quantitative and qualitative data, disaggregated by sex, age and other factors, to enable effective and gender-responsive climate action;

Promote, facilitate and provide financial resources for the development, acquisition, demonstration and deployment of environmentally sound technologies that enable effective climate action, and ensure equitable access to those technologies<sup>42</sup>;

Strengthen current partnerships and build new partnerships among ministries and between Government and the private sector, civil society and academia at the global, regional, national and local levels, for the effective implementation of climate action in Myanmar;

Ensure transparency and accountability of all actors through open decision-making, promoting public awareness and participation, and by providing access to information and access to justice;

Ensure coherence and coordination of existing and future national and sectoral frameworks, policies, legislation, regulations, strategies and action plans;

Monitor the implementation and progress towards achieving the purpose of this Policy and encourage learning and knowledge-sharing at all levels.

EXPLANATORY ENDNOTES (TO BE DELETED IN THE FINAL VERSION OF THE POLICY)

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<sup>1</sup> Lays out the context in which this policy is placed

<sup>2</sup> Rationale: The protection and conservation of Myanmar's natural environment is one of the priorities in the Constitution.

<sup>3</sup> Rationale: To reflect Myanmar's climate change profile at a high-level. The specific figures are well articulated in the INDC and MCCSAP so they are not repeated here. Multi-dimensional vulnerability includes vulnerability to biophysical hazards as well as social factors (such as marginalisation) that affect how at risk people are.

<sup>4</sup> Rationale: Reflects language from Myanmar's INDC on the pressure climate change impacts have on Myanmar's overriding development and poverty eradication priorities.

<sup>5</sup> Rationale: General language to reflect the need to develop sustainably in the context of promoting socio-economic development (as referred to in the INDC). Recognises Myanmar's commitment to green growth.

<sup>6</sup> Rationale: Reflects Myanmar's social and economic development priorities to be advanced through the UN sustainable development agenda in general terms, recognising the close relationship between climate change and achieving sustainable development.

<sup>7</sup> Rationale: To recognise that climate change action needs to be coordinated globally.

<sup>8</sup> Rationale: Reflecting that countries will take on commitments at the international level such as periodic nationally determined contributions required under the Paris Agreement without necessarily referring to specific language from the agreement.

<sup>9</sup> An aspirational expression of where Myanmar would like to be in the long-term.

<sup>10</sup> Rationale: We used ideas and themes from the vision in the MCCSAP but kept it broader. We added prosperity as an important element of Myanmar's vision for its people. We included language to reflect a people-focus and stress why Myanmar wants this vision (as mentioned in previous comments) although the word "prosperous" necessarily implies the well-being of Myanmar's people

<sup>11</sup> How the policy will help in achieving Myanmar's national vision

<sup>12</sup> Rationale: "Take and promote" emphasises that the government should take action to address climate change and promote/incentivise action by others, including the private sector and civil society.

<sup>13</sup> High level established concepts to guide actions under the policy.

<sup>14</sup> Rationale: this is one of the foundational principles of environmental law (and is a pillar of both international and national environmental frameworks). Essentially, if there is a strong suspicion that a certain activity may have environmentally harmful consequences, it is better to regulate that activity now rather than to wait for incontrovertible scientific evidence.

<sup>15</sup> **Rationale:** preventing environmental harm is cheaper, easier, and less environmentally dangerous than reacting to environmental harm that already has taken place.

<sup>16</sup> **Rationale:** recognises the national priority of protecting and conserving the environment and the concept of from Myanmar's Constitution. The term "natural environment" includes natural ecosystems and resources. Language on complete and intrinsic value of the environment conveys that the environment has value in and of itself in addition to the whole tangible, non-tangible, economic and non-economic facets of its value. The language also considers the rights of indigenous peoples as per the draft National Environmental Policy.

<sup>17</sup> **Rationale:** This reflects the need to take into account the views and contributions of members of diverse social, economic and cultural groups so that all voices and needs are heard and considered in important decision-making processes, which in turn will contribute to development benefits being enjoyed by all on an equitable basis. This principle focusses on inclusiveness through participation to all in a non-discriminatory manner. The concept of including all in just and equitable outcomes is covered under the principle of environmental and climate justice below.

<sup>18</sup> **Rationale:** Good governance focusses on process rather than outcome of decision-making. Decision-making must be transparent so all stakeholders are well-informed with timely information, participatory so all stakeholders are empowered to participate in important decision-making, and responsive so that decisions reflect the priorities and needs of a, l stakeholders. In such a way, decisions will be inclusive of all people and communities, equitable, in particular with respect to the most vulnerable or marginalised groups and individuals and accountable to all. All decisions must be taken in accordance with the rule of law.

<sup>19</sup> Sector-relevant measures aimed at achieving the purpose of this policy.

<sup>20</sup> **Rationale:** Move beyond a focus on resilience and emphasise the need to take opportunities for low carbon practices.

<sup>21</sup> **Rationale:** Emphasising the need to develop sustainably while recognising that Myanmar needs to continue its social and economic development. Also recognises that it is important to decouple growth from increasing emissions.

<sup>22</sup> **Rationale:** Recognises the need for energy security, that energy needs will grow, and the need to prioritise energy-efficient and renewable energy sources in Myanmar's energy mix in order to develop sustainably and have reliable energy sources into the future.

<sup>23</sup> **Rationale:** Energy poverty is highly gendered and it can exclude marginalised groups from development gains. Reinforces that access to energy for all is one of the crucial pathways to eradicating poverty enable a healthy environment and achieving inclusive development.

<sup>24</sup> **Rationale:** to be more inclusive.

<sup>25</sup> **Rationale:** Recognises that transportation networks and infrastructure are significantly affected by climate change impacts and need to be made low carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable.

<sup>26</sup> **Rationale:** Recognises that the industry sector is expected to become one of the biggest contributor to Myanmar's GDP. Therefore it must be resilient to climate change impacts (as reflected in first bullet under this cluster), must be resource efficient and productive, and needs to be competitive in the global market.

<sup>27</sup> **Rationale:** By 'interdependencies' we mean the connections between urban areas and their hinterlands e.g. rivers in cities depend on a catchment area that is usually outside the city, cities depend on food from rural areas, there is a flow of goods and services between them, etc. We need to emphasise the point that urban and rural are not two separate things operating in isolation of each other.

<sup>28</sup> Rationale: Recognises that education and technology sectors are vulnerable to climate change impacts and that direct impacts on infrastructure, loss of livelihoods and loss and damage in general will detrimentally impact social and economic development in general (e.g. children no longer able to attend school, which limits women's ability to work).

<sup>29</sup> Rationale: Recognises the importance of raising awareness on climate change, its impacts and challenges and opportunities at all levels of education and across professions and disciplines.

<sup>30</sup> Rationale: Recognises that education for all people is necessary to eradicate poverty, develop sustainably and become a resilient society and that a third of households in Myanmar have no communication tools and limited access to education and other opportunities as a result.

<sup>31</sup> Rationale: Recognises the need for innovation and technological developments to address climate change impacts. Also reflects that the importance of local solutions.

<sup>32</sup> Overarching and crosscutting measures to facilitate implementation.

<sup>33</sup> Rationale: To give the Myanmar Government the option to take the policy forward through future climate legislation for more rigour.

<sup>34</sup> Rationale: Language to indirectly refer to the current MCCSAP for 2015-2030 (to say that Myanmar should adopt and implement such documents), but generalised to include other efforts as needed in the future, and on a regular basis to highlight that these efforts need to be iterative and progressive.

<sup>35</sup> Rationale: Integrating climate change considerations across government may require amending existing policies (whether national or sectoral) as well as adopting new ones (e.g. National Urban Policy, National Environmental Policy, etc.).

<sup>36</sup> Rationale: This suggests establishment of a body for general coordination, monitoring, evaluation and review. The NECCC could be one such institution and could be strengthened to fulfil these roles.

<sup>37</sup> Rationale: to distinguish between baseline national budget allocations and complementary funding from other sources such as national climate funds or international funding sources.

<sup>38</sup> Rationale: To highlight that climate-sensitive budgeting is required for sectors to tap into the ear-marked finance from the national budget; to distinguish sector finance allocations from national allocations and encourage sectors to consider climate change from the beginning stages of planning their workplan.

<sup>39</sup> Rationale: Ensure investments within Myanmar and from outside the country, keeping in mind that they should be consistent with low-carbon climate-resilient development and therefore the government may intervene if they are not in line with climate-smart development.

<sup>40</sup> Rationale: to recognise that certain enabling environments are required to access bilateral/multilateral funds, including skills to develop 'bankable' project and programme proposals, and certain standards are required to manage and disburse those funds (e.g. GCF funding criteria); Institutional capacities include individual/personal skills; create space for establishing a national climate fund or similar institution.

<sup>41</sup> Rationale: We emphasise that capacity building is not one-off activity (it is continuous, etc.). We refer to relevant stakeholders so that civil society and others are included in the capacity-building activities.

<sup>42</sup> Rationale: environmentally-sound technologies enable more effective climate action; also reflects the need to ensure equal access to technology.