

SECTION 5: DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM

5.1 Health policies and strategies

Government of Union of Myanmar laid down social objectives "to uplift of health, fitness and educational standards of the entire nation" is fulfilled by in terms of National Health Policy. National Health Policy was developed with the initiation and guidance of the National Health Committee in 1993. The National Health Policy has placed the Health For All goal as a prime objective using Primary Health Care approach. The National Health Policy is designated as follows:

- (1) To raise the level of health of the country and promote the physical and mental well-being of the people with the objective of achieving "Health for all" goal, using primary health care approach.
- (2) To follow the guidelines of the population policy formulated in the country.
- (3) To produce sufficient as well as efficient human resource for health locally in the context of broad frame work of long term health development plan.
- (4) To strictly abide by the rules and regulations mentioned in the drug laws and bylaws which are promulgated in the country.
- (5) To augment the role of co-operative, joint ventures, private sectors and non-governmental organizations in delivering of health care in view of the changing economic system.
- (6) To explore and develop alternative health care financing system.
- (7) To implement health activities in close collaboration and also in an integrated manner with related ministries.
- (8) To promulgate new rules and regulations in accord with the prevailing health and health related conditions as and when necessary.
- (9) To intensify and expand environmental health activities including prevention and control of air and water pollution.
- (10) To promote national physical fitness through the expansion of sports and physical education activities by encouraging community participation, supporting outstanding athletes and reviving traditional sports.
- (11) To encourage conduct of medical research activities not only on prevailing health problems but also giving due attention in conducting health system research.
- (12) To expand the health service activities not only to rural but also to border areas so as to meet the overall health needs of the country.
- (13) To foresee any emerging health problem that poses a threat to the health and well-

being of the people of Myanmar, so that preventive and curative measures can be initiated.

- (14) To reinforce the service and research activities of indigenous medicine to international level and to involve in community health care activities.
- (15) To strengthen collaboration with other countries for national health development.

5.2 Inter-sectoral cooperation

The meeting of National Health Committee, highest policy making body in Myanmar chaired by Prime Minister, is conducted regularly every three months to make decision on health matters. The National Health Committee composed of Ministers from Health and other Health related Department such as Ministry of Agriculture and irrigation, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sports and Ministry of Immigration and Population etc. Cooperation with the NGO sector at all levels (up to the grass-root level), is well established for contribution in implementation of NHP. In order to strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation activities, National Health Plan dissemination workshops are conducted in all regions.

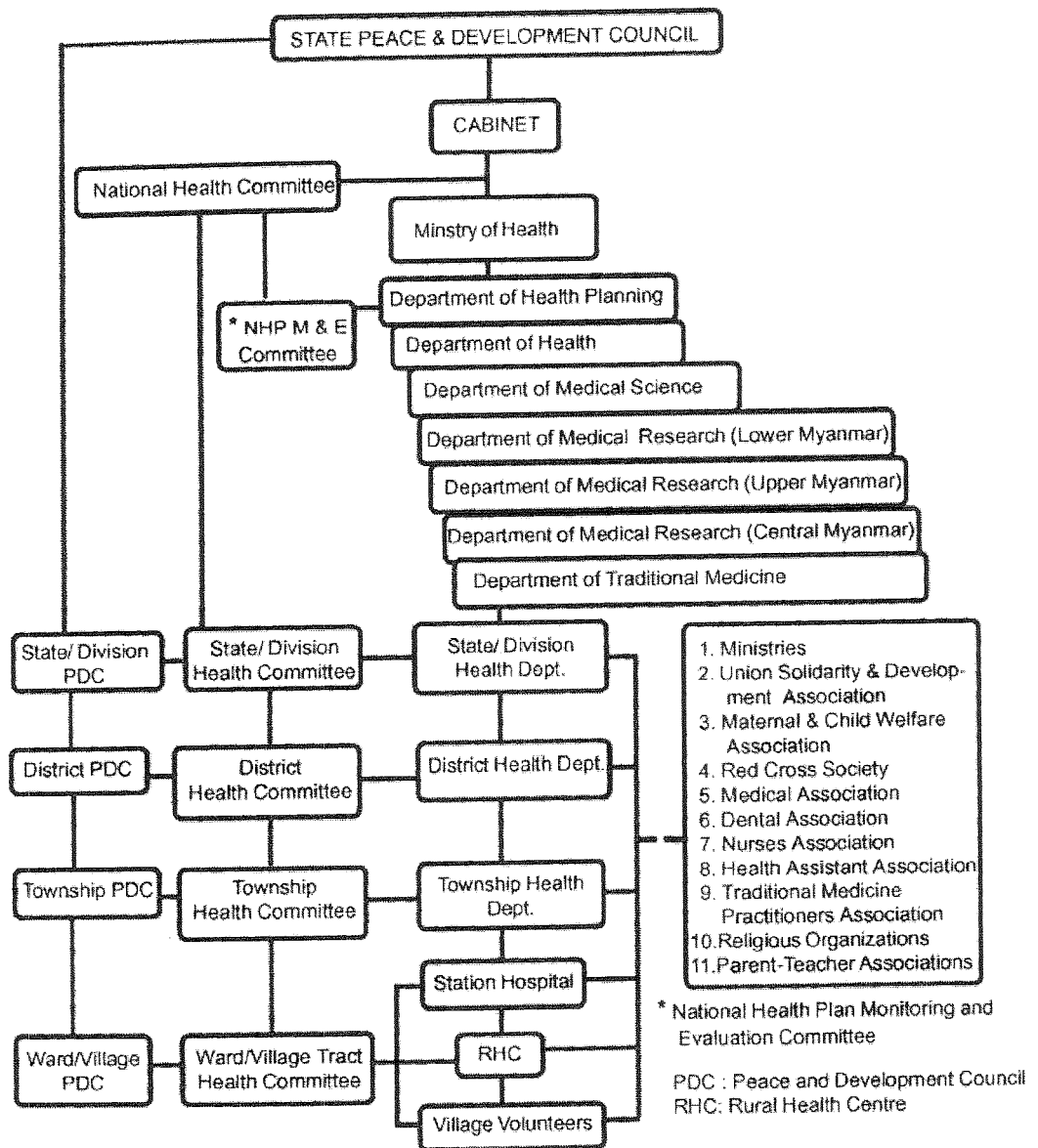
5.3 Organization of the Health System

With the commitment, guidance and support of the State, the Health System is well organized to strengthen and expand health services through out the country including the remote areas. The State Peace and Development Council and the Cabinet supervise and pay guidance through National Health Committee to the Ministry of Health, the corner stone in the planning, organizing, coordinating, financing and regulation in delivery of health care for entire population.

Ministry of Health consists of seven Departments: Department of Health Planning, Department of Health, Department of Medical Science, Department of Medical Research (Lower Myanmar), Department of Medical Research (Upper Myanmar), Department of Medical Research (Central Myanmar) and Department of Traditional Medicine. The Department of Health Planning comprised of planning division to systemically develop health plans, health information division to disseminate reliable health information, health promotion division to behave adoption of healthy life styles, research and development division to research health related matters and coordination division to facilitate coordination with international organization. In Department of Health, there are nine directors who are leading and managing the administration, planning, disease control, public health, medical care, nursing, food and drug control laboratory and occupational health under the supervision of the Director General

and two Deputy Director Generals. The Department of Medical Science is responsible for training and production of all categories of health personnel according to the needs of the country. Biomedical research, toxicology research, research related to blood safety and hematology, research related to traditional medicine and herbal plants are conducted in the Departments of Medical Research (Lower, Upper and Central Myanmar).

Health Service Delivery System



At the grass root level, sub health center mented by midwife provides basic health care services, disease prevention and health promotion. Voluntary health workers: Auxiliary midwives, trained traditional birth attendants and community health workers also attempt to support the health of the community. Rural health center is formed by at least five sub health

centers and mended by health assistant. Every hospital is handled by doctors who are generalists and specialist services are occurred in district hospitals. Station hospital, township health department, district health department and state/divisional health department manage the health and health related problems.

Recognizing the growing importance of the needs to involve all relevant sectors at all administrative levels and to mobilize the community more effectively in health activities, health committees have been established in various administrative levels down to the wards and village tracts. These committees at each level are headed by the chairman or the responsible person of the organs of power concern and include heads of related government departments and representatives from the social organizations as members. Head of health departments are designated as secretaries of the committees.

5.4. Managerial Process

The Ministry of Health provides broad guidelines based on National Health Plan which is divided into twelve broad programs and 78 projects for managerial purposes. The central level facilitates the activities by providing required technology and resources. The townships have the primary responsibility for planning and implementation of health care services for its health development and monitoring and evaluation is conducted by itself. Evaluation is also conducted in state/division and central level on half yearly basis started from 2004 to ensure effective implementation of the managerial process for health.

5.5 Health Information System

The National Health Management Information System has been established to provide information to use in all levels of management including planning, monitoring, evaluation and disease surveillance. The system use minimum essential data set with the consensus of all project managers to improve the quality of data and it has been decentralized to various level of the health infrastructure to facilitate the completeness and validity of the data collection. Data collection is done from all available sources like hospitals as well as public health centers. It is designed as a user based for management, monitoring and evaluation in support of corrective action for better services, policy analysis and planning. Data collection tools, definition and procedures have been standardized. It acts as a dynamic process according to the needs of the changing conditions. The Ministry encourages the capacity building of health information staff and provides data processing equipments for development of online computerized information system to ensure rapid timely information.

In concerning with hospital information system, there are 790 hospitals in 324 townships. The system is to strengthen the validity of hospital statistics to understand the leading causes and the magnitude of morbidity/ mortality burden of hospitals for better management and planning of hospitals. Hospital information system is well established in Computer Assisted Medical Record System with ICD-10 coding in some hospitals. According to NHP (2001-2006), 300 hospitals will be established in CAMRS at the end of 2006.

Public Health Information System is part of the Health Management Information System on public health aspect. It is focused on the grass-root level by basic health staff. It is integrated national public health information system designed to meet the needs of community as well as health managers, decision makers and planners.

5.6 Community action

The Village Health Committees have been formed to support health improvement in village level. Voluntary health workers have been trained and provide health care in their own community where health staff is not lived. There are many community actions such as community cost sharing, revolving drug fund, community contribution in hospitals and health centers, implementation of water and sanitation projects.

5.7 Emergency preparedness

Natural disasters like earthquake, floods, storms and strong winds are occasionally present in Myanmar. The country has disaster response system with the involvement of all related government sectors. Migrating population and construction are also geared to epidemics of communicable diseases and fire hazards. Training on disaster management is given to medical officers who live in disaster prone areas. Road traffic accident is becoming a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Myanmar and trauma unit and orthopedic services need to be strengthened.

5.8 Health research and technology

The Department of Medical Research has already established under the Ministry of Health. Nowadays, Department of Medical Research expanded to Lower, upper and central department to strengthen the research activities. Health research policy board was formed in 1994 under the Ministry of Health with the Director General of various Health Departments, directors of medical Universities and representatives of other related ministries. The board has

laid down guidelines such as strengthening of research capability, promoting health system research, investing communicable and non communicable diseases and research findings applied in practices. During the National Health Plan (1996-2001), a total of 423 research projects have been accomplished. Of these, 276 projects were carried out solely supported by the Government and 147 projects in joint support with the external funding agencies. Regarding financial support, construction of the Diagnostics and Vaccine Research centre has been undertaken. Clinical Research Unit on HIV/AIDS has been funded and established.