

## PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

The multi-sectoral dimension is inherent in practically every health intervention. Our understanding of health purely as a technical issue is no longer enough. Economics, political science, human development and even issues of global and national security now require us to consider health in a broader context. Health has a mutually reinforcing relationship with development. Major progress on achieving developmental goals including the MDGs, is inconceivable if there is no improvement in the health situation.

The Ministry of Health has closely cooperated with several organizations within the UN system, particularly those organizations playing an important role in public health. The WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA are mainly responsible for the provision of technical assistance and also have been involved in assisting various health care activities. UNDP, UNHCR, JICA, OXFAM, SCF, etc. are also actively involved in health development activities.

Myanmar has been elected as member of the Executive Board of the WHO for the years (2001-2004) and His Excellency Professor Dr. Kyaw Myint, the Minister for Health has also been elected to chair the Board.

Myanmar is actively involved in activities pertaining to international health development. Myanmar as one of the countries of the WHO South East Asia region has signed the "Declaration on the Health Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in the SEA region" and will do its best for health development of the country as well as the region. Myanmar become a signatory to the Framework Convention on the Tobacco Control in 2003 and party to the Convention in 2004.

WHO has provided technical support to the Ministry of Health and has also gradually expanded the scope of cooperation. As Myanmar has shown its potential for implementing projects in collaboration with WHO, there have been several successful WHO supported activities. As a member country in the WHO, SEA Region, Myanmar holds the tradition of participating actively in the Regional health activities. The Seventeenth Meeting of Health Ministers of the Countries of the WHO South East Asia Region, hosted for the first time in Myanmar, was held successfully in Yangon in October 1999. Similarly 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Health Secretaries of the South East Asia Region was held successfully in February 2001. This was followed by a number of regional and international health meetings.

UNICEF has been supporting development projects under the World Summit for Children and Expanded Programme for Immunization. In 1991, the Government ratified the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of the Children. Some of the goals of the declaration such as reduction of infant mortality rate and increase adult literacy rate have been spelled out in the country's agenda for health development.

On the other hand, UNFPA has been a major supporter of reproductive health activities since 1996. UNDP also has been supporting several development projects in health field and gradually expand the scope of cooperation.

As a member country of ASEAN Myanmar is collaborating with other member countries in health matters. Myanmar will host the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN + 3 Health Ministers' Meeting in 2006.

Myanmar is among the countries actively participating in Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance activities with the objective of strengthening national capabilities as an initial phase in three programme areas identified, namely improving disease outbreak investigation and response, strengthening health manpower development in Epidemiology, and establishment of Regional Surveillance Network.

Intercountry joint activities were conducted between Myanmar and China and Myanmar and Thailand. In September 2001 a joint programme on health exhibition and health activities at border area between Myanmar and Thailand was held at Tachileik-Maesai region. This was followed by other joint activities at Kawthong-Ranong region in February 2002 and in Kyaintong-Chaingrai in September 2003. On all occasions Health Ministers of both countries attended and delivered inaugural addresses. In addition to holding health exhibitions health care services were provided to the local population by the visiting as well as local specialists.

A team comprising orthopedic surgeons, doctors and nurses performed corrective surgery for those with orthopedic problems. Similarly, a team of plastic surgeons headed by professor/head of the maxillo-facial department of the Yangon General Hospital performed corrective surgery for the patients with congenital cleft lip and palate during that period. Other specialists like ophthalmologist, ENT specialist, general surgeon, obstetrician and gynaecologist are also providing specialist services.

In addition international and local NGOs are also joining hands with Myanmar in health development activities.

#### **International Non-Governmental Organizations working in Myanmar**

- Action International Contre La Faim (AICF)
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
- Aide Medicale International (AMI)
- Artsen Zonder Greenzen (AZG)
- Asian Maternal and Child Welfare Association (AMCWA)
- Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA)
- Burnet Institute (Australia)
- Care (Myanmar)
- CESVI (Cooperation and Sviluppo onlus)
- Humanitarian Services International (HSI)
- International Organization Migration (IOM)
- International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Association (ILEP)
- Malteser (Germany)
- Marie Stopes International (MSI)
- Mediciens du Monde (MDM)
- Mediciens Sans Frontieres - Switzerland (MSF-CH)
- Merlin
- PACT Myanmar
- Partners International Solidarity Organization (Partners)
- Population Services International (PSI)
- Progetto Continent (Progetto)
- Save the Children (Japan) - SC (Japan)
- Save the Children (UK) - SC (UK)
- Save the Children (US) - SC (US)
- Support Fund Myanmar
- The Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud (AFXB)
- The International HIV/AIDS Alliance
- Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP)
- World Concern
- World Vision International (WVI)

### National Non-Governmental Organizations

- Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA)
- Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAFF)
- Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA)
- Myanmar Red Cross Society
- Myanmar Medical Association (MMA)
- Myanmar Dental Association (MDA)
- Myanmar Nurses Association (MNA)
- Myanmar Health Assistant Association
- Myanmar Council of Churches
- Myanmar Anti-narcotic Association

Other ministries related to health are also working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health for health development. This collaboration is co-ordinated and strengthened by the National Health Committee.

To elaborate a few, the Ministry of Information is an indispensable partner in disseminating health information and education. Similarly, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs and Ministry of Mines are key partners of the Ministry of Health in providing promotive and preventive health services to the people.

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs together with the Ministry for Health are working together in provision of Safe Water to the Community. Active co-operation of Ministry of Mines had made universal iodization of salt possible.

Being aware of the indispensable roles of the professionals in health development the Government has formed the Myanmar Academy of Medical Sciences with the membership of experienced health professionals both in-service and retired. The objectives are to strengthen health services and health research activities and to ensure that production of human resources for health and continuous education of them are up to the international standard.

Acknowledging the importance of pharmaceutical firms and medical equipment company in provision of medical care and following the guidance of the state leader in this matter, Myanmar Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment Entrepreneurs Association was formed by the state in 1999. Formation of this association would contribute to the successful implementation of health care activities, and will ensure that manufacturing, importing and distribution of drugs and medical equipments are accordance with the National Drug Law.

With the philosophical changes in the economic policy, alternative health care financing schemes are being given serious consideration and the private sector is also being encouraged.

