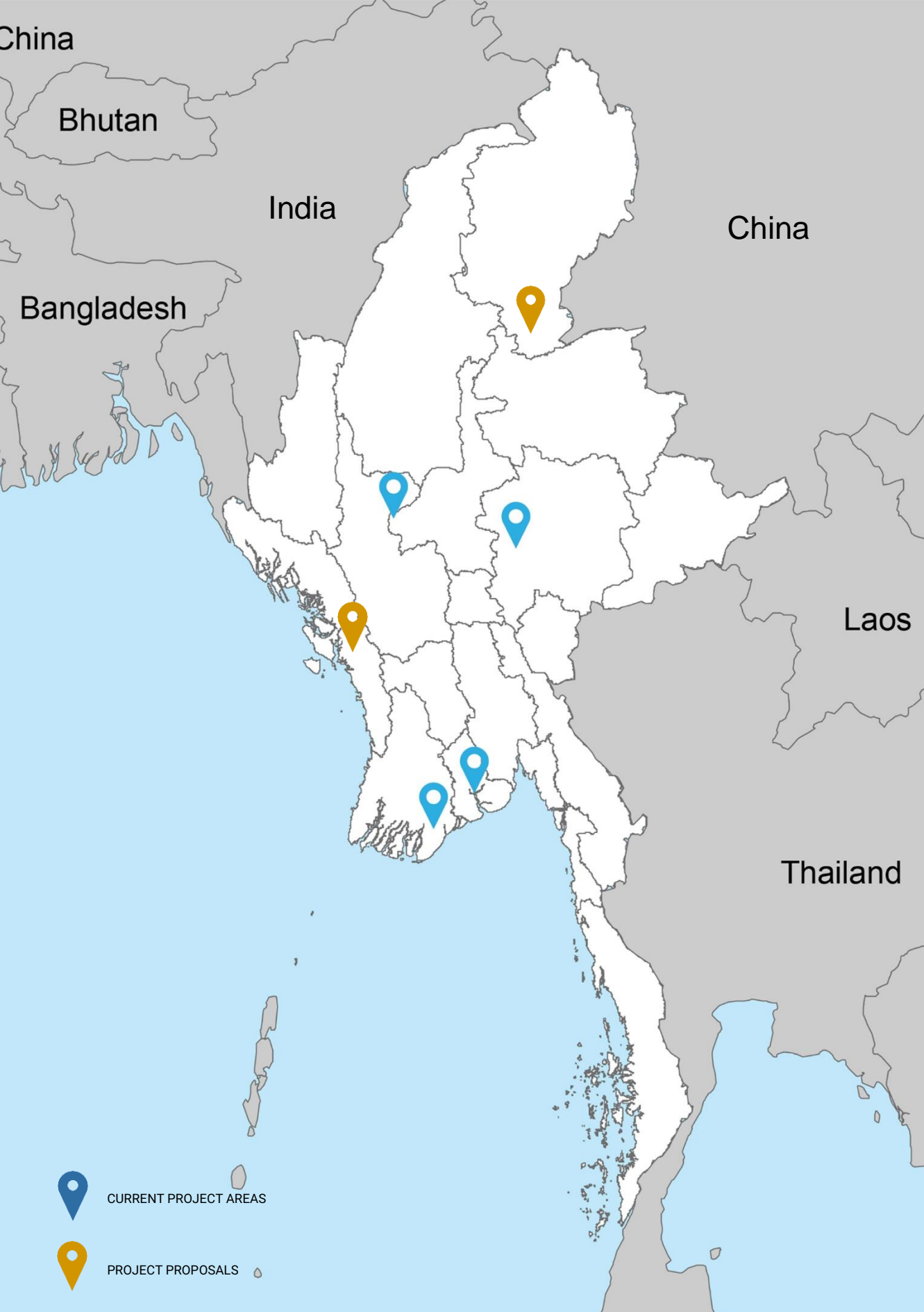




# UN-Habitat Myanmar

## Country Report 2023



China

Bhutan

India

China

Bangladesh

Laos

Thailand



CURRENT PROJECT AREAS



PROJECT PROPOSALS

# Table of Contents

## 1 INTRODUCTION 4

- 1.1 Context and Challenges
- 1.2 Factsheet

## 2 SUMMARY OF CURRENT PORTFOLIO 8

- 2.1 Community resilience
- 2.2 Climate Action

## 3 PROJECT PROPOSALS 12

- 3.1 Urban Resilience Programme (URP)
- 3.2 Resilient schools and Disaster Risk Reduction in Myanmar
- 3.3 Project for Integrated Resilience Building in cyclone affected communities in Rakhine and Kachin States in Myanmar

Cambodia

Vietnam



01



INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

More than two years after the military takeover, Myanmar continues to face the impacts of a multidimensional crisis that is driving population displacement, creating serious protection risks, limiting access to services, and causing substantial food insecurity. The three interrelated crises of the February 2021 military coup, COVID-19, and climate change are pushing the country towards dire humanitarian and developmental constraints. In addition, access limitations, bureaucratic and administrative impediments, ongoing attacks, and underfunding continue to challenge development efforts.

For the decade prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Myanmar was one of the fastest growing economies in South Asia. During that period, the country achieved significant development gains, including a notable reduction in the poverty rate from 48.2 percent in 2005 to 24.8 percent in 2017, and it was expected that by 2021 Myanmar would graduate to middle-income country status. However, with an estimated 40 per cent of the population living below the national poverty line in 2022 such development gains have been lost.

During that period, while much of the country's economic growth was generated by its extractive industries and agriculture, there was also a surge in internal migration to urban areas, fuelled by increased livelihood opportunities. Myanmar has seen a rapid urbanisation over the past recent years, with most of the urban population growth concentrated in major cities such as Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. To meet the needs of these growing urban and peri-urban communities, the requirement to provide basic services, including access to clean water, waste management and electricity, as well as shelter, also increased. Due to inadequate supply of affordable housing, many of the urban newcomers moved into informal settlements, where they lived as squatters, without secure tenure rights, and often without access to basic services.

With only 31% of its population estimated to live in urban areas, Myanmar is still in a very early urbanisation stage (UN Population Division, 2019). This brings many opportunities for sustainable urbanisation practices to be put in place which may support poverty reduction. An inclusive nature-based approach will help to ensure that local communities achieve a greater balance with the natural environment, while also bringing potential benefits for peace and stability. Within these principles, various policies and plans were developed aiming to strengthen urban planning and management and to improve disaster risk reduction, including the formulation of a draft National Urban Policy (NUP) in 2021. However, the realization of many of these policy goals was hindered by institutional capacity gaps, and the official response to informal settlements continued to place emphasis on forced evictions and population resettlement.

The onset of the pandemic in Myanmar in March 2020 and the subsequent containment measures resulted in significant job loss, especially in the service, manufacturing and construction sectors, which are urban-based. The increase in poverty rates has therefore been somewhat higher in urban, rather than in rural areas. Moreover, as a communicable disease, the impact of COVID-19 has been greatest in densely populated areas where social distancing is difficult: urban centres are estimated to have experienced some 90 percent of all reported COVID-19 cases. In Myanmar, among those hardest-hit by the health and socio-economic impact of the pandemic have been the urban poor of Yangon, particularly the estimated 400,000 residents of Yangon's informal settlements.

The socio-economic consequences of the health crisis have been intensified by the February 2021 military coup. The escalation in conflict has contributed to the numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who are now estimated to be some 1.8 million, that is, almost five times the pre-February 2021 estimate of 370,000.



One consequence of the dramatic rise in IDP numbers is that urban migration, particularly to informal settlement areas, has continued to increase. This has further strained basic services and infrastructure, which were already weakened by chronic underinvestment. It has as well exacerbated existing waste management, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and energy access challenges, particularly in slum areas. Consequently, there is an urgent need to more effectively manage the growth of Myanmar's human settlements to mitigate against potentially grave, negative consequences for community health, livelihoods and security. Unfortunately, progress on the NUP and on other policy work that could guide urban planning to address these issues has stalled since the military takeover.

Myanmar is also at significant threat from natural disaster and its compounding effects on an already dilapidated economy and society. In fact, Myanmar is one of the world's most climate vulnerable countries both in climate risk and coping capacity. With a population of over 54 million people, the country is rich in natural resources, spanning over its 677 km<sup>2</sup>, a diverse topography and ecological zones.

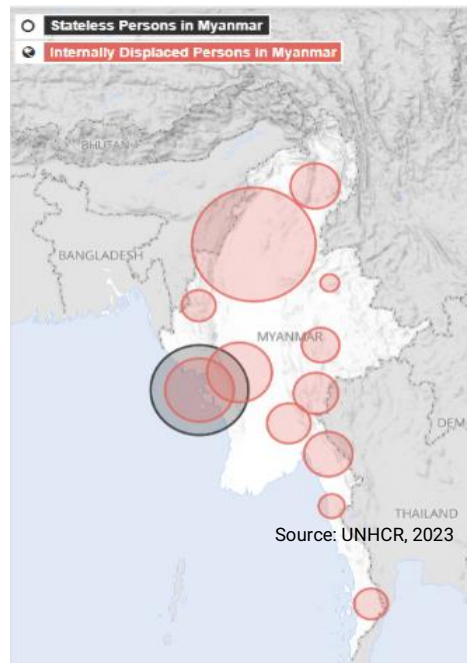
The country's climate is projected to shift dramatically in the coming decades:

- In every region in Myanmar, temperatures are expected to rise by the middle of the 21st century by 1.3°C–2.7°C. Warming varies by both season and region, with the cool (November–February) and hot (March–May) seasons projected to see the most warming.
- The eastern and northern hilly regions are projected to see the most dramatic warming among all regions of Myanmar, with hot season average temperatures rising by up to 3°C.
- During 1981–2010, Myanmar had about one day of extreme heat per month. In the future, projections show that Myanmar could experience anywhere from four to 17 days of extreme heat each month.
- Changes in rainfall patterns are projected to vary by region and season, with increases projected during the monsoon season, while both increases and decreases are possible the rest of the year.
- Sea level rise projections for the coastline range from 20 cm to 41 cm by mid-century. Although projected changes in cyclone severity and frequency are still uncertain, coastal flooding both during and independent of cyclones will worsen as sea levels rise.

These risks and vulnerabilities have been prevalent in the aftermath of cyclones such as Nargis, in 2008, and more recently, cyclone Mocha which has hit Myanmar in May 2023. The most powerful cyclone to hit the country in more than 10 years, Mocha brought devastating impacts in terms of loss of lives and massive damage to infrastructure and houses in Rakhine, Chin, Magway, Sagaing, and Kachin. 70 percent of the entire Rakhine State sustained damages and 90 percent of houses have been unroofed. 5.4 million persons were impacted by the cyclone and almost 1 million were evacuated to safe places. Access to safe drinking water is an urgent priority, along with roofing for shelters, health services and WASH facilities.

National level political issues, intercommunal violence and armed conflict impact in particular the most vulnerable communities in both rural and urban areas, especially in informal settlements that continue to struggle with longstanding issues of poverty and inequality. The devastating socio-economic fallout from the pandemic, as well as the ongoing political crisis, thus places at risk not only the significant development gains that Myanmar had achieved over the past decade - it also threatens the country's progress towards the 2030 Agenda, including the commitment to leave no one behind (LNOB). Myanmar's protracted political and socioeconomic crisis, coupled with its extreme climate vulnerability including heightened scarcity of natural resources, extended periods of drought, more intense cyclones and flooding, makes it especially prone to climate related security challenges. While Myanmar's conflict is not directly caused by climate change, as impacts from climate change intensify, the risk of climate-related conflict also intensifies. However, Myanmar continues to face low investment and innovation to improve readiness and promote climate action.

Within this context, UN-Habitat continues to promote sustainable urbanisation efforts. With increased population displacement and expanding urbanisation, the importance of addressing the basic needs of the most vulnerable population in urban centres grows, especially to foster diversity, support inclusion and promote resilient basic urban infrastructure and access to services.



## 1.2 FACTSHEET



**31%**  
**URBAN**  
**POPULATION<sup>1</sup>**



**1.7%**  
**URBAN POPULATION**  
**GROWTH<sup>1</sup>**



**53.8 M**  
**POPULATION<sup>1</sup>**



**0.7 (annual%)**  
**POPULATION GROWTH<sup>1</sup>**



**-17.9%**  
**ANNUAL GDP GROWTH<sup>1</sup>**



**1209.9 USD**  
**GDP PER CAPITA<sup>1</sup>**



**66**  
**LIFE EXPECTANCY<sup>1</sup>**



**64.4%**  
**PERCENT OF 15-64 YEAR OLDS**  
**IN LABOR FORCE<sup>3</sup>**



**1.8 M**  
**INTERNALLY DISPLACED**  
**PEOPLE<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 2021, <sup>2</sup> UNDP, 2021, <sup>3</sup> World Bank, 2019, <sup>4</sup> UN in Myanmar, 2023



Housing conditions in Informal Settlements in Yangon



# 02

---

## SUMMARY OF CURRENT PORTFOLIO





UN-Habitat established a presence in Myanmar in the early 1990s through 2004 during which time the agency pioneered introducing community-driven development through its flagship “People’s Process” and established the first community-led projects in the Dry Zone, Shan State and the Delta region. The country programme was re-established in 2008 in the context of Cyclone Nargis emergency response. Reconstruction and rehabilitation work followed the principles of building back better by incorporating disaster resilient construction techniques. UN-Habitat continues to work in disaster risk reduction and sustainable urbanisation, while also addressing climate action, building resilience from the ground up.

## 2.1 Community resilience

Based on the COVID-19 response survey to informal settlements in Yangon conducted in 2020, UN-Habitat Myanmar Office has been providing support to community resilience, with particular focus in urban informal settlements, and with financial assistance from the Government of Japan since March 2021. At the initial stages of pandemic response, efforts were put into controlling and cutting the transmission of COVID-19 by securing access to and sustaining availability of WASH and solid waste management services in informal settlements. This includes targeted interventions in schools’ communities, health centers, as well as the most vulnerable households, with the aim to prevent further expansion of the pandemic at home and in the community. UN-Habitat has been implementing following three inter-related components in 45 locations, 257 schools, and 42 community health clinics in eight townships in Yangon:

- Enhancing access to safe water and improved environmental sanitation
- Improving solid waste management
- Improving hygiene awareness and capacity of communities

UN-Habitat is implementing 22 stand-alone water supply systems in informal settlements in Yangon. This has included collaboration and knowledge exchange with private sector and water experts both in Myanmar, as well as from Japan and Arcadis international team, to consider the extreme water challenges in the specific locations, address the needs of the most vulnerable population groups, and propose innovative water governance solutions for informal settlements. The consideration of nature-based solutions has also been a critical element of the design and proposed solutions, considering also alternative low-cost rainwater harvesting systems. Through coordination with local authorities and community volunteers, the team installed school and community latrines and 1,045 units of hand-washing stations for communities, schools, community health clinics, distributed drinking water to 21,030 households and 4,150 home care support packages containing personal protective equipment (PPEs) and reusable cloth masks to 139,364 students. The team also carried out solid waste management activities in 22 locations and disseminated different types of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials to 25,000 households and 170,777 students in 257 schools.

## 2.2 Climate Action

The country programme has been providing technical support to resilience planning at community level so as to guide mainstreaming of climate action into local level development planning. In order to deepen the understanding of community-based climate change adaptation and mitigation and undertake gender responsive climate action at local level, with financial support from the European Union under the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance Programme, two key components of intervention are being promoted:

- Building of resilience at local level, considering the specific needs and demands of women and youth.
- Improved climate sector dialogue through knowledge generation, awareness raising and communication.

A simplified community-based climate change vulnerability assessment tool was formulated to help conduct the assessment at township level and develop local level climate action planning considering each township's context. Prioritized climate action will be supported to enhance climate resilience of the most vulnerable communities in the targeted areas.

The "Myanmar Climate Action Network (M-CAN)" has been launched during the first ever Myanmar Climate Action Week in March 2023. The rationale is to revitalise climate dialogue while creating a space where partners can work collaboratively to strengthen climate action across multiple sectors. A virtual knowledge hub was established to provide open, tailored, and improved access to all Myanmar citizens and stakeholders to climate change data, information, and knowledge.

During 2022, UN-Habitat worked with Myanmar Journalism Institute (MJJ) to build the capacity of journalists on climate change reporting in Myanmar. MJJ engaged with trained national journalists and international experts to review and update the existing training curriculum based on the new knowledge developed, new national, regional and global framework and strategies developed. As a result, a total of 30 stories and 2 video documentaries were created focusing on climate change issues in Myanmar. MJJ facilitated the publishing of these articles and documentaries through 13 channels of media houses, online news portals, and social media. By 31st December 2022, the published articles and stories had reached approximately 273,500 viewers.



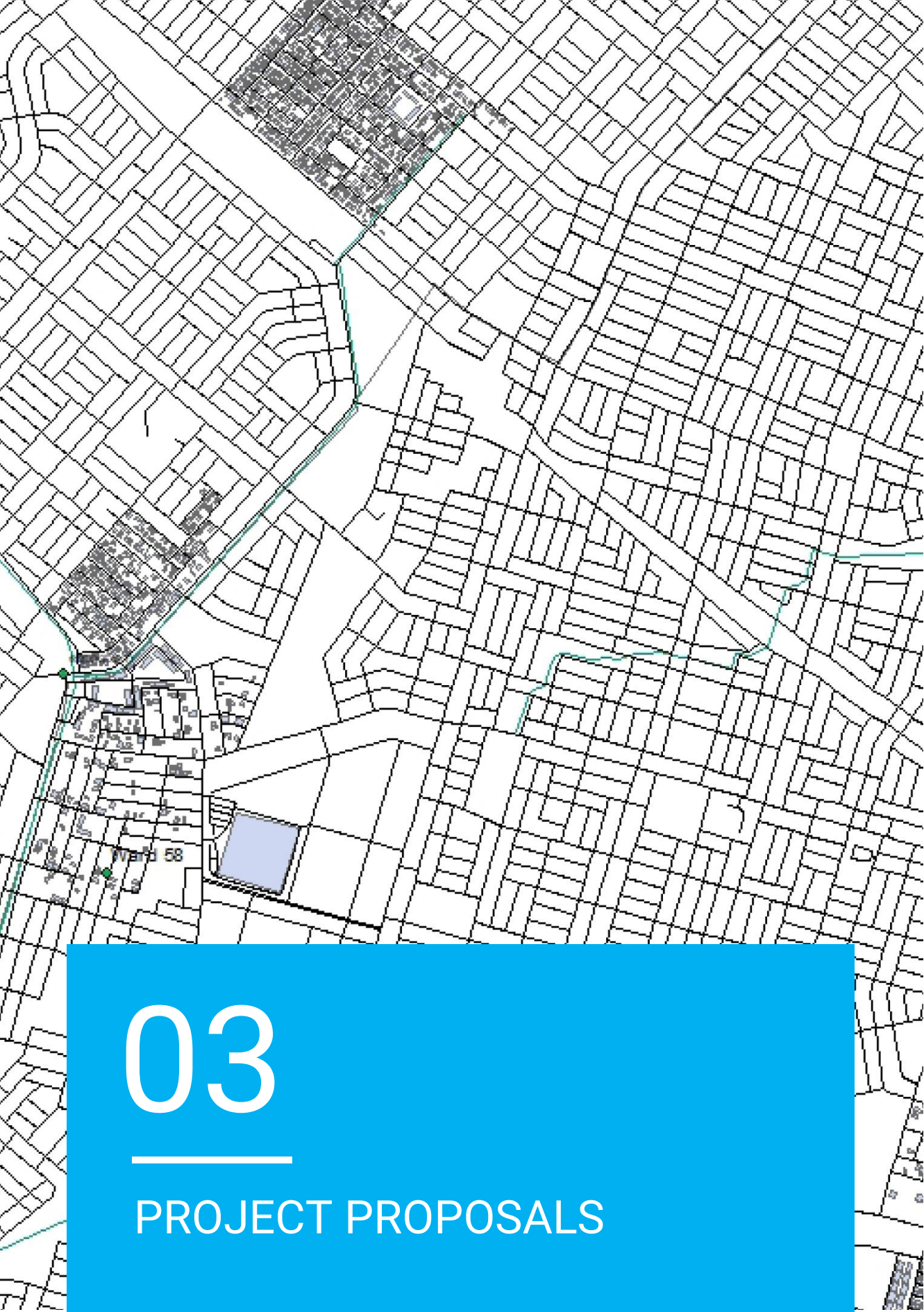
Community Hazard Mapping in Yangon's Informal Settlements



Reimagining Our Futures Together in Myanmar Climate Action Week 2023



Children Drawing Event in Myanmar Climate Action Week 2023



03

---

PROJECT PROPOSALS

### 3.1 URBAN RESILIENCE PROGRAMME (URP)

**PARTNERS:** UNDP, UN Women, private sector, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), Community volunteers, Community Development Committees (CDCs)

**TIMEFRAME:** 3 years

**LOCATION:** Eight townships in informal settlements in Yangon.

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** \$12M USD

**TARGET BENEFICIARY GROUP:** 470,000 persons living in informal settlements (300,000 direct beneficiaries and 170,000 indirect beneficiaries)

**SDGs ALIGNMENT:** SDG 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13



#### CONTEXT

Health pandemic, political turmoil, armed conflict, insecurity and displacement have compounded the immense socio-economic and developmental effects from Myanmar's multidimensional crisis. A UNDP and UN Women survey conducted in 2022 highlighted that urban poverty in Myanmar is estimated to have tripled under the combined threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing political crisis. Women and children are being disproportionately affected with women more likely to be engaged in vulnerable employment and over-represented in sectors heavily impacted by the crisis.

Among Yangon's urban population, the hardest hit were those living in informal settlements due to very high housing densities, as well as challenges in access to poor and often inadequate basic infrastructure and services. Yangon's peri-urban areas lack safe drinking water supply, health services and facilities, have very poor hygiene, sanitation and waste disposal services, as well as poor or non-existent access paths and roads. Job losses followed by continued imposition of martial law from early 2021 have hindered people's access to going to work and significantly exacerbated the vulnerabilities of those living in informal settlements.

Poverty and debt levels of households have risen exponentially. In addition, there is high level of mobility of settlers not only due to failure to pay rent or repay debts but also caused by forced evictions and/or constant fear of eviction. Mobility perpetuates and a sense of insecurity prevails, causing social problems and tensions, including mistrust between neighbours, leading to lack of social cohesion, low-trust and isolation.

The impacts of climate change and the increasing magnitude, frequency, and rate, particularly of weather-related disasters, drought and floods, are also pushing people beyond their capacity to cope and adapt. Climate-induced changes are significantly affecting the viability of some livelihoods in Yangon. The resilience of the population in Yangon is currently very low. Due to exposure to a multitude of hazards and insufficient capacity to mitigate risks, they are often unable to accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Purpose

The Urban Resilience Programme (URP) aims to address some of the most prevalent urban poverty issues in the selected townships in Yangon. These issues include poor quality housing, lack of resilient basic urban infrastructures and services, including drainage, access to reliable, safe drinking water, WASH and health services, inadequate access roads and paths, poor waste management and lack of livelihoods options, income generation and employment opportunities. The programme aims to improve the resilience of nearly half million beneficiaries living in slums and informal settlements in eight selected townships in Yangon, addressing the above-mentioned issues. The URP programme will thus benefit 18% of the total population in the eight selected townships.

The URP will be composed of three outputs: 1) Communities empowered to undertake inclusive, participatory development and gender-responsive basic service delivery implemented; 2) Upgraded/ developed climate resilient community infrastructures for the most vulnerable; 3) Improved livelihoods and economic well-being, with particular concern for women and girls fostered. The ultimate intended beneficiaries of this intervention are the poor and vulnerable urban residents in slums and informal settlements in peri-urban Yangon. The expected long-term benefits will ensure community resilience including climate resilient basic urban infrastructure and services – drainage, flood protection, access to reliable, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and health services, access paths and roads, as well as enhanced livelihoods and increased income earning potential of individuals through support to micro and small enterprises, vocational and skills training and initial investments in the form of grants and innovative financing mechanisms for local community development.

### Linkage with the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan (2020 – 2025)

Through these interventions, the URP also contributes two Strategic Pillar (SP) of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan (2020 – 2025). Specifically, it contributes to the SP 1 (Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban – rural continuum) through improvement of accessibility to WASH and livelihoods and economic well-being to the poor and vulnerable people in informal settlements in Yangon. With the intervention on the climate resilient community infrastructures for the most vulnerable including WASH facilities, drainage systems, flood protection, access paths and roads, the project also contributes to the SP 3: Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment.

### Description

The URP will be a UN joint programme of UNDP, UN-Habitat and UN Women. The URP adopts “by community, for community” placing the communities in the selected townships at the centre of all planned resilience measures. The programme builds on recent initiatives in Yangon such as UN-Habitat’s project on “Building resilience to COVID-19 through WASH and waste management support in informal settlements (2020-24)” and UNDP’s “Rapid Response Programme”.

The management and implementation responsibility of the URP measures in the selected townships will be divided based on areas between UNDP and UN-Habitat because both agencies have past experience and networks of community volunteers in target informal settlements. Based on three criteria (Total direct beneficiaries, Geographic vicinity of the selected townships, and existing project contacts), the division responsibility between UNDP and UN-Habitat is planned. In addition, UN Women will work in close collaboration with UNDP and UN-Habitat to ensure gender mainstreaming in all activities, and implement activities targeted at women in all areas.

Each organisation will be responsible for ensuring that all jointly agreed upon project measures are implemented with the allocated resources in their townships under their responsibility. While UNDP and UN-Habitat will take the lead in their respective areas for coordination and implementation of agreed project activities, core expertise and experience of both agencies will be shared in each other’s targeted townships to effectively implement the programme. Coordination responsibility will be with the respective lead UN organisations for the specific area. Procuring and acquisition of funding will be a joint responsibility with all three UN agencies actively seeking third-party funding for the URP programme.

## Strategy

The URP strategy will be based upon interacting directly with the selected communities, building upon the UNDP and UN-Habitat community volunteer groups established under pre-existing programmes and expand into developing new community groups. The assumption for the URP is that persons living in the selected areas (e.g. informal settlements and their immediate vicinity) are motivated by specific developmental interests and that they are thus willing to form groups around these common interests. For example, communities that are affected by water supply shortages will be motivated to address this issue; communities interested in specific income generating activities will form a special interest group, etc. The URP aims to form these new community groups with a gender balanced approach, incentivising also a women- and youth-led approach that may promote gender and youth responsive action at local level.

## Expected Accomplishments

1. Communities empowered to undertake inclusive, participatory development and gender-responsive basic service delivery.
2. Climate resilient community infrastructures for the most vulnerable upgraded /developed.
3. Improved livelihoods and economic well-being, with particular focus on women, youth and girls.

## Assumptions, Risks, and Mitigation Measures

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation Measures
Impact due to natural disasters, including flooding, cyclones and earthquakes affecting the targeted areas and the highly vulnerable locations where populations are settled.	Both man-made and natural disasters may impact on sanitation and cause displacement of the communities and possible delay in the implementation of programme activities.	The disaster risk mitigation measures such as building climate resilient infrastructures will be a clear focus of the URP programme planned activities. The implementation modality of the programme, which is based on Community Interest Groups (CIGs), will ensure that the communities are prepared for the natural disasters by themselves developing disaster risk management strategies.
Continuous financial risks including banking or liquidity crisis, and constant changes in market, depreciation of currency and negative real interest rates in the country.	Banking or liquidity crisis including the heightening of intensive scrutiny of all transactions' renders transfer of funds to community groups impossible, as well making possibilities of cash-based transfers very difficult.	In the immediate term, the programme will develop innovative approaches, including partnering with fintech companies in order to enable easy transactions. In the long term, bank accounts will need to be opened and operated by various community groups, and the scale of operations and the informal settlement improvements would need to be maintained at the community level with approvals from parties concerned.
Renewal of political and civil unrest and commensurate heightened security measures restrict access to targeted communities and impact programme implementation.	Restriction of accessibility to targeted communities and impact on programme implementation.	Lean communication channels coupled to a swift decision-making mechanism will ensure that the programme activities are in-line with and reflect the most pressing needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries in the event of any emergencies. The programme will prioritize using local resources in the process of implementation in order to avoid any delay of the service delivery potentially caused by the access restrictions. Ensure that the community interest groups are non-political in nature and will only support development activities in their target communities.
The most vulnerable and targeted beneficiaries are forced to move out of their informal settlements by the authorities as part of alleged presence of security threat.	Project beneficiaries displace to other areas.	As long as the vulnerable population are within the target areas, a flexible and adaptive project design of implementation will be applied to cater for the most pressing needs of vulnerable population e.g. supporting their basic needs in hostels/ nearby informal settlements where the evicted target groups have moved to in residential area.

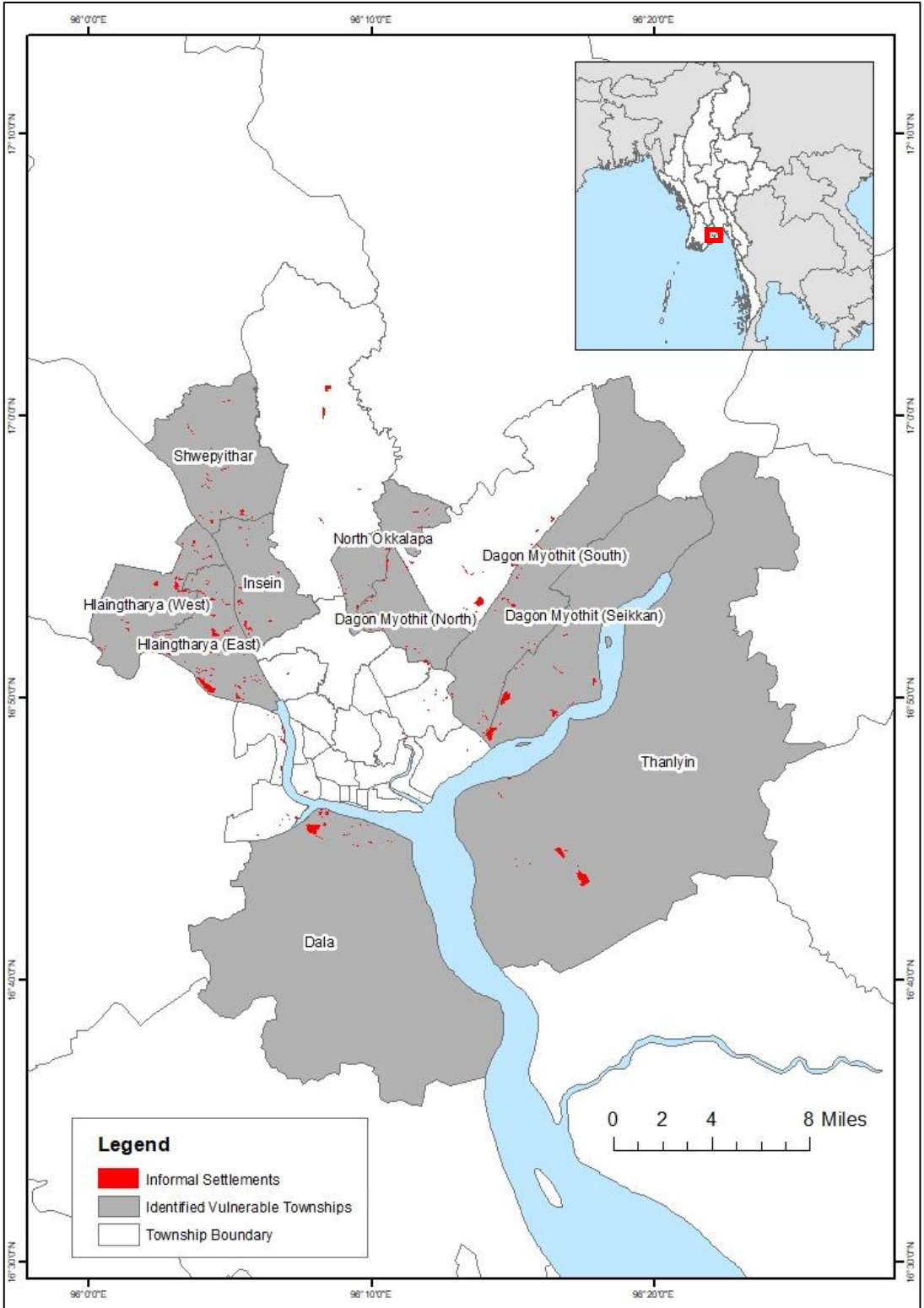
<p>Misperception of the formal and informal security groups.</p>	<p>Programme stakeholders targeted as a result of misinformation and disinformation spread on programme activities and programme stakeholders.</p>	<p>Access to vulnerable communities will be negotiated considering humanitarian nature of activities. Trainings on security and conflict resolution for the staff and volunteers will be conducted. Regular stakeholder engagements will be carried out to ensure to mitigate misinformation and disinformation regarding programme activities.</p>
--	--	---



An informal settlement in peri-urban Yangon where residents face the challenges of inadequate shelters and unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.



IDENTIFIED VULNERABLE TOWNSHIPS IN YANGON REGION



## 3.2 RESILIENT SCHOOLS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN MYANMAR

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** UNICEF, UNESCO, Plan International, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), Schools, Parents and Teachers Associations, Community volunteers, Community Development Committees (CDCs)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2 years

**LOCATION/ TARGET AREAS:** Private and/or monastic schools in Myanmar

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** \$6M USD

**TARGET BENEFICIARY GROUP:** School communities across Myanmar, with particular focus on recent cyclone-affected areas.

**SDGs ALIGNMENT :** SDG 4, 7, 11, 13



### CONTEXT

Educational institutions can play an instrumental role in local level climate adaptation and resilience building. Preparing young generations is fundamental for building a climate resilient future in Myanmar. Education encourages school children and youth to change their attitudes and behaviour and enables them to be a part of the solutions while also empowering them to make informed decisions. Based on the experience of leading the climate actions in Myanmar over the last year, UN-Habitat has been assessing about the needs and opportunities to support the education sector in addressing climate change. While Myanmar is classified as the second most affected country by the impacts of climate related extreme weather events for the period from 2000 to 2019, there has been only limited efforts in Myanmar on improving climate literacy at school level to engage young people in addressing the climate change crisis. It is critical to engage children in thinking and learning about the environment at every age, and that includes the challenges climate change presents to our environment today. In the classroom, young people shall be taught about the impact of climate change and learn how to adapt to climate change. Climate education can empower and motivate the younger generations to take climate actions throughout their lives.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### Purpose

The project aims to promote climate resilience through school children and youth engagement and to empower and motivate the younger generations to take climate actions throughout their lives. The project targets school children to become climate ambassadors by engaging in thinking and learning about the environment, implementing climate actions and, and sharing knowledge among each other and back to communities where they live. Through this project, we will identify the opportunity for the education sector to take action, localize climate solutions, and prepare today's students to lead a sustainable future. The project envisions a future where Myanmar's schools are model for climate actions, climate solutions and sustainability.

## Linkage with the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan (2020 – 2025)

“Strengthen climate action and improved urban environment”, SP3, is one of the four domains of change of UN-Habitat Strategic Plan. The project will especially contribute to SP3 by addressing the resilience, adaptation, and mitigation actions for sustainable and resilient schools. The interventions are designed to empower youth and local communities and to strengthen their capacity to promote resilient recovery. Therefore, the project will also partially contribute to SP4: Effective urban crises prevention and response.

### Description

The project is designed to deliver a school level climate action plan with the interlinked outcomes that collectively address the challenges of limited climate education, capacity building, access to climate change related knowledge at school level.

- 1) The project is expected to enhance the knowledge of the school children by delivering a series of school awareness trainings by using age-appropriate knowledge materials and tools for school children and young people. The project will conduct tailored complete capacity building trainings and outdoor activities for teachers/educators and school children which focus on scientific knowledge of climate change, global and local climate impacts and nature-based solutions applicable at local level. In each school, relevant educators will be capacitated to continue to engage in teaching the rising generation of students to be better equipped to address climate change.
- 2) The project will initiate climate action planning at school level through active engagement of relevant local climate actors: Analyzing the challenges related lack of awareness and action on climate change and opportunities for improving climate change educations and actions in schools. Based on the analysis, the project will provide clear recommendations on both soft interventions and hard interventions on how the schools can be empowered to play a role in local level climate adaptation and resilience building.
- 3) Based on the recommendations, the project will implement the prioritized interventions of school climate action plan with the support of school children, teachers, youth groups, local NGO/CSOs and communities etc. The project will implement resilient school retrofitting pilot projects suitable for the condition of each selected schools (such as rainwater harvesting facilities, solar power system, sustainable school gardening and campus composting, climate education learning ground, etc.), in which school children, teachers and community members can have active peer learning experiences. These interventions will later act as 3D textbooks which define environmental sustainability and climate change resilience.

### Strategy

Under this project, UN-Habitat will work with selected private schools or monastic schools in cyclone-affected areas on developing the school level climate action plan with short-term and medium-term goals that focus on enhancing local planning for climate actions. For this plan to succeed, UN-Habitat will work in collaboration with school leaders, educators, students, families, and communities. The project will promote the schools as “learning and demonstration centres” of climate change for school children, youth and communities. The project aims to encourage participatory approaches and intergenerational dialogues which are crucial to promote climate actions. The project will target middle (grade 6 to grade 9) and high schools (grade 10, grade 11) to enhance climate awareness and engage school children effectively to address climate challenges.

### Expected Accomplishments

- i. Strengthened the knowledge of Myanmar’s young generation on climate change and natural disasters to better respond to local climate impacts.
- ii. Enhanced school-led adaptation and resilient building participatory interventions contextualized to each selected school to create climate resilient school infrastructures or spaces so that the children and communities can gradually build towards more complex ideas about climate change, the causes, impacts, and what they can do to help reduce it or adapt the changes.
- iii. Model schools for climate actions, where the youths and communities can further build lasting change to advance a sustainable future.

## Assumptions, Risks, and Mitigation Measures

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation Measures
Proper engagement of targeted schools, educators and communities in active and transparent manner.	Lack of support from school board members and communities to pass the proposed activities. According to the current political tensions in the country, the schools and communities may not want to cooperate with UN agencies.	Explain to the involved stakeholders and beneficiaries to understand that proposed activities are not related to any political interest.  Maintain effective messaging and regular communication between students, parents, educators, and school board members.  Ensure the training and awareness raising activities are conducted in safe and secured locations.  All activity-related permits that require local authority approval shall be done in a timely manner.
Key actors and stakeholders including communities are actively engaged in capacity building, consultations and activities.	Limited safe spaces (indoor and outdoor) can be a challenge for proposed activities and trainings.	Partnerships between community-based organizations and other local non-government organizations can improve access to other potential safe areas for the proposed activities and trainings.
	The regular school exams can be challenge for students to participate in the activities.	Develop a detailed monthly activity schedule in consultation with the parents and teachers to ensure the activities are not overlapped with the other exams and other significant school events.
Internal administrative processes and procurement procedures could cope with the size of the project to deliver in a timely manner.	Delay in the implementation of projects and activities	Maintain regular and sturdy internal follow up on the procurement process.  Ensure regular internal coordination to keep track of the materials to be procured and trainings to be conducted.



School Children in Myanmar

### 3.3 PROJECT FOR INTEGRATED RESILIENCE BUILDING IN CYCLONE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN RAKHINE AND KACHIN STATES IN MYANMAR

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** UNCT, UNDP, IOM, UNHCR, Plan International, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), host communities, Community Development Committees (CDCs)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2 years

**LOCATION:** IDP camps and host communities in Mrauk-U Township of Rakhine State and Myitkyina/Waingmaw Townships of Kachin State

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** \$5.2M USD

**TARGET BENEFICIARY GROUP:** 610,000 persons living in three townships (direct beneficiaries: 21,477 people in IDP camps and host communities as well as 12,264 people living in camp or camp like conditions)



#### CONTEXT

People in Myanmar are faced with forced displacement – induced by human or natural disasters. With the attempted military coup in early 2021, many people were forced out of their dwellings in short notice. More than 1.8 million persons are currently internally displaced due to conflict and instability in Myanmar.

Especially Rakhine and Kachin states have been involved in armed conflict for several years and humanitarian needs increased after the COVID-19 pandemic and political context. Limited physical space, communal sleeping spaces and inadequate basic facilities have led to protection concerns. Lack of livelihood opportunities has rendered women and girls vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking to China. Boys are at risk of forced recruitment into armed forces and armed groups and turning to negative coping mechanisms (alcohol and drugs). In addition, GDP per capita in Rakhine is 25 percent below the country average and 78 percent of the population lives below the poverty line with less access to sanitation, drinking water, and electricity than in any other state in Myanmar.

A needs assessment conducted by Plan International Myanmar from November to December 2022 also revealed that residents in these two states suffer from food insecurity owing to loss or lack of stable livelihood opportunities and market prices, as well as water scarcity during summers and because of damaged ponds and wells due to heavy rainfall and flooding. The water sources are situated 30-45 minutes from their village or camps, while these areas have lack of proper drainage and solid waste management systems causing health and environmental risks. In addition, both areas are also disaster-prone areas and impacted by climate change. Rakhine State faces flooding, cyclones and storms, while Kachin faces flooding and landslides.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Purpose

In the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Progress Report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated that just 12 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets are on track. The number of people living in extreme poverty today is higher than it was four years ago, and only 30 percent of all countries have a potential to achieve SDG 1 on poverty by 2030. To achieve the 2030 Agenda, the report also includes five important recommendations to reduce poverty and inequality, and to expand social protection, job opportunities, and climate action. The report also considers homelessness both as serious deprivation of access to housing and as an extreme form of social exclusion, discrimination and loss of dignity.

As the UN focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, UN-Habitat promotes socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities and communities based on its Strategic Plan (2020-2025). Adequate housing for all remains a priority area of intervention, as recognised by UN-Habitat Assembly in 2023. The proposed project contributes to UN-Habitat's SP 1, SP3, and SP 4 through improvement of accessibility to WASH and livelihoods and economic well-being to IDPs and the poor and host communities; intervention on the climate resilient housing and community infrastructures; and assistance for IDPs and other vulnerable populations to enhance their resilient communities and accessibility to social basic services and livelihood opportunities in Rakhine and Kachin States.

Specifically, the proposed project aims to address the needs of vulnerable communities impacted by cyclone Mocha by improving the socio-economic situation of the IDPs and homeless people in the IDP camps and host communities. This will be achieved through enhancement of community resilience based on the multi-sectoral assistance for food security, financial sustainability, decent shelter and climate-resilient community infrastructures, particularly in Rakhine and Kachin States. The theory of change for the proposed project is:

- *If livelihood opportunities and income of IDPs and the vulnerable populations are increased through vocational and skills training and innovative financial mechanisms;*
- *If accessibility to water and sanitation services as well as solid waste management are improved through upgrading or provision of safe drinking water sources and sanitation services; and*
- *If innovative housing models and climate resilient-community infrastructures are restored or updated*

*Then, the resilience of communities accommodating IDPs and homeless populations in the selected communities in Rakhine and Kachin States will be strengthened by enhancing preparedness and response to emergencies through multi-sector assistance.*

### Description

Based on the urgent needs on livelihood opportunities, WASH, and climate resilient housing and community infrastructures, UN-Habitat and Implementing Partners will formulate a project on "Multi-Sectoral Life Saving Assistance and Resilience Programming for Crisis Affected People in Myanmar". The objective of the project is to *build resilient communities that prepare for, respond to, and survive in conflict situations through multi-sector assistance. The project intervention will enhance preparedness and response to emergencies through multi-sectoral assistance with a focus on IDPs in hard-to-reach communities and Persons with specific needs (persons with disabilities, elderly, single/female/child headed households, women and girls, LGBTIQ).*

Under this proposed project, in three target townships through the following inter-related outputs:

- a. Increased access to livelihood opportunities and income potentials of individuals through support cash for work schemes, micro-credit plans, vocational and skills training and initial investments in the form of grants and innovative financing mechanisms for local community development: The modality principles are inclusiveness, participation and gender mainstreaming;
- b. improved water and sanitation services and solid waste management: communities will be empowered in the design, implementation and monitoring of the interventions: activities will include drainage, flood protection, access to reliable, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, health services, access paths and walkways; and
- c. enhanced housing and improved infrastructure as well as building the capacity of community members to strengthen resilience enabling households and the communities for taking localized actions to better prepared for and respond to the impacts of climate of climate change. Cross-cutting issues are gender, youth, CSO strengthening and disaster risk management.

## Strategy

The project will be built on the experience and achievements of UN-Habitat's urban resilience of the marginalized groups and communities as well as reconstruction efforts aligned with humanitarian and development responses through working closely with the UNCT and agencies such as IOM, UNHCR, and international NGOs.

Aiming to swiftly access and implement the activities in Rakhine and Kachin States networks, and familiarity with the local context, UN-Habitat will establish partnerships with other UN agencies and/or international NGOs working in the target townships engaging in life-saving humanitarian and development programmes.

The project will mainstream the People's Process and promote participation of the people in the planning, implementation, and monitoring phases of the project. Since the ownership is given to the communities and community people build their capacity, the project will be more likely to succeed and sustain, while it could be safety net when traveling from or guidance given from mainland becomes an issue. The People's Process also urges the bottom-up approaches to decide the project interventions based on local needs, concerns, and gaps.

## Assumptions, Risks, and Mitigation Measures

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation Measures
Political situation remains stable throughout the project areas in ethnic regions for programme implementation	Ethnic armed groups in the two states become more active militarily in the target communities, and it could have negative impact on project implementation and restriction of accessibility to targeted communities.	Partnering with organisations that have firm ground in the project areas and building the capacity of local CSOs and community volunteers to ensure continuous operations of the project if traveling from or guidance given from mainland becomes an issue.
Occurrence of the new wave of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases in Myanmar.	The project implementation could be hampered by travel restrictions, national or local lockdown, or limited operational capacity of implementing partners due to health risks.	Ensuring the protection of the project implementers and stakeholders, the project will share the knowledge on the proper prevention measures and PPEs to stakeholders who implement field activities. The project will also obtain updated information from UN systems and other stakeholders and adjust the implementation schedule and approaches flexibly.
Some IDP camps in the target communities may close and people be resettled	Target IDP camps and host communities may be moved out of current areas and be resettled during the project implementation.	The project flexibly adjusts the activities and provide humanitarian and development assistance to the IDPs and the vulnerable populations in host communities through coordination with the donor, local authorities, and implementing partners.
The de facto authorities may create stricter security check points and long procedures to visit the field, getting the visa for international experts.	Limited accessibility to the project areas or working in the duty stations.	Planning the field work/ mission and coordinating with authorities in advance, while collaborating with stakeholders including community volunteers, local NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and other non-state local actors to implement the field activities.

“

*When the storm hit last year, we were terrified and had to spend five days in this cyclone shelter. I can only see the fields around this cyclone shelter. If I plant trees now, when I'm older, they will be dense and crowded, reducing heat, and protecting us from winds and rains.*

”

A boy in Ayeyarwady region explained how he and his family sought refuge in a UN-Habitat-supported multi-hazard shelter during previous flooding.





Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) 2023

All rights reserved.  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)  
Yangon, Myanmar

Excerpt from this publication, including photographs may be reproduced on condition that the source is quoted.

All photographs copyright @ UN-Habitat Myanmar

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Narratives: Catarina Camarinhas, Shashank Mishra, Jun Fujihira, U San Tun Aung, Min Thein Htike, Kyu Thin Cho  
Contributors: U Denzil Abel, U Htun Lynn, Naw Khine Thazin



**UN-HABITAT**

---

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Yangon, Myanmar

[t] (+95-9) 772 999 142

[e] desk@unhabitat.org.mm, info@unhabitat.org.mm

[w] www.unhabitat.org.mm