

# Environmental Crisis in Myanmar: Key Highlights from Health Perspective

Dr. Ye Min Htet

M.B.,B.S, MSc (International Health)





# Environmental crisis in Myanmar

## Mining



## Deforestation



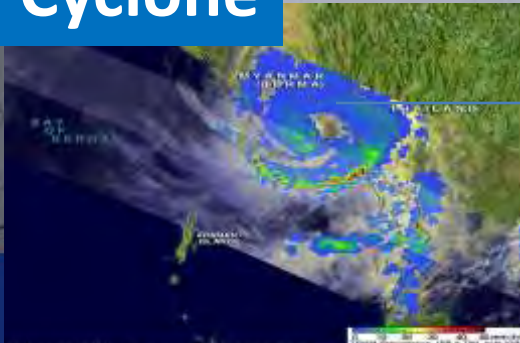
## Flood



## Rivers and dams



## Cyclone



# Nargis Cyclone: the worst in Myanmar's record

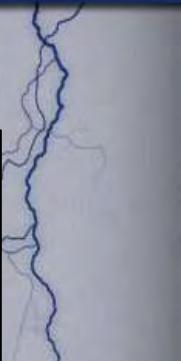


- Causing catastrophic destruction and at least 138,000 fatalities
- Damage:\$ 12.9 billions
- Nargis impacted 65% of the country's paddies
- lesson learned: weak disaster preparedness





# Flood in Myanmar



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# Mines and its impact



# Large dams and its impact



Almost 200 large **dams** in **Myanmar**

“The construction of the dam on the Irrawaddy should be avoided due to the changes in downriver hydrology which may affect navigation, riverine ecosystem and delta ecosystem and will lead to negative impacts on the economy.\*\*”

The dams will have severe negative impacts, including on livelihoods, public health and safety

Lesson learned:  
**No proper HIA, EIA  
and SIA.**





# Environment- law- health

Name	Year
× <b>Public Health Law (1972)</b>	
Factory Act	1951
Public Health Law	1972
× <b>National environmental policy (1994):</b>	
Territorial Sea and Maritime Zone Law	1973
Fishing Rights of Foreign Vessels Law	1989
× <b>Myanmar mines law (1996)</b>	
Marine Fisheries Law	1990
Pesticide Law	1990
× <b>Conservation of Water Resources and Rivers Law (2006)</b>	
Private Land Acquisition Law	1992
Forestry Law	1992
Plant Pest Quarantine Law	1993

Development of Border Areas and National Races Law	1993
National Environmental Policy	1994
Protection of Wildlife and Wild Plants and Conservation of Natural Resources Law	1994
Myanmar Mines Law	1996
Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law	1998
Fertilizer Law	2002
Conservation of Water Resources and Rivers Law	2006

# Solutions?

- Rule of law
- Law reinforcement
- Proper HIA/EIA and be transparent and reflect the community's voice
- Disaster risk reduction and preparedness
- What else???

**Thank  
you 😊**



**LINH THI BUI**

Institute for Technology and Resources Management in  
Tropics and Sub-tropics (ITT) – TH Cologne



**Alexander von Humboldt**  
Stiftung/Foundation

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE PROTECTION FELLOWSHIP

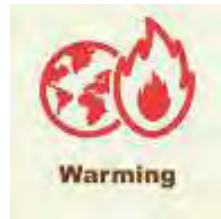
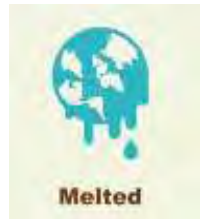
# VIETNAM: NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION (NDC) AND REPERCUSSION ON COMMUNITY FORESTRY



DAAD REGIONAL ALUMNI CONFERENCE – HANOI, MAY 2017

# 1. OVERVIEW

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INDC – Intended Nationally Determined Contributions are set of post-2020 climate intended actions which a country will take under the Paris Agreement, taking into account its domestic circumstances and capabilities.

Paris Agreement goals:

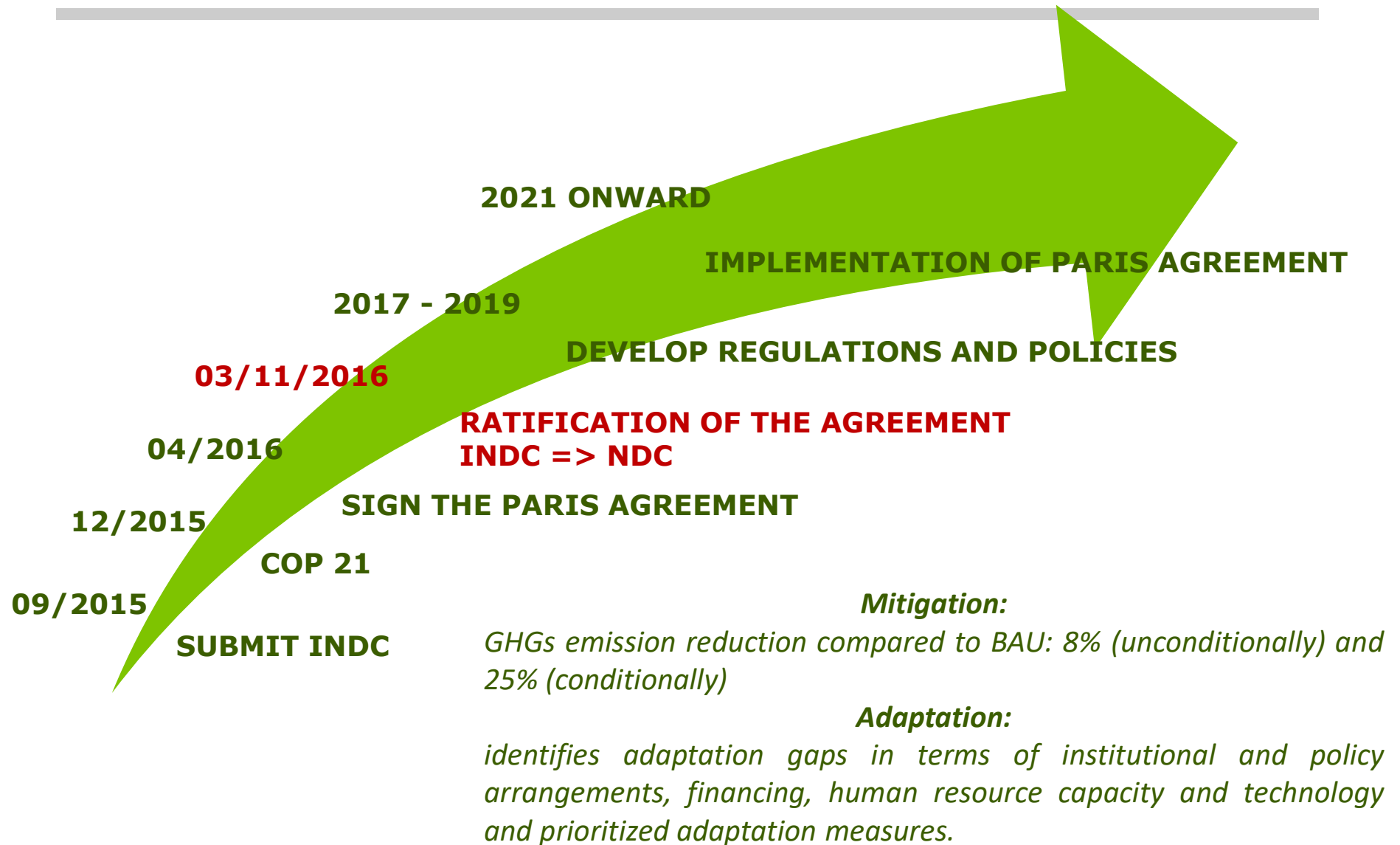
- hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C
- pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C
- achieve net zero emissions in the second half of this century

INDC => NDC: when a country finalizes their national climate plans and ratifies the Paris Agreement.

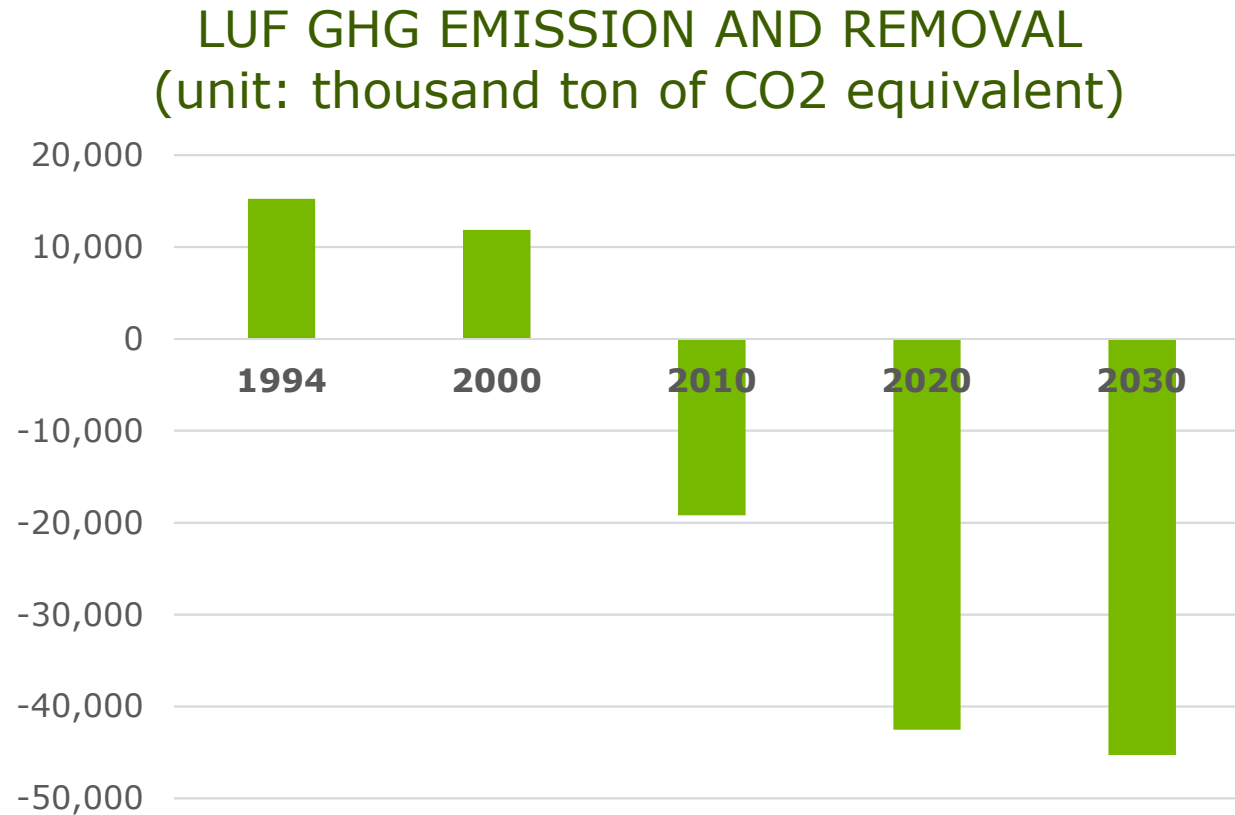


# 1. OVERVIEW

## VIETNAM'S NDC



## 2. LAND USE AND FORESTRY SECTOR IN VIETNAM'S NDC



**=> LUF sector changed from emission source to carbon sink which mark its potential in climate change mitigation strategies.**



### 3. NDC VS COMMUNITY FORESTRY (CF) IN VIETNAM

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#### FOREST-RELATED LAW AND POLICIES

Revision of Law on Forest Protection and Development 2017 (ongoing) suggested basic changes in:

- Forest ownership (private ownership and common ownership)
- Forest owners (definition and recognition of a community as an owner)
- Human-forest relationship (balance between environmental protection vs economic benefit, improvement of ecosystem services, contribution of forestry into poverty reduction, climate change respond and social security)

=> Enabling regulatory framework for CF would be placed!

### 3. NDC VS COMMUNITY FORESTRY (CF) IN VIETNAM



#### PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

NDC target for LUF: Forest cover will increase to the level of 45%.

LUF strategies:

- Afforestation (planting 1 million ha)
- Reforestation (0.5 million ha)
- Forest protection with community-based management approach (0.25 million ha)



Process of forest devolution would be enhanced, together with the transfer of tenure rights via private ownership and forest contracting model.



Potentially this could facilitate voice and positions of local people, in aspect of utilizing and governing forest resources.



### 3. NDC VS COMMUNITY FORESTRY (CF) IN VIETNAM

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#### **DIRECT AND INDIRECT BENEFIT**

- Planting NTFP under natural forest with community-based approach
  - Strongly highlighting REDD+ and other incentive-based programs
  - Attracting private sector investment for sustainable forest management
  - Addressing the need of livelihood improvement for forest-dependent people and poverty reduction
- ⇒ Different forms of community-based forest enterprises could gain equal level playing field against other actors.
- ⇒ Technologies and knowledge will be transferred to local people.
- ⇒ Incentives from climate funds

### 3. NDC VS COMMUNITY FORESTRY (CF) IN VIETNAM

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#### **ADAPTIVE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES**

Action to increase forest cover to 45% of total land will create strong adaptation benefit and increase climate resilience for 25 million forest-dependent local people and communities.

# THANK YOU!

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# **“Chewing Betel Nuts in Myanmar: Impact, Implications and limits of legislation on Health and Environment” \*\*\***

Presented by

Dr. Soe Moe Oo

Ph.D. in Political Science, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

DAAD Alumni, Myanmar

## *The Problem (Just a glimpse)*

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- Chewing betel nuts (also known as smokeless tobacco – SLT) in Myanmar is a widespread practice among population.
- Adding tobacco to betel nuts chewing tremendously increases the risk to have health related problems.
- Chewing betel nuts is one of the major causes for contracting oral or oral-pharyngeal cancers (consistently the **5<sup>th</sup>** most common cancers for both genders in Myanmar).
- This high incidence of oral cancer is associated with significant morbidity and mortality rates also in some countries in the Asia-Pacific Region because of this chewing betel nuts.
- Measures need to be taken to discourage the consumption of betel nuts with or without tobacco.

## The Problem (continued:)

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- Spitting from betel nuts chewers was unsightly, unhygienic and might lead to the spread of disease.
- The prevalence of SLT use among boys was about four times higher than that in girls.
- Since there is a widespread detrimental *myth* that chewing betel nuts or use of SLT is not as harmful as cigarettes, parents and teachers tend to show less concern if their children chew betel with tobacco than if they smoke.
- Based on existing prevalence data, it is estimated that there would be around 10 million people of above 15-year who are the regular betel nuts chewers or SLT users in Myanmar.
- Rate of betel use is very high: 43 % of population consuming betel nuts – 62% of men and 24% of women.
- The trend in tobacco-related diseases is steadily increasing in Myanmar. Available data shows that of total deaths in Myanmar, a staggering overall 39.3% among men and 40.1% among women were attributed to Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) of which a substantial avoidable part probably due to the consumption of SLT.



# Context and existing legislation in Myanmar

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- Myanmar is a common law country in its legal system although it is literally a mixture of civil law and customary practices.
- Existing legislative frameworks – Penal Code, Criminal Codes of Procedures, and a variety of Special Laws on different thematic lines under the general umbrella of the Constitution.
- ***The Control of Smoking and Consumption of Tobacco Product Law*** was promulgated on **4<sup>th</sup> May 2006** in Myanmar to take action for the control of all forms of tobacco use.
- In compliance with the 2006 Tobacco Control Law, some establishments that people often attend (example: sport stadiums, hospitals, restaurants, and schools) have begun implementing "smoke-free" location rules.
- While smoking has the added danger of second-hand smoke, it is possible that due to the common misconception that SLT is less harmful, there is less emphasis on the control of chewing betel nuts or using SLT products in many places.
- After 10 years of this 2006 law coming into force, there is still no decrease in tobacco use, particularly chewing betel nuts with tobacco.

# Limits of Legislation and Policy Implementation

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- The lack of urgency is misplaced because the proportion of betel nuts chewers and SLT users is still significantly higher than that of smokers.
- Several establishments to which the general public including pregnant women and young children have access to have markedly begun posting "*Kun Ta-twe Ma Htwe Ya*" (spitting of saliva from chewing betel nuts is prohibited) stickers, together with the "no smoking" signs.
- Such places include hospitals and health centers, public gardens, guest houses, hotels, restaurants, bus stations, railway stations, religious places as well as schools. The main purpose of these signs is meant for esthetic reasons.
- The paradigm shift is required from prohibiting spitting and disposing of SLT products to a total ban on consuming SLT in all public establishments - a shift from hygiene measures to the health measures.
- A sign such as "*Kun Ma Sa Ya*" or "The consumption of *betel nuts* is totally prohibited" would be more appropriate for promoting tobacco control.
- Recently, collaborative efforts of the People's Health Foundation and the Ministries of Health and Education have started community-based actions to implement demand reduction measures by launching "100% Tobacco-Free areas" in selected townships.

## Public opinion, gaps & things to do

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- The current government recently conducted online and off-line public opinion polls how to deal with the betel nuts issue.
- Results show – 54% of poll respondents support a total ban on betel, while 25% support for the campaign to reduce betel chewing and spitting. Only 1% voted against the campaign.
- Existing national tobacco legislation of 2006 in Myanmar covers mainly demand reduction, and thus, it needs to be updated with supply reduction, and thus, to become a comprehensive legislation, that would be in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and also in harmony with legislation of other ASEAN countries.
- Legislation could be strengthened with additional measures targeting availability and accessibility of tobacco products, especially SLT, illicit trade, legal provision for support to tobacco growers with economically viable alternative activities, etc.
- It would also need to strengthen the regulation with respect to the limitation on contents and product disclosure, as well as health warning labels and advertising for all tobacco products.



## Measures to combat the habit of betel nuts chewing

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A set of effective measures to discourage betel nut and tobacco use includes:

- Formulation of effective Policies and Legislation
- Education, awareness-raising and advocacy
- Strategies to promote behavioral change (based on KAP: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices)
- Clinical services (for screening and early detection of for precancerous conditions)
- Surveillance and research
- Strengthened monitoring and enforcement mechanism
- Partnerships and alliances.

## Measures (contd:)

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- The prevention and control of tobacco-chewing with betel nuts poses some unique challenges since the production and sale of betel nut are not well regulated in many countries in Asia-Pacific Region.
- Production of betel nut is encouraged in some countries as a commodity for both local consumption, and for export, so it has become a significant source of income for people.
- Addressing supply-side issues for betel nut control will require multi-sectoral collaboration among ministries of health and other sectors of government and community stakeholders.
- This highlights the need for clear messages for both policy-makers and the public regarding the dangers of betel nut and tobacco use.
- Meeting these challenges requires recognition of the magnitude of the problem in Myanmar and a mobilization of different sectors to take action.



Thank You!