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The Director-General



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Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP MYANMAR

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

According to the latest UN Gender Inequality Index¹ (2019), Myanmar ranks 118 out of 162 countries. Myanmar is going through tumultuous times following the coup d'état on February 1st, 2021. Conflict that was previously located in border areas and ethnic states is now widespread throughout the country. This situation is aggravated by the massive transmission of the COVID-19 delta variant since July 2021. The new context is drastically shifting the present and future of women and girls in the country, passing from the hope for change to a context of extreme insecurity and instability.

Given the country context, the European Union Delegation (EUD) did not develop a Multiannual Indicative Plan (MIP) yet, but instead a two-year Strategic Framework jointly with Member States (MS). For 2021, the EUD drafted an Annual Action Plan (AAP) comprised of three actions. The priority sectors identified during the programming phase prior to the coup: i) Sustainable livelihoods, ii) Human development and education, and iii) Peace and governance have remained valid and are reflected in the AAP 2021, but are being addressed differently. As the situation stands now, the EU and its partners have put on hold cooperation with the de facto national authorities and institutions. They have adopted a "back to basics" approach with a focus on supporting provision of fundamental services to the population, safeguarding democratic values and human rights. This is a fundamental change from the MIP 2014-2020, which had a strong focus on governance and institutional capacity building.

1.1. National Policies

Prior to the coup, Myanmar was making slow advances towards including gender into policy making. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of national Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and development partners, some progress was achieved in the areas of political representation and the inclusion of gender in the latest national strategic plans and policies. In 1996, following the Beijing Conference on Women, the Myanmar government formed the **Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (MNCWA)**, a national machinery designated as national focal point for women's affairs and placed under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The Committee focused in the areas of Education, Health, Violence Against Women, Economy, Girl Child and Culture but had no budget allocated given the general belief

¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

that Myanmar policies do not discriminate against women². The MNCWA with the support of CSOs and international partners developed the **Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-22)** that reflects the 12 priority areas of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, even if the strategy shows an evolution in the approach, it still lacked budget, institutional capacities and will to implement it.

The overall national policy framework developed by the national authorities prior to the coup, was the **Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030)**. It included women's empowerment as a crosscutting issue, aimed to increase women's representation in decision making and to include gender budgeting at all levels. The sectoral policy plans had a diverse degree of integration of gender, from being gender blind to having specific actions targeting women's empowerment.

Despite advocacy efforts of CSOs and the international community, Myanmar's **national legal framework still contains discriminatory clauses**. Some of the most relevant legal flaws include: i) The 2008 Constitution does not cover gender equality. ii) The penal code that dates from 1861 does not cover marital rape and abortion is only permitted when the mother's life is at risk. iii) The "Protection of Race and Religion Laws" passed in 2015 limit women's rights to choose husband, religion, and family size. iv) Myanmar does not have a law on violence against women, after 7 years of negotiations and advocacy efforts by CSOs and the international community the draft of the law never gained enough support to be presented at the Parliament. A particular mention should be done to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer and intersexual **(LGBTQI) rights**. The Constitution does not include sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds for discrimination and there are no other laws that protect them from discrimination. Consensual same-sex conduct is a crime under the Penal Code (section 377) and harassment of transgender persons is covered by the Police Act so-called shadow and disguise laws that are used to justify persecution of people that do not dress in accordance to their biological sex.

In general, the appropriation of the gender discourse remains low at the level of decision makers. At the same time, institutional understanding and capacities are weak. Consequently, despite the efforts done by the international community to move forward the gender equality agenda, very limited advances were achieved during the last elected government term.

1.2. International Commitments

Myanmar is a signatory of the **CEDAW** (1979), but it has reservations to art. 29 paragraph 1 and has not ratified the Optional Protocol, limiting in this way Myanmar's international accountability. In 2019, the Rapporteur³ reminded the government that it was requested to report by 2018 on the implementation of the recommendations to: i) Amend the Constitution to remove stereotypical reference to gender roles and discriminatory practices in the appointment of civil servants. ii) Revise discriminatory laws and adopt new ones to promote gender equality. iii) Ensure birth registration of Rohingya and other ethnic groups and remove obstacles to access citizenship. iv) Establish an independent body to investigate allegations of violence (including sexual violence and GBV) against ethnic women and prosecute perpetrators. In 2019 Myanmar was requested to produce an exceptional report concerning the allegations on the 2017 military operation against the Rohingya community. Following the explanations by the Government of Myanmar, the concluding observations of the Committee continued to stress

² <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/responses/Myanmar.pdf>

³ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MMR/INT_CEDAW_FUL_MMR_33438_E.pdf

the need to reform: the legal frame, and the accountability, investigation and judicial system. The Committee showed concern about: i) the use of sexual violence in conflict settings, ii) the freedom of movement and humanitarian access and protection, iii) the possibility of safe voluntary and dignified return and resettlement, iv) the right to rehabilitation and compensation; and finally, v) the observance of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Council Resolutions.

Important to mention is the WPS Agenda⁴. Particularly, **UN Resolution 1325** that addresses the impact of conflict on women and recognises the central role they have in promoting peace and **UN Resolution 1820** that covers sexual violence as a weapon of war. A Joint Communiqué was signed in December 2018 between the UN and the Government of Myanmar to address conflict related sexual violence⁵. No significant progress was made to live up to the commitments made from the Myanmar government prior to the February 1st coup. While efforts have been made to include gender concerns in the Myanmar peace talks, little has been achieved. The use of sexual violence by armed groups and particularly the Tatmadaw has been widely reported since the 90's and recently accusations have acquired wider international coverage following the report of the UN Independent Fact Finding Mission to Rakhine. The Mission⁶ reports on the use of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) not only in Rakhine but also in Kachin and Shan states. The issue was also presented on the case brought by the Gambia against Myanmar in front of the International Court of Justice⁷ as evidence to build a case of genocide against the Rohingya community.

The latest **Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review**⁸ (UPR) took place on January 25, 2021. The UN Compilation of Information repeats the main concerns of the latest report of 2015 and CEDAW's 2016 recommendations as no action had been taken by the national authorities. The UPR pointed out additional issues regarding the lack of data on the prevalence of violence against women and the difficulties of women in accessing justice. It particularly mentioned the need to revise family, citizenship, anti-trafficking and abortion laws. It was specifically worried about the discrimination of women from ethnic minorities whose situation is further marked by conflict and patriarchal traditional culture. While the report acknowledged the existence of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022) it expressed concern towards the lack of the necessary authority, funding and human resources of the institutions assigned to operationalize it. The stakeholder contribution to the review covers key issues concerning legal discrimination of the LGBTIQI community.

Following the military coup of February 1st, accusations on the use of SGBV by armed forces and particularly in detention centres continue to be present in the media and in reports by CSOs and international organisations.

⁴ The UN Council Resolutions addressing WPS issues are: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2016 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2422 (2015).

⁵ Joint Communiqué signed between the United Nations and the Government of Myanmar to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence in Myanmar - United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

⁶ Sexual and gender-based violence in Myanmar and the gendered impact of its ethnic conflicts. Council Forty second session. 9-27 September 2019 Agenda item 4

⁷ International Court of Justice (2019). Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar). International Court of Justice. <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/178/178-20191210-ORA-01-00-BI.pdf>

⁸ National Report, Compilation of UN Information and Summary of Stakeholders Consultations can be downloaded from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/MMindex.aspx>

1.3. Present challenges and opportunities

In the **2020 parliamentary elections, the percentage of elected women Members of Parliament increased** by an average of 3 percentual points to reach 16% in the lower house and 17% in the upper house, while they were 18% of the representatives in the 2020 elections in States and Regions almost 6 percentage points higher than in 2015 elections. The parallel National Union Government (NUG) -government in exile- is composed of 27% women including young women with a record of working on women's rights. Gender equality is among the values and visions of the NUG. The NUG has also established a Ministry of Women, Youths and Children⁹ Affairs that has the mandate to advance on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Under the military de facto authorities, **no progress is expected in the gender agenda** and the limited advances gained in the near past in the areas of political representation and policy making are being lost. The Ministry in charge of gender has shown an understanding of the portfolio which is far from a rights-based approach. Even if the de facto authorities committed to pass the law on violence against women nothing has been done so far on this regard.

On the other hand, **women activists and organisations have been at the forefront of the pro-democratic movement** from the beginning either as protest organisers, online mobilisers or active participants. The highly feminised sectors of health and education were among the first and most active in their engagement with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and women civil servants -according to UNWOMEN updates- amount to at least 64% of all public employees sanctioned or dismissed. On the 3rd of August 2021, Women account for 7% of the deaths and 20% of those under detention¹⁰.

Conflict and instability affect differently women and men¹¹. Men are more often exposed to conflict-related death, torture, physical assault, landmine injuries, forced labour, and forced recruitment. Men living in conflict affected areas often resort to negative coping mechanisms such as alcohol and drug abuse, which are leading risk factors for SGBV. The ongoing crisis is mobilising young men from the CDM into the new defence forces that have taken arms to fight against military rule.

At present, the main gender challenges are linked to the ongoing **security and health crises**. The worst of the health crisis is occurring as we write this document, the Ministry of Health on data of the 21st July reports that 40.11% of COVID-19 related deaths since last year have occurred in the current month. Women and children are bearing the heaviest brunt of the combined impact of COVID-19 and the political crisis. Given the pre-existing, vulnerabilities female headed households are those most at risk. According to a recent study¹² on the gender impact of COVID-19, 42% of female headed households stated that they did not have enough to eat compared to 31% of male headed households. In consultations, it has been reported that there is a growing demand on **maternal healthcare** particularly for single mothers that may indicate big gaps in access to sexual and reproductive health.

Many women have died as a result of the conflict and many others are on the run or have fled the country. Particularly important is the situation of women activists that keep working under constant threat and distress for them and their families. Allegations of **abuse and GBV** in detention centres and in military operations continue to be raised. Myanmar lacks overall

⁹ <https://mowycanugmyanmar.org/department/2/Women%20and%20Gender%20Affairs%20Directorate>

¹⁰ <https://aappb.org/?cat=109>

¹¹ Extract from the Conflict Analysis

¹² <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34888/Women-Endure-COVID-19-Unequally-to-Men.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

statistics on the incidence of GBV, nevertheless recent studies show that there is a high level of acceptance of violence in intimate relationships and point to the lack of means to prevent, respond and seek justice for survivors¹³.

According to the latest published data by OCHA¹⁴ the post-coup **conflict has displaced around 230,000** persons that should be added to over 500,000 displaced by pre-existing conflicts, the majority of them being women and children.

The **participation of women in the labour market is consistently low**. According to UN data,¹⁵ in 2020 only 47.3 % of females engaged actively in the labour market compared to 77.2% of males. This gender gap is likely to have increased, COVID-19 and the coup having affected highly feminised economic sectors, such as the garment sector where 90 % of the employees are women. A recent ILO¹⁶ analysis states that 580,000 women are estimated to have lost employment between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the second quarter of 2021, with job losses of more than 7 %, compared to less than 6 % for men.

Cultural values, traditions and social roles consistently discriminate against women across the diverse ethnic spectrum. Under the current setting, the traditional responsibilities of women in the household (providing and preparing food for the family, doing housework and handling the home finances and debts) put them under a lot of distress. New urban educated generations were challenging the current values, and this was shown in the pro-active involvement of women in the civil disobedience and pro-democratic movement. Women are actively advocating for a change and questioning the rules and roles of the past, they want the movement to promote further social transformation. Reports state that women make up for at least 60% of the activist either on the streets and online.

Given the constant changes in the environment there is a need to **conduct specific gender needs assessments** per geographical area before project implementation as no actual data is available and existent statistics are not reliable. These analyses should take into account gender intersectionality with factors such as ethnic background, displacement status or disabilities. They should also cover the different impact of programmes and projects on women/girls and men/boys.

1.4. Basis for elaborating the CLIP

The Delegation has consulted recent studies and reports by CSOs, UN Agencies, research institutes and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), as well as policy documents elaborated by the latest legitimate government. At the same time, the CLIP reflects the priority areas and gender targets of the recent programmatic documents elaborated by the EUD, including: the Myanmar Special Measures 2021, the Team Europe Response to the Myanmar crisis of February 2021 Strategic Framework and the three Action Documents for the priority sectors.

This document reflects the valuable feedback and inputs of EU MS, ECHO, representatives of the women CSOs networks and implementing partners. While wide consultations with stakeholders took place prior to the military coup, such consultations were not feasible in the post-coup context. The EUD has nevertheless consulted multiple actors including numerous implementing partners.

¹³ A nation wide survey was planned to be conducted by UNFPA but stopped following the coup.

¹⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-8-24-june-2021>

¹⁵ <http://data.un.org/en/iso/mm.html>

¹⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-yangon/documents/publication/wcms_814681.pdf

This CLIP has been elaborated at the same time as the Gender Country Profile. The EUD Gender Focal Point has been actively involved in the drafting of programme documents and the CSO Roadmap Strategy providing gender context analysis and feedback to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all documents. This CLIP is also aligned with the Human Rights Strategy and covers the key gender concerns of the Conflict Analysis.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

2.1. Team Europe gender objectives, areas of engagement and specific thematic objectives selected from the GAP framework

Overall objective 1	
To increase resilience of women by supporting access to livelihoods and decent jobs	
GAP III Areas of engagement	GAP III Specific thematic objectives
Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women	<p>Increased access for women, in all their diversity, to decent work, including women's transition to the formal economy and coverage by non- discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems (SO 1)</p> <p>Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources (SO 4)</p> <p>Reduction in gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for women, men, girls and boys (SO 6)</p> <p>Improved access to safe water and sanitation facilities, disaggregated at least by sex (SO 8)</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, have improved nutrition levels (SO 10)</p>
Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation	<p>Increased participation of women and girls in all their diversity in decision-making processes on environment and climate change issues (SO 1)</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, addressing climate change in their daily lives and preserving the natural environment are supported (SO 3)</p>
Overall objective 2	
To support access to sexual and reproductive health and prevent and respond to GBV.	
GAP III Areas of engagement	GAP III Specific thematic objective

Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence	<p>Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity, who experience sexual and gender-based violence have increased access to essential services and protection (SO 3)</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are better protected from sexual and gender-based violence in fragile and humanitarian crisis situations (SO 6)</p> <p>Women's rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence (SO 7)</p>
Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights	Improved access for every individual to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including family planning services, information and education on sexual and reproductive rights (SO 2)
Overall objective 3 To support women human rights defenders, women's organisations and other CSOs working on gender and women rights as key actors to promote peace, human and civil rights, and democracy.	
GAP III Areas of engagement	GAP III Specific thematic objectives
Promoting equal participation and leadership	Women's organisations, other CSOs and women human rights defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights work more freely and are better protected by law (SO 3)
Integrating the women, peace and security agenda	<p>Participation: To help increase women's leadership and participation in all policy-making decisions/processes in all areas related to peace and security</p> <p>Leading by example: To enhance further the EU's political commitment and actions for the implementation of the WPS Agenda at local, national, regional and international levels.</p> <p>Prevention: i) The EU plays an active role, globally, regionally, nationally and locally, in conflict-prevention through the WPS approach, cardinal for its success. ii) The EU plays an active role in prevention, monitoring and reporting of conflict-related human rights violations against women and girls and the promotion of zero-tolerance/full accountability policies to help end impunity and to bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice;</p> <p>Protection: i) The EU actively promotes the protection and safeguarding of women's and girls' rights as well as the increase in women's and girls' access to justice at local, national, regional and international levels through special emphasis on restorative justice and the rights of survivors and victims. ii) The EU supports all efforts for the protection of peacemakers and peacebuilders, especially of women, in post-agreement/transitional settings.</p>

	Relief and recovery: The EU supports and provides adequate and appropriate relief and recovery in conflict and post- conflict situations that meet the needs of women and girls.
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2.2. Gender mainstreaming in EU Programming

In the new programming phase, CSOs and NGOs have become central actors in Myanmar as a significant part of the aid will be channelled through them. **Women's organisations are now more than ever key actors** given their long tradition of providing services to communities which were not covered by government services, and given their work in the promotion of human and civil rights.

Below are the three priority areas under AAP 2021, as well as their gender focus:

- **Sustainable livelihoods:** The EU will support actions to increase resilience of households and to promote responsible business practices. The action envisages to improve nutrition levels by reducing poverty in rural areas, will empower women to participate into decision making at community level on natural resource management and will aim to increase access to nutritious food by women and children, while promoting good agricultural practices. The action also targets the private sector, more concretely the garment sector, where it will support responsible business practices, higher human rights standards and gender equality.
- **Human development and education:** The EU will support technical and vocational training and non-formal education in areas where there is no service provision by the state. It will also facilitate access to post-secondary education and professional development while promoting student mobility and access to distance training. The focus on gender will be on inclusivity and promotion of women's participation into the trainings and educational programmes.
- **Peace and governance:** The action document addresses three key issues: i) Responding to the immediate needs, reducing vulnerabilities, and increasing resilience of vulnerable populations ii) Working towards peace and iii) supporting CSOs as central actors for service delivery and promotion of civil rights. In these three areas, women will not only benefit from the action but they will be key actors in the implementation. The Nexus Response Mechanism (NRM) programme that will facilitate a part of the implementation of this action has already developed its own gender strategy with a focus on implementing gender transformative approaches. In the area of peace, the action targets women's rights in the peace process and increased participation of women at all levels, including in conflict mediation and peace negotiations. The development of the CSO roadmap has included consultations with women's organisations and other organisations working on gender equality (particularly LGBTQI) and is addressing their specific priorities and needs. Gender issues will be addressed in the structured dialogue with CSOs and links between the roadmap and the CLIP are included.

2.3. Potential for synergies, cooperation, partnerships and joint implementation with EU Member States and other EU actors

Given that no collaboration with the de facto national authorities is possible, multilateral agencies will continue to be key in the coordination and pooling of funds. In Myanmar, some well-established funds have a strong gender focus and receive contributions from the EU and MS: the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) and the Joint Peace Fund (JPF). To this

should be added the NRM initiated by the EU, which has the potential to become a multi-donor programme, and the Women and Girls First (WGF) programme managed by UNFPA.

In the current context, the linkages between humanitarian, peace and development actions come under the spotlight. In the area of gender, it is of particular importance to strengthen the synergies between service delivery/protection actions and gender transformative actions. Given that development and humanitarian partners often work with the same organisations on the ground, this aspect is to be considered in activities that aim at building the capacities of local CSOs.

Below are some of the existing joint programmes and potential areas of cooperation for each of the overall objectives:

Overall objective 1: To increase resilience of women by supporting access to livelihoods and decent jobs.
The LIFT fund managed since 2009 by UNOPs in Myanmar, will likely continue to be a key instrument for joint action in nutrition and food security. The fund has been consistently applying gender responsive approaches into their programming. It receives contributions from the EU, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, the United States of America, Canada and New Zealand. The Netherlands may re-join it as well. It
Overall objective 2: To support access to sexual and reproductive health and prevent and respond to GBV
<p>The WGF programme phase II, managed by UNFPA, aims at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, with a focus on access to sexual and reproductive health and ending violence against women and girls. It is being reprogrammed to be able to address current needs and growing demands in a context of general instability. It receives the contributions of the EU, Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.</p> <p>The EU and MS have a previously coordinated efforts to promote advocacy actions on GBV prevention on key dates and they have also cooperated to move forward the WPS Agenda. Given the increasing interest in these areas of work, further cooperation on gender-focussed public diplomacy is foreseen.</p>
Overall objective 3: To support women human rights defenders, women's organisations and other CSOs working on gender and women rights as key actors to promote peace, human and civil rights, and democracy.
<p>Given that CSOs will be the main actors in aid delivery there is a strong interest in supporting them and in investing in their capacity building, with particular attention to women's rights and women-led organisations due to their long tradition of providing basic services to their communities and promoting peace, human rights and democratic values. Most development partners are working with the same organisations and networks, consequently there is a will and need to coordinate among EU actors to avoid fragmentation of funds and ensure that they reach key actors on the ground, particularly those using gender-responsive approaches. It was also agreed that donors should to the extent possible alleviate CSO's administrative burdens.</p> <p>In the current context, new opportunities to support women's organisation and networks are being planned. There are ongoing initiatives by MS to pool funds to provide direct support to CSOs. Given the current challenges, the funds allow for flexibility in the proposal drafting as well as in the delivery and reporting of activities. Another MS is supporting technical staff working for feminist organisations and plans to support gender capacity building for CSOs</p>

and to sponsor micro-projects targeting gender equality. The EUD has developed the CSO roadmap with a strong gender focus. It includes structured dialogues on specific needs for women's organisations and networks in the new context.

The JPF has been very active in the promotion of the WPS agenda and has committed to allocate at least 30% of its funding to gender-focused projects. It receives, among others, the contributions of the EU, Finland, Germany, Italy, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada and Switzerland. The JPF will continue its activities initially until mid-2022; options for a JPF II are being explored.

The Paung Sie Facility (PSF) receives contributions from the Netherlands and Sweden. PSF has a strong commitment to the WPS agenda and has committed to allocate at least 20% of its funding to gender principled programming.

2.4. Inclusion of civil society in the design, implementation and monitoring

CSOs participated in a first round of consultations in preparation of the MIP right before the military coup. At the time of writing, the situation is not conducive to having extensive consultations since women CSOs are very active in the CDM, the protests and the pro-democratic movement. CSO representatives are facing multiple challenges, many activists are in hiding and others have left the country. On the other hand, several international partners have shared women's CSOs needs assessments and priority lines of action, therefore it was considered irrelevant to repeat this work. The EUD has opted to do targeted consultations with key CSOs stakeholders and implementing partners working on women's rights and gender while using the available secondary data.

The CSO roadmap includes gender and women's empowerment as a topic for structured dialogue. Within this setting, follow up and monitoring of ongoing actions funded by the EUD will be conducted, the same as re-evaluation of needs and priorities.

3. Targeted actions supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

G2 Action:

Contribution to the phase II of the programme Women's and Girls First implemented by UNFPA

Thematic areas and related GAP III thematic objectives:

Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence

- Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity, who experience sexual and gender-based violence have increased access to essential services and protection (SO 3)
- Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are better protected from sexual and gender-based violence in fragile and humanitarian crisis situations (SO 6)
- Women's rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence (SO 7)

Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Improved access for every individual to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including family planning services, information and education on sexual and reproductive rights (SO 2)

Rationale for the chosen actions and expected results

The Women and Girls First Programme phase II is an ongoing action (2019-2022) that contributes to overall objective 2.

The programme responds to the identified gaps in access to sexual and reproductive health services of population in poor, conflict affected states that have as a result high maternal mortality rate (MMR) and unsafe practices. The MMR in Myanmar is the second highest in Southeast Asia, at 282 per 100,000 live births compared to the regional average of 140/100,000 live births. Maternal health care is an identified priority by CSOs in the current setting.

On the other hand, the high incidence of GBV and its wide broad acceptance highlight the need to support prevention and response mechanisms. Given that conflict settings exacerbate the levels of GBV it has become a key issue. The specific country context also presents risks known to be associated with poor mental health. The 2015 Global Burden of Disease Study, already reported that depressive and anxiety disorders are among the top 10 health problems that cause most disability in Myanmar.

The programme results are:

R.1. Policies responsive to the needs of women, girls and young people regarding SRHR, MHPSS, the right to safety from violence and safety in emergencies are adopted. Given the new context this action is being reconsidered as no interaction with the “de facto” authorities is foreseen.

R.2.1 Increased availability of integrated quality SRHR, GBV and MHPSS services delivered by governmental and non-governmental service providers

R.2.2 Increased demand for SRHR, GBV and MHPSS information and services through awareness raising in Rakhine and Kachin states

R.3. Positive coping strategies, social norms, and non-violent behavior reinforced through individual, family and community level engagement

Main indicators to measure results

R.1 # of laws, policy documents and SOPs in place relating to MHPSS needs in the context of SRHR and GBV

R.2.1 i) # of UNFPA supported townships in Rakhine and Kachin states where rights-based GBV Case Management and Referral, SRHR and MHPSS services are delivered. ii) # of facilities (including WGCs) with functional MHPSS mentoring system

R.2.2 # of people in Rakhine and Kachin states participated in awareness-raising sessions

R.3. i) % of women, men, boys and girls engaged in community engagement activities who demonstrate knowledge of positive coping strategy in Rakhine and Kachin states. ii) # of communities in Rakhine and Kachin states with men and boys engaged in community dialogues on SRHR/GBV/MHPSS
Estimated amount and/or other resources for the action(s)
EUD contribution from July 2019 to June 2022: 4,998,441 Euro
Collaboration among Member States, Team Europe initiatives and with other development partners
EUD, Italy, Finland Germany, Sweden and Switzerland are contributing to the programme. Australia, Finland, Italy and Sweden contributed to the implementation of the first phase.

The AAP 2021 foresees to fund at least 2 other G2 actions that will be under the priority area governance and peace and will contribute to overall objective 3. More detailed information will be available at a later stage.

G2 Action: Supporting women CSOs and women CSOs Networks
Thematic areas and related GAP III thematic objectives:
<p>Promoting equal participation and leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's organisations, other CSOs and women human rights defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights work more freely and are better protected by law (SO 3)
Rationale for the chosen actions and expected results
<p>Women CSOs are now more than ever in need of support for the values they have and the services they deliver. They have been key actors to provide services and privileged partners of donors, INGOs and UN Agencies in the promotion of Human Rights, democratic values and peace. They should be supported to survive despite the pressure and persecution by the military and to allow for their continuity in a situation that presents many challenges.</p> <p>Indicative Results (to be revised once the action is designed)</p> <p>R.1. CSOs members protected by facilitating security training, means and psychosocial support.</p> <p>R.2. CSOs networks supported to increase coordination, cooperation and promote advocacy work.</p> <p>R.3. CSOs organisational, programmatic and administrative skills strengthened.</p> <p>R.4. Service provision of gender targeted actions supported.</p>
Main indicators to measure results (see Staff Working Document - SWD) if possible
To be developed at a later stage. Those in the SWD do not fit the current context in Myanmar.
Estimated amount and/or other resources for the action(s)

Not yet available

Collaboration among Member States, Team Europe initiatives and with other development partners

Italy, Sweden, and the Netherlands have shown interest in cooperating with the EU in this area.

A third action may be designed to support the **implementation of the WPS Agenda**. Although it is too early to provide detailed information, the following gender areas of special interest under the Peace and Governance priority can be identified:

- Building the capacity of local communities, and in particular of women and youth, in peace negotiation and mediation in preparation for resuming of the inclusive peace dialogue;
- Enabling local actors to identify and respond to gender specific local security threats and needs;
- Enabling local actors to organise and conduct ceasefire monitoring, participate in ceasefire monitoring committees and ongoing ceasefire negotiations;
- Building capacities for gender-sensitive approaches and mainstreaming of gender perspective, including on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework.
- Supporting CSOs to move forward the WPS agenda with a focus on increasing the representation of women in peace building initiatives and decision-making bodies in conflict-affected settings.

4. Dialogue for gender equality and women's empowerment

In the current setting, dialogue with the national authorities has been interrupted. Before the coup, the preliminary programming of the EUD in governance foresaw the allocation of funds to support gender-mainstreaming within Myanmar institutions.

Promoting equal participation and female leadership is one of the objectives for the EU engagement with CSOs. Structured dialogues on gender and women empowerment are included in the CSO roadmap. However, given the current context it is yet unclear which form this dialogue will take and which CSOs will be involved. The dialogue will specifically tackle the needs of organisations working on gender and women's rights. An effort will be done to include agents of change that use gender transformative approaches to challenge gender norms and work with men and boys. The EUD has a strong network with women's organisations and umbrella NGOs which are consulted on a regular basis. These networks also share the latest research they carry out with the EU and MS.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

In previous years, the EU reached out the Myanmar public thanks to dynamic communication and public diplomacy activities focusing on the EU's strategic priorities, human rights, the promotion of democracy and gender equality or poverty alleviation and access to education have been at the forefront of this engagement and anchored the EU to these principles in the people's mind set. As the art scenes were becoming more daring and creative, the European Film Festival had turned into an unmissable popular cultural event in Yangon. The yearly Schuman Awards honouring Myanmar human rights advocates enabled universal principles to be given a unique visible grandstand. European development projects were also in the spotlight and further contributed to the perception of the EU as a flagship of progressive ethics.

The EU Delegation contributed to a wide series of online and offline communication and public diplomacy events, notably promoting the rights of minorities and the freedom of expression. In 2019 and 2020, a unique campaign on gender based violence involved numerous Myanmar celebrities.

This came to a halt on February 1st. However, the EU has built a strong foundation of exchange with the Myanmar population based on which it can plan a renewed strategic communication revolving around the restoration of democracy, respect for human rights, gender equality and the rule of law. The Delegation's social media successfully served as a substantial relay for institutional messaging/statement since the crisis erupted and remains an important basis to maintain the contact with the local population despite internet restrictions. Moving forward, public diplomacy efforts should promote the coherence of the collective European engagement, building on the Team Europe best practices developed throughout 2020, notably on post-COVID-19 recovery. The universality and indivisibility of human rights will remain the core message of the EU's communication strategy for the next four years.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

The EUD has been allocating funds to support gender mainstreaming and assist the Gender Focal Point in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan through the MyGovernance facility since 2018. Looking forward, given that the EUD has not developed a MIP, new sources of funding will be identified to ensure availability of gender expertise.

Several Member States including Denmark, Finland and Sweden, also have funds and facilities dedicated to gender mainstreaming.

Date:

Signature by Head of Delegation: