

Terms of Reference
South-Eastern Myanmar Working Group
Myanmar, October 2018

Background and objectives of the South-Eastern Myanmar Working group (SEWG)

Myanmar has embarked upon a series of political and economic reforms since 2012, including a transition to quasi-civilian government, a series of ceasefires with non-state actors (NSAs), a general election in 2015 resulting in a National League for Democracy (NLD) led government and a strengthening of State and Region government structures, departments and services. The country has opened up considerably, not only for foreign investment but also for international organizations working in development, peace-building, human rights, early recovery and humanitarian response.

In recognition of the evolving context and need for greater coordination to transcend individual sectors and bring together development and humanitarian responses so as to better address and support the larger objectives, the international community working in South-Eastern Myanmar, initiated a South-East Working Group that became operational in 2015. The first SEWG meeting highlighted core elements for an enabling environment for durable solutions, human development and peace in South-Eastern Myanmar that include (i) Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and Coordination Platforms, (ii) Durable Solutions, (iii) Social Services and Protection, (iv) Community Development and Livelihoods, (v) Rule of Law and Local Governance and (vi) Peacebuilding. Focus on these issues will continue to be pivotal to the work of the SEWG.

As input into this framework, the working group takes as a point of departure, consultations and discussions, the UN Framework for Engagement in South-Eastern Myanmar. This framework was developed through an inter-UN task force and endorsed by the UN Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and UN Country Team in 2015 and laid the foundation for establishing the South East Working Group. Other key strategic documents for consideration in the work of the SEWG include Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, the National Ceasefire Agreement (including chapter six on interim arrangements) and the Roadmap for Voluntary Return. The SEWG developed a situational analysis, a conflict sensitivity paper and a humanitarian development peace-building paper.

SEWG objectives:

- Encourage collaboration and coordination of assistance delivery at different levels between UN Agencies, INGOs, local NGOs, bilateral donors, wider civil society networks as well as authorities in government and non-government-controlled areas.

- Encourage members' work plans to take into consideration the evolving context and ensure that all activities are conflict-sensitive, do no harm and are designed and implemented in accordance with a human-rights-based approach.
- Encourage UN/INGO/Government/NSAs/Donors engagement to better inform mutual understanding of the ongoing situation, needs of the population, and solving operational challenges.
- Create opportunities for constructive dialogue between international and local actors and find ways to ensure that international actors take local voices and priorities into account.
- Inform wider international advocacy and policy-development

Membership and frequency of meetings:

The South-Eastern Myanmar is defined as covering Kayin, Kayah and Mon States, and East Bago and Tanintharyi Regions. Participation is comprised of INGOs and UN Agencies and Development Cooperation Partners engaged in programming in South Eastern Myanmar.

Members of SEWG are nominated annually by each of the three stakeholder groups, UN Agencies, International Donor Government representatives and the International NGO (INGO) Forum. To ensure the SEWG is inclusive and representative, members will be nominated by each of the stakeholders group ensuring they include: (i) actors operational in two or more states/regions in South-Eastern Myanmar, (ii) humanitarian, development and peace actors, (iii) actors with significant financial and policy engagement/support to south-east Myanmar. SEWG is co-chaired by UNDP and UNHCR.

SEWG Members are:

- 6 international NGOs, nominated by the INGO Forum Stakeholder Group
- 6 international donor representatives
- 6 United Nations organizations with strategic interest and operations in South East region, including the co-chairs.

MIMU is part of the SEWG as an additional resource providing important information to the members.

Responsibilities of Members:

Each member agency is responsible for nominating one representative to attend SEWG meetings and one or two backups/proxy members for the distribution list.

Each Member is responsible for proposing and preparing meeting content and presenting issues, themes and analysis gathered from pre and post meeting discussions and wider consultations. Members may also be asked to prepare background information on agenda items, themes, conduct research or follow-up, analysis and strategies for consideration of the group.

Responsibilities of SEWG co-chairs:

Responsibilities of SEWG Co-chairs is to:

- i) facilitate regular SEWG meetings including: the preparation of agendas, circulation of meeting minutes, follow-up on drafting of documentation and action points),
- ii) coordinating the development of SEWG work plans, information products, tools, and facilitating their final endorsement and distribution,
- iii) support SEWG members' advocacy at national and state/region level and in other UN and other forums and
- iv) identifying emerging issues and opportunities.

Linkages with other forums:

UNHCR and UNDP, co-chairs of the SEWG will represent the SEWG at the Cooperation Partners Group (CPG) and other meetings and forums, reporting back to the group key directions, issues and findings. The Development, Humanitarian, Peace (DHP) nexus working group may periodically prioritize issues specifically relevant to the South East region through reporting of the SEWG co-chairs as well SEWG members as needed. The INGO representatives coordinate their input to the SEWG through the South East Focus Group, and report back to South East Focus group as well as to the monthly INGO forum meeting on issues discussed. The South-East Working Group will continue to interface with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) at common meetings on critical points for consultation including proposed draft frameworks and operational strategies—which go beyond the scope of donor support and humanitarian support alone. The coordination will ensure that issues, recommendations and advocacy points raised by the SEWG are escalated to the attention of a wider range of decision-makers and stakeholders.

Country Representatives of UNHCR and UNDP will chair the annual, South East Consultation meetings that aim to bring together a wider audience of humanitarian, development and national and international government actors to present the work of SEWG members and highlight key issues and findings and build consensus on wider issues.

Frequency of meetings:

SEWG will be convened by the co-chairs. It will ordinarily meet at least quarterly and the meetings will be held on a rotational basis in the States/Regions defined above as South-East Myanmar to further strengthen its connection to implementation of programmes/projects in the field.

SEWG meetings held in the State/Regions will coincide with coordination meetings in the field to further widening the input to SEWG. A regular SEWG meeting for its members will follow directly after the state/region coordination meeting.

As the working group seeks first and foremost to support, enhance and coordinate and promulgate best practices for the activities already underway in South-Eastern Myanmar, its priority activities will focus on the following areas:

- Review and analysis of advances, achievements and continued gaps in reaching the above benchmarks can provide additional guidance on strategic and operational priorities as well as advocacy strategies as well as guide the overall work plan of the SEWG;
- Mapping and analysis of South-Eastern Myanmar, coordination structures and analysis of gaps and overlap and recommendations for improving coordination mechanisms;
- Identify and map at region/state and local level, existing and emerging stakeholders, strategic and operational partners, local community-based organizations, innovation and business leaders, non-state actors, communities and other interlocutors with a view towards identifying possible Affiliate Working Group members;
- Analysis of connectors and dividers, triggers and conflict sensitivities in the current peace processes and the roles and responsibilities of local, national and international actors;
- Analysis of 2018-2020 displacement, return and reintegration opportunities and challenges, advocacy and program/ funding directions in each State in SE Myanmar;
- Review the SEWG Terms of Reference on a yearly basis.