

PRESS RELEASE

Yangon, Myanmar, 5th January 30, 2013: Project Launched on Development of Guidelines on Land Use Planning and Institutionalizing Carpenters Training

Department of Human Settlements and Housing Development (DHSHD), Ministry of Construction and UN-Habitat launched a collaborative project on development of guidelines on land use planning and institutionalizing carpenters training in Nay Pyi Taw on 30th January 2013 at *Ingyin* Hall of Amara Hotel. It is a part of “Myanmar Programme for Safer Settlements and Urban Research Programme” ongoing partnership between Ministry of Construction and UN-Habitat. The meeting brought together a total of 45 representatives of various government departments, City Development Committees, Universities, Training Institutions, Professional Bodies and Bilateral donors.



U Min Htein, Director General, DHSHD delivering his opening remarks

In his opening remarks, U Min Htein, Director General of the Department of Human Settlements and Housing Department(DHSHD), Ministry of Construction, highlighted the vulnerability of human settlements and communities in Myanmar to natural hazards and the importance of preparedness and mitigation, in particular safer settlement planning and use of appropriate building materials and construction techniques.

He also made reference to the Ministry’s ongoing partnership with UN-Habitat and Myanmar Engineering Society on formulation of a Myanmar National Building Code.

U Win Zaw, Director of the DHSHD stressed the importance of addressing both vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards through safer construction and settlement planning as part of development efforts, emphasizing the need for multi-hazard approach particularly on earthquake risks.

“What we are in future depends on what we do now. So, it is important to include disaster risk reduction into recovery, reconstruction and development process,” he said.

Mr. Bijay Karmacharya, Head of Agency and Country Program Manager, UN-Habitat, recalled the Agency’s ongoing support to the Ministry in the areas of policy formulation, capacity building, research and analysis.

He touched upon urbanization, its trends in Myanmar and the challenges faced in the past, present and the future, noting that the proposed activities such as development of land use planning guideline and institutionalizing carpenters training complement the ongoing development initiatives on “Safer Settlements”.

Mr. Brian Heidel, Regional Advisor for Asia East and Pacific, USAID /OFDA acknowledged USAID’s collaboration with UN-Habitat in Myanmar since 2008.

“No matter what stage of economy we are in, disasters continue to affect people and we continue to learn new lessons” referring to the recent Hurricane Sandy which lashed North Eastern US in 2012. He also emphasized the need for multi-hazard approach and recalled

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USAID's support on earthquake preparedness to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology and Myanmar Engineering Society through US Geological Survey.



Mr. Bijay Karmacharya, UN-Habitat (L) and Mr. Brian Heidal, USAID (R) delivering their remarks.

Mr. Jaiganesh Murugesan, DRR Specialist, UN-Habitat provided a detailed presentation on the project and its interventions in the field and National level approach.

“A research study will be undertaken to understand the existing land use practices and guideline will be developed based on the existing practices. It will be take into consideration of evolving institutional and legal frameworks in the country and draw upon experiences from other countries in the region, while also incorporating disaster risk reduction, natural resource management and climate change point of view,” said Mr. Murugesan.

He said that carpenters training will focus on reviewing existing training modules to include building materials and environmental aspects and explore options to institutionalizing and rolling out of the training and establish linkages with Urban Research Development Institute.

There was a broad discussion on existing frameworks and tools for land use planning in Myanmar, relevant departments updating their ongoing activities and further discussion on coordinating with DHSHD settlement planning initiatives. Training initiatives and proposed skill development programmes from MOC Training Centre and Myanmar Engineering Society were also discussed. Finally, the meeting agreed to establish a Working Group comprising of key stakeholders to guide implementation of the project.

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