



31 May, 2016  
Naypyitaw

# FP2020 High-level Consultation Meeting in Myanmar

On 31 May, 2016, the Minister of Health and Sports, the Minister of Social Welfare, other executives from the Ministry of Health and Sports, as well as the heads of UN agencies, Myanmar NGOs and INGOs gathered in Naypyitaw to reaffirm Myanmar's commitment to the Family Planning (FP) 2020 goals, and to discuss the importance of family planning access to the development of the nation.



## Message from the Minister of Health and Sports

The newly-appointed Minister of Health and Sports, His Excellency Dr Myint Htwe, emphasized the importance of family planning to the progress of the nation and expressed his hope that partners in the country will work together to meet the FP2020 commitments to which Myanmar pledged in 2013.

The Minister stressed the need for “inclusive development,” where the highest levels of government are working efficiently and collaborating with INGOs to reach populations with unequal access to modern contraceptives and facing high levels of maternal and child mortality. The need for high quality and technically competent FP services, in addition to coverage, was also pointed to as an important consideration. The Minister acknowledged the contributions of the INGO community, but also stressed the importance of



improving the national Health Management Information System (HMIS). In this regard, more action is needed on how to capture INGO contributions and incorporate private sector data as a part of the National Health Plan 2016 -2020.

In order to address the high maternal mortality rate in Myanmar, including deaths resulting from unsafe abortions, the Minister pointed out how improvements to the national HMIS would help allocate the right resources in the right places. These goals can be reached when high ranking officials in the new government are informed of the benefits of realizing Myanmar's FP2020 commitments. He also encouraged professional societies such as Ob/Gyn Society, Myanmar Medical Association, and the Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association to be fully involved in achieving FP2020 goals, especially in regards to updating training curricula. The Minister said he has also asked for support from global partners at the 2016 World Health Assembly for these and other efforts.

The Minister concluded his remarks by emphasizing the need to listen to the voices of communities. In order to practice a rights-based approach targeting improved access for poor and vulnerable underserved populations, he regarded health system strengthening as the priority. For this, he encouraged decision makers to listen to the voices of Township Medical Officers and the communities. He recommended health officials from the state and region



levels to work with local communities by forming people's health assemblies to solve problems, and work with community-based organizations to listen to the voices at the grassroots.

### **Family Planning in Myanmar**

The Minister's speech was followed by that of former Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Thein Thein Htay, who elucidated the history of family planning programming in Myanmar. In recent history, Myanmar's FP Costed Implementation Plan is now in place thanks to the partnership with FP2020 and UNFPA. In order to move forward, however, Myanmar now needs to fulfill its performance measurement and evaluation agenda by selecting indicators to create a transformative framework for rights-based programming. To support this effort, a focused coordination effort is needed to promote knowledge-sharing among partners in order to help avoid duplication and better align efforts to the existing agenda.

This was followed by presentations on the FP2020 global overview by Sono Aibe from Pathfinder International, and the FP2020 strategic plan by Dr. Hla Mya Thway Einda, Director of Maternal and Reproductive Health of the Ministry of Health and Sports. Dr. Hla Hla Aye of UNFPA presented on the FP2020 Action Plan 2016 and spoke about some recent research reports that are useful in assessing the current gaps. With more midwives delivering injectables, the incoming shipment of Sayana Press<sup>®</sup> and the piloting of Post-Partum IUD insertion in Mandalay Hospital will continue to increase method choice for Myanmar couples. UNFPA support for Ethnic Health Organizations has helped to expand services further into hard-to-reach areas and populations.

Dr. Than Min Oo, TMO of Pindaya Township in Southern Shan, showcased some local level FP efforts. Some participants felt that the effective practices in Pindaya could be expanded nationwide. Participants went on to discuss the future of FP in Myanmar, touching on topics such as integrated RMNCH strategies, strengthening Auxiliary Midwife FP training, incorporating FP into district level implementation plans, the involvement of the Ministry of Immigration and Population, updating related laws, the role of the Global Financing Facility, and strengthening data collection.

Following animated discussions, participants approved the following recommendations as a consensus on improving family planning in Myanmar:

#### **Recommendations to the Minister of Health and Sports**

1. Ensuring continued political commitment to family planning and FP2020 through awareness raising
2. Creating enabling policies and guidelines to improve contraceptive service delivery
3. Collaborating across ministries and partnering with private sector partners and ethnic health organizations to accelerate impact
4. Allocating increased financial resources for family planning
5. Prioritizing contraceptive commodities in national and local budget allocations
6. Increasing choices of contraceptive methods and products
7. Strengthening data monitoring and reporting systems, especially including private sector data
8. Addressing young people's need for sexual and reproductive health services
9. Promoting gender-sensitive, rights-based programming and high quality of care

#### **Additional Recommendations**

10. Conducting community health forums in every state and region to reflect community voices
11. Including FP indicators to customize District Health Information Software (DHIS)-2
12. Community-based distribution of contraceptive commodities through task sharing

