**Minutes of IM Network Meeting: 8th February, 2017**

Chair Person: Shon Campbell, MIMU Manager.

Participants’ Organizations: Phandeeyar, MIMU, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UNHCR

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|  | **Issues discussed** | **Next steps** |
|  | **Presentation of Open Development Myanmar**  Open Development Myanmar is a new initiative of Phandeeyar’s Open Data Programme as the Myanmar partner of OpenDevelopmentMekong.net, a regional open data platform. The programme is supported by USAID through the Mekong Partnership for the Environment. The OpenDevelopment Myanmar platform was launched in November, 2016, and is designed to facilitate the generation of new insights which can lead to improve decision making, to provide a central repository for Myanmar (and Mekong) related data, and to facilitate the development of new products and services which serve the public good. The website is available in two languages: English version and Myanmar version (Unicode).  Key features of OpenDevelopmentMyanmar.net include: Dashboard – interactive tool letting users dynamically explore statistics across seven categories: Demographics, Government, Education, Economy and industry, Health, Environment and Households at union, regional and TS levels. **Map explorer** – interactive tool letting users visualise geographic information as complementary layers.  **Profile** – currently it has one profile for Oil and Gas Blocks.  **Data stories** – Brief overviews of key topics and subtopics with dynamic links to data, news and law sources.  All content on the portal is available for direct download. Existing data can also be retrieved via an open API.  In addition to running OpenDevelopmentMyanmar.net, Phandeeyar promotes Open Data by supporting helping local civil society organizations gather and use data developing data, infographics and mapping skills, developing the community of data journalists and data advocates, supporting the tech community to build data products. |  |
| **2.** | **Cluster/Sector/agency updates**  **UNHCR** has just completed the Humanitarian Protection 4W and the final report for PIMS. Activities are underway to automate protection monitoring at village level to Kobo. Currently UNHCR is working on village profiling in Maungdaw district; Kobo questionnaires have been finalized. Camp Profiling exercise (round 6) in Kachin, Rakhine and Northern Shan has been initiated and questionnaires reviewed with partners and the CCCM coordinator. The next step is refining the database (based on the agreement on the questionnaires) and training in preparation for data gathering. The next focus will be sharing the protection monitoring tools with teams in south-eastern Myanmar.  **UNICEF WASH** has done finalizing WC 4W, Quarter 4 2016 and it will be shared and published at MIMU website.  **UNOCHA** released the Kachin IDP site maps on 20th Jan, 2017. The team worked Pre Crisis Assessment survey in Mandalay aimed at gathering information on likely needs in the event of emergency.  **Phandeeyar** haspartnered with FHI 360 will organize a competition/event on March 16 and 17focusing on the development of technological products to further action in various topics such as human rights, advocacy, and support for LGBT people. The event will bring together civil society groups, Yangon region government, technology groups to propose products. Those selected will receive funds to develop their idea and the best one will receive funds for completion.  **MIMU** has completed various capacity building support (10 days QGIS training in December, Information Management trainings in Nay Pyi Taw and Mawlamyine). The MIMU excel training has been adapted as a distance course which can be followed over several weeks from remote locations. Trainees will need to apply for the course as they are offered and go through a selection test before being accepted to ensure the initial skills are sufficient for them to participate in this level of course. Learning materials are provided in Myanmar language on DVD/flashdrive and the trainees will be required to complete several assignments showing their use of the course material as well as a final exam, after which they can receive the certificate.  The new MIMU 3W round is starting and requests are being sent to agencies for their 3W inputs (210 agencies provided inputs in the last round of the 430 agencies to whom entry forms are sent). MIMU will provide 3W data support trainings to assist agencies to complete the data forms. Visualisation capacity: with the support of Australian Volunteers International, the MIMU has a new international Data Management and Visualization Specialist. MIMU recently released the Situation Analysis of south-eastern Myanmar – copies are available on the MIMU website and hard copies can be obtained from the MIMU office. Additional ongoing projects are the School Mapping (starting development of a platform enabling MoE staff to combine education data with school locations), development of an Online Photo Archive (a tool to promote improved use of images by media and agencies), and the Township Vulnerability Analysis being undertaken together with HARP / Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience programme supported by DFID. |  |
| **3** | **Village Naming Issues in northern Rakhine State**  Feedback was also provided on a recent trip to Maungdaw to support the preparation of inter-agency products (mapping, beneficiary tracking, NFI tracking etc). A key issue which was discussed at length was village naming issues.  Myanmar’s government controls the place names across the country from village to country level. This is mainly handled by the General Administration department / GAD, which comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs. In some areas where people use languages other than Burmese, the name on government listings may be a translation of the local language name to Burmese/Myanmar (so looking and sounding quite different), or a transliteration which attempts to match the sound in Burmese language characters, or something entirely different harking back to the colonial administration or other sources. The result is that some village names in the government listings may be quite different to that used locally, especially in areas where Burmese/Myanmar is not the main spoken language.  Administratively, village names are listed by GAD based on information provided by TS GAD officers, with changes recorded in the annual Government Gazette however the full government listing is only available from GAD. Our understanding from discussions with GAD is that village names can be officially revised through a request to the local MP who then presents the rationale to Parliament for endorsement, and that these requests are generally endorsed without issue provided they are on the government listing. If they are not on the government listing (possibly due to land issues such that the village cannot be confirmed for that location), but only on the PCode listing, the name can be changed to the alternative name on the PCode listing only.  The MIMU Place Codes are based on these government-provided names and was developed at the request of the UN Country Team to provide a system allowing the mapping and combination of data from different sources. The MIMU Place Code system is the most widely used and most comprehensive geo-spatially linked coding system currently in use in Myanmar; it currently includes unique codes for all administrative levels down to the over 66,700 villages across the country.  Steps taken to issue a Place Code; (1) verify village locations (and ensure they are settled and not seasonal communities), (2) gather GPS coordinates for each village, (3) transliteration of the Burmese name as recorded in the Government village listing to English to match the sound of the name between the two languages as best as possible. To address the issue of differences between the (Burmese) village name on the government listing, and the name by which the village is commonly known by locals living in and around the village, the MIMU has added the option of an Alternative Name for each village in the Pcode listing. MIMU is currently providing technical support to the development of a nationwide coding system with the OneMap Myanmar project and government partners and the Place Codes have been provided as an example of the system which can be put in place. This listing is currently being used in several government initiatives.  During a recent MIMU visit to Rakhine, several issues were raised around village names:   * ***Controversial names***: 336 villages countrywide have “Ku Lar” as part of the place name as per the Government listing. The largest number are in Ayeyarwady Region (93), followed by Rakhine State (88) where most are in Buthidaung (22), Kyauktaw (14) and Pauktaw (10).  Maungdaw and Rathedaung TS each have 7 villages whose government name includes this term. While the original meaning of this term was not so contentious (a rough translation is “from across the water”), it now has an offensive connotation in some areas. Agencies are getting around this problem by substituting names their staff feel are more appropriate, but there is no agreed standard across implementing agencies in the area, alternate names have not yet been provided for the Place Code listing, and no action has been taken to raise it in relation to the government-recognized names.  Requests for Travel Authorisations still require the government name and some agencies list, alongside, their name for the village, the government name in brackets. Where agencies use non-standard names in their databases (not recognised in relation to the Pcode listing), matching with shapefiles becomes ver difficult and this brings long delays in preparing the data for mapping - a major problem in an emergency or for coordinated approaches to information sharing. Note that care is needed in deciding on alternative names: Simply substituting a term for “Ku Lar’ as some agencies are doing is unlikely to be adequate as some villages may still be mixed or not seen by locals in that way. Pushing for use of names which are not recognized at all could also delay the issue being addressed more appropriately, and lead to misunderstandings in the local area. It is important to ground any decisions in choice of alternate names for village sin this category in the names used by the people from that village, and not names used by agencies/others to describe it. * ***Local language names***: Some villages continue to be called by their locally-recognized (often local-language) name rather than by the Government-listed name. This can be resolved by including the alternative name in the Pcode listing (provided it is commonly used by the people from that village and surrounding villages). * ***Different agency spellings:*** Government village listings are currently maintained in Burmese only with no government convention for the transliteration of Myanmar place names to English.  The MIMU countrywide Pcode system is currently the only comprehensive transliteration system – this uses the same English spelling for specific Burmese names throughout the Place Code listing but transliteration is more challenging where it comes to names from other languages.  An agency raised the concern that it can be difficult to match villages with the Pcodes when the spelling they use does not correspond with that used by MIMU.   It was agreed to seek the locally used names for villages with contentious names in the MIMU Pcode listing and to include these as an Alternative name. Further steps could be taken by people from these villages to review/revise the village name following appropriate procedures.  The importance of ensuring that the alternative names in the Place Code list are those used by the community rather than what staff from agencies active in the area understand/expect to be the name was underlined. | Follow up as planned with implementing agencies to seek the locally used names as alternate village names in the Pcode listing |
|  | **AOB**   * **Mapping of specific humanitarian issues** – MIMU suggested formation of a small task group to recommend/develop templates for key products for conflict-related emergencies as a support for field teams (initially UNHCR/OCHA/MIMU). * **Feedback on MIMU QGIS training** – the attending agencies had all included at least one staff member in one of the recent QGIS trainings provided by MIMU. They noted that the course was extremely useful in that staff trained were confident and capable of undertaking mapping on their own once back in their work place. * **Map printing** – participating agencies also noted that the company suggested by MIMU for map printing on vinyl is also recommended (efficient, low cost and did a good job).   ***“Winner” at No.140, 22nd street (Upper), Latha township. Phone: 09255882889.*** | MIMU to convene the task group in the coming period |
|  | **Next Meeting**  The next meeting has been rescheduled to 8th March, 2017 at 09:00 pm in the MIMU. | Share ideas for speakers |

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