The commemoration ceremony for “World Sight Day 2011” was conducted at the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw on 13 October 2011. It was attended by H.E. Professor Pe Thet Khin, Union Minister for Health, Dr. Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health, Directors General from Departments under the Ministry of Health, officials from the Ministry of Health, representatives from Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, INGOs and other local NGOs.

The opening speech was delivered by H.E. Professor Pe Thet Khin, Union Minister for Health which was followed by an address by Dr. H.S.B. Tennakoon, WHO Representative to Myanmar. This was followed by viewing the exhibition on the activities of the prevention of blindness programme in Myanmar.

The theme of World Sight Day 2011 is “Avoidable blindness shames us all”.

International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) recognizes the poverty trap of people with visual impairment, the real risk that they will be excluded from basic health and education services and thus suffer economic deprivation. Disability contributes to the risk of poverty, but conditions of poverty add to the risk of disability.

Representing over 110 organizations, including virtually every major organization working in blindness prevention, global eye health professional associations and the World Blind Union, IAPB calls on the World Bank and major donors to provide official development assistance to enable national governments to allocate the necessary budget support to the key issues on preventing blindness.

Dr. H.S.B. Tennakoon, WHO Representative to Myanmar delivering address at the commemoration ceremony for World Sight Day 2011 at the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw.

“Getting to Zero” World AIDS Day 2011

Observed worldwide on 1 December since 1998, World AIDS Day is the moment of the year where millions of people come together across the globe to commemorate people who lost their lives to HIV, applaud progress made in responding to the epidemic and recommit to ending the epidemic. The World AIDS Day is an occasion to honor those who have died of AIDS and those who live with HIV or AIDS and to increase awareness of these conditions. Getting to Zero is the theme selected by the World AIDS Campaign (WAC) to commemorate this year’s World AIDS Day. The new theme, that will be used until 2015, echoes the UNAIDS vision of achieving “Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.” Getting to Zero is the overall agenda for responding to HIV in the next five years, but the priority may be zero discrimination in some parts of the world and zero AIDS related deaths in some other parts.
The launching ceremony for "World Disability Report & Workshop on Reproductive Health for People with Disabilities" was conducted at the Ministry of Health in Naypyitaw on 24 November 2011. It was attended by H.E. Professor Pe Thet Khin, Union Minister for Health, H.E. Dr. Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health, H.E. Dr. Win Myint, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health, Directors General from Departments under the Ministry of Health, officials from the Ministry of Health, President of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, President from Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, Director General from Ministry of Education, Officials from WHO, Officials from Department of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of Education, and special invitees, representatives from two national organizations of people with disabilities: Shwe Min Thar Foundation and Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association, attended the launching ceremony.

The opening speech was delivered by H.E. Professor Pe Thet Khin, Union Minister for Health which was followed by a welcoming address by Ms Alana Margaret Officer, Coordinator, Disability & Rehabilitation, WHO HQ This was followed by viewing of power point slides of the World Disability Report. Next H.E. Union Minister and guests viewed the mini exhibition on the activities of the Disability & Reproductive Health programme in Myanmar.

A seminar was conducted next in which Ms Alana Margaret Officer, WHO HQ, presented the global status of disability. This was followed by a brief discussion by two disabled persons on their experiences as disabled persons. The main event closed with a general discussion on disability and reproductive health providing an opportunity to exchange on existing activities and current challenges.

The third part was the Workshop on Reproductive Health for People with Disabilities. It was attended by 50 participants and elaborated over two days a vision for disability and inclusive reproductive health services in Myanmar, as well as priorities, areas for action, expected outcomes, activities and indicators. At the conclusion of the workshop, recommendations were drafted for the way forward for both the Disability programme as well as the Reproductive Health Programme.

Mass Measles Immunization Campaign

Measles is a very infectious disease presenting with fever with rashes. Myanmar has started measles immunization since 1987. At first one dose was given to the children at the age of nine months. In 1995, 87 urban townships were covered by mass measles immunization campaign targeting children under the age of three years. The whole of Yangon and Mandalay Divisions were covered in 1997, targeting children under the age of five year. Then the whole country was covered with the same type of campaign, in three phases, implemented from 2002 to 2004. Again in 2007, the mass measles campaign covered the whole country for all children aged between 9 months to five years. Under this campaign altogether some six million children were immunized.

Second opportunity was given to cover the missed children and also to boost the immunity for those who have already received the first dose. Despite all those immunization efforts, those who are missed are missed again. Hence, new cohorts need to be continually reached. In fact, we should never miss the opportunity to immunize a child. Minor illnesses should not be the reasons for not vaccinating a child.

There were more cases of measles during the year 2011 and more outbreaks were observed since the number of children who missed the immunization during previous years has accumulated, remaining them unprotected against the disease.

However, some positive developments in this context are coming up:

- Myanmar will start measles second dose in routine immunization in 2012
- Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) supports additional vaccines to Myanmar to immunize second dose of measles vaccine
- Pentavalent vaccine proposal has been prepared and submitted to GAVI
- Costed Multi-year plan for the period 2012-2016 has also been formulated
Providing tuberculosis (TB) control services through public hospitals: an example of the Public-Public Mix in TB control

Through PPM (public-public mix), the National Tuberculosis Control Programme (NTP) aims at strengthening the linkages with public hospitals.

The objectives of creating such linkages are:

(i) to apply NTP guidelines at hospital level;
(ii) to establish a referral system between public hospital and the township TB center;
(iii) to establish a TB laboratory quality control system at hospital level; and
(iv) to include hospitals in the NTP surveillance system.

This joint effort is expected to result in an increased case detection; improved treatment results; reduced drug resistance and a decrease in diagnostic delays.

PPM DOTS activities were formally launched in the following general hospitals: four hospitals (New Yangon General Hospital, East Yangon General Hospital, West Yangon General Hospital and Sanpya General Hospital) in 2007. Insein hospital in Yangon (2010); Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital; Pathein Hospital; North Okkalapa Hospital, Yangon and 300-bedded Hospital, Mandalay in (2011). All hospitals are practicing options 3 or 4.

Table 1 shows the case detection (all TB cases) as per Options 3 and 4; while Figure 2 shows the treatment results in the above four hospitals.

It is expected that through intensive supervision, proper training and information sharing, treatment results will be further improved.

Table 1: TB case notification, by hospital, 2007-2010
(Option 3 in blue; option 4 in green)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanpya GH</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanpya GH</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New YGH</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New YGH</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>East YGH</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East YGH</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West YGH</td>
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<td>West YGH</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insein GH</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insein GH</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Option 3</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>1071</td>
<td>1538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Option 4</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A painting and an essay competition for UN Day 2011 were held by UNDP in the UN compound on the 15th of October 2011. Participants who are mostly children of UN staff took part in the competition. In English essay competition, there were two categories: for children under 14 years of age, and above 14 to 16. Panel selected the winners according to their writing and drawing skills against the following set criteria:

1) subject of the title;
2) ideas which are relevant to title;
3) knowledge about UN organization, past, present and future;
4) current burning issues faced by UN today.

Amongst the eleven winners, WHO Myanmar is very happy and proud, to state that Maung Thi Ha Aung, the only son of U Than Htike Aung, WHO Myanmar, and who is a Grade six student from Fellowship International Study Center at 24 Alanpya Phaya Lan, Yangon, won third prize for English Essay competition for under 14, titled “If I were the UN Secretary-General” and a consolation prize for painting competition in Myanmar language, on the theme “We the peoples: a stronger UN for a better world”. For someone who is only eleven he has shown a wonderful ability to capture the essence of what United Nations is doing for the peoples in the world, in his drawing.