Multistakeholder Discussion on Tourism in Mrauk U

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MCRB aims to provide a trusted and impartial platform for the creation of knowledge, building of capacity, undertaking of advocacy and promotion of dialogue amongst businesses, civil society, governments, experts and other stakeholders with the objective of encouraging responsible business conduct throughout Myanmar.

Financial support from governments of:
- UK
- Norway
- Switzerland
- Netherlands
- Ireland
- Denmark (2014-2017)
What is ‘responsible business’?

**Responsible business** means business conduct that works for the long-term interests of Myanmar and its people, based on responsible social and environmental performance within the context of international standards.
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**What Does a ‘Responsible Business’ Do?**

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<th>Understanding and meeting legal and regulatory requirements</th>
<th>Being environmentally friendly</th>
<th>Providing competitive products and services</th>
<th>Preserving and developing human resources</th>
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- **Behavior that defines a 'Responsible Business'**
  - Understanding and meeting legal and regulatory requirements
  - Being environmentally friendly
  - Providing competitive products and services
  - Preserving and developing human resources
MCRB and Rakhine State

- Sector-Wide Impact Assessment (SWA) on Oil and Gas (research in Kyaukphyu 2013/4, published Sept 2014); followed by
  - engagement with companies (including Daewoo, CNPC, Woodside);
  - Promoting discussion between UNHCR and offshore companies on interactions with boats;
  - advocacy to parliament on artisanal oil law

- Awareness-raising on responsible business:
  - establishing and funding a Sittwe office of the Myanmar Business Coalition on Aid (MBCA) from 2015-2017 to work with SMEs on responsible business issues, workshop on responsible business for 32 SME representatives in Sittwe in February 2017.
  - Training for civil society, and government on responsible business in Kyaukphyu and Sittwe for civil society, and for government, in December 2017/January 2018, with Scholar Institute/Oxfam.
After tourism sector-wide impact assessment (SWIA), two multistakeholder workshops on tourism have been held in Ngapali in May 2016 and 2017, co-hosted with Hanns Seidel Foundation.

Briefed Dr Kofi Annan’s Rakhine Advisory Commission on investment issues in Rakhine in January 2017 including:

- Need for regulation of tourism accommodation to be liberalised (10 room minimum for guesthouses should be removed to enable local SMEs to establish guesthouses)
- Need for a Strategic Environment Assessment of the Kyaukphyu area, including SEZ and port and pipeline.

Lent a tourism expert to the Rakhine State Government and UNDP to work on the tourism strand of the Rakhine State Socio-Economic Development Plan. – encouraged them to focus on Ngapali and Mrauk Oo.
Most countries’ official travel advice says that travel to Rakhine especially in the North is strongly advised against or ‘all but essential travel.’

All countries’ official travel advice classifies Rakhine state as at least Level 2 or 3, officially recognized as “danger zone”, with higher levels of warning for NRS and now also including Mrauk U

Korea, Japan, Australia, US advise no travel to NRS including Mrauk U

Main EU countries and Canada advise against all but essential travel to either all or most of Rakhine other than Ngapali – UK specifically confirms that Kyaukpyu, Ramree, Munaung, Toungup, Thandwe, Gwa townships are OK)

Singapore advises against travel to Buthidaung, Maungdaw, Rathedaung, and to reconsider travel to other parts of NRS (but advice is not updated since September 2017!)

Most travel insurance policies do not cover trips where governments have issued negative consular travel advice, which means tour operators will cancel tours
Japan

https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/info/pcinfecrionspothazardinfo_018.html#ad-image-0

**Level 3: Please stop travelling**

"Mrauk-U, Sittwe, Kyaukpyu & Maungdaw township in Rakhine state are areas where ethnic minority armed groups are active. The situation is still unstable, and levels 3 are continuously issued to the area."

South Korea

South Korea has issued its **highest-level travel restriction** ("No travel") for northern Rakhine, including Mrauk U

United Kingdom

**Updated 4 July to mention internet shutdown**

*Orange* advise **against all but essential** travel to Rakhine State, except the administrative areas of Kyaukpyu, Ramree, Munaung, Toungup, Thandwe (including the tourist resort of Ngapali and Gwa).

https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/myanmar

Singapore

Singaporeans should **avoid non-essential travel** to the Maungdaw, Rathedaung and Buthidaung townships, and **reconsider travel to other parts** of Northern Rakhine State (September 2017)

United States (18 June 2019)

**Level 4:** Do not travel to Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Ponnagyun and Rathedaung townships due to civil unrest and armed conflict.

**Level 3:** Reconsider travel to Ann and Myeboon

https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Burma.html
Canada

Chin (Paletwa Township), Kachin, Rakhine, and northern Shan States - Avoid non-essential travel

Avoid non-essential travel to the following areas, due to the risk of serious civil unrest:

- Paletwa Township in Chin State
- Kachin State
- Rakhine State, except for the tourist resort of Ngapali and travel between the resort and Thandwe airport

France

ZONE OF VIGILANCE

"Formally inadvisable to set foot in Northern Rakhine and SW Chin State. Advise against all but essential travel to Sittwe. Strongly advise against travel to Mrauk U"

Australia

Level 3 Orange Reconsider Travel

Rakhine State (except resort areas at Ngapali Beach and Townships marked as do not travel), reconsider your need to travel

Level 4 Red Do Not Travel

Townships of Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Kyauktaw, Ponnagyun and Mrauk-U in Rakhine State and Paletwa in southern Chin, do not travel

Germany

"Travel in Rakhine border regions is permitted only with special permission. Travel to Mrauk U and surrounding communities is currently not recommended."

Switzerland

"It is not recommended to travel to Sittwe or areas north of Sittwe."

Netherlands

Do NOT travel to Rakhine state (other than Ngapali/Gwa)
Tourism is affected by conflict, but also should not cause conflict

Case study 1: Hotel licensing in Myanmar

Current restrictive licensing requirements for hotels and guesthouses in Myanmar can create conflict in communities which are seeing an increase in foreign tourists. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) Notification 2/2011 on Guesthouses, in addition to imposing building safety requirements, requires guesthouses to have a minimum of ten rooms, all en-suite, before they can receive an MoHT licence for foreign visitors. Even Bed and Breakfast (B&B) licences which are also currently difficult to obtain require four rooms in a separate building to the main home (see Case Study 5).

Local community members who have available land for building guest rooms and would like to enter the tourism business to cater for both Myanmar and foreign tourists cannot access enough capital to immediately build a ten room guesthouse. However, local entrepreneurs would be able to build a few simple but safe rooms, and gradually expand if the investment is successful.

Because of the high barriers to entry caused by the licensing restrictions, some locals conclude that they would be better off selling their land for a high price to speculators from outside the community. This drives conflict, since local communities feel that the profits of tourism are going to outsiders, and that they have been squeezed out of their ancestral homes by high prices and red tape.
Thank You!
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