

Food Security and Development in Myanmar:

Ongoing MDRI-MSU-IFPRI Work in support of a Mon State Rural Development Strategy

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Outline

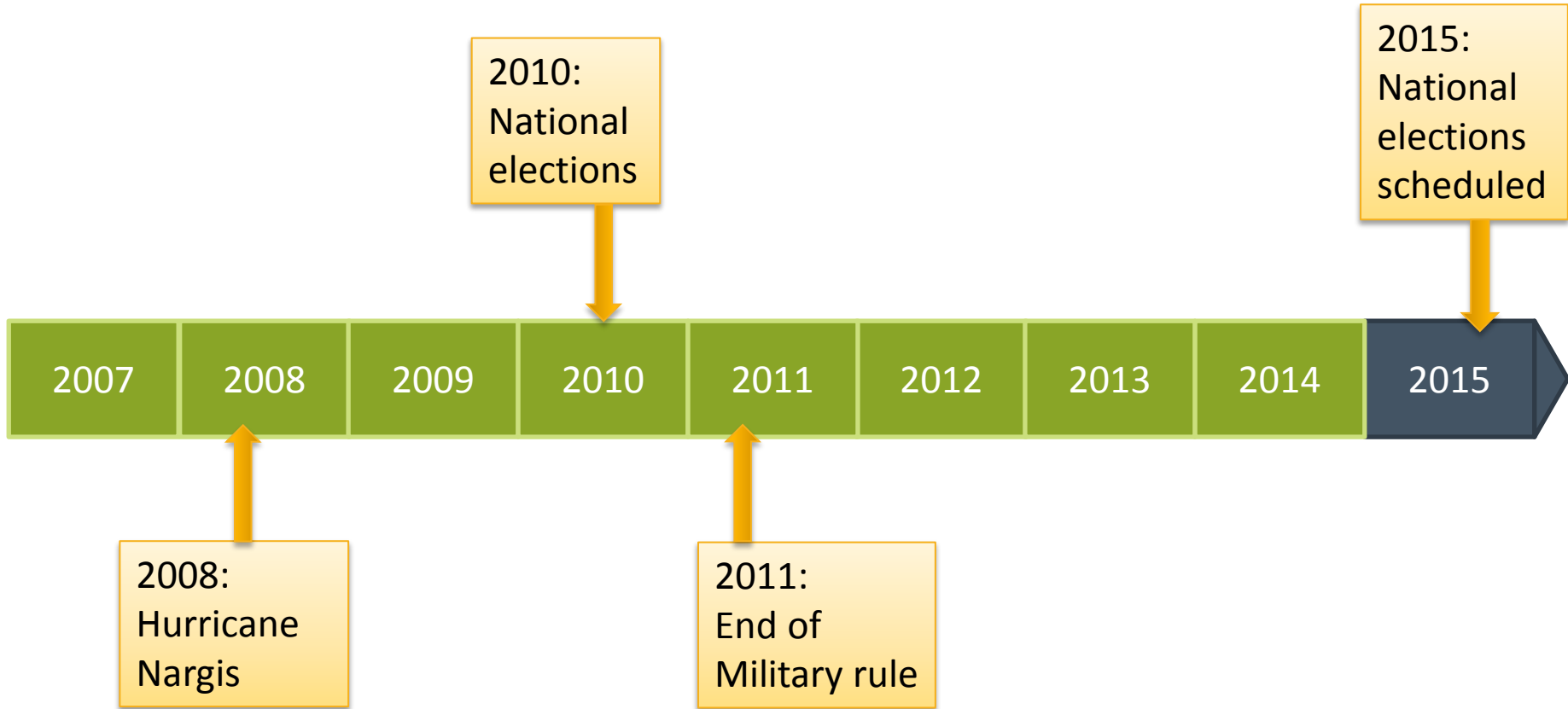
- Background
- Insights from Mon scoping
- Mon State Livelihoods Survey



Background



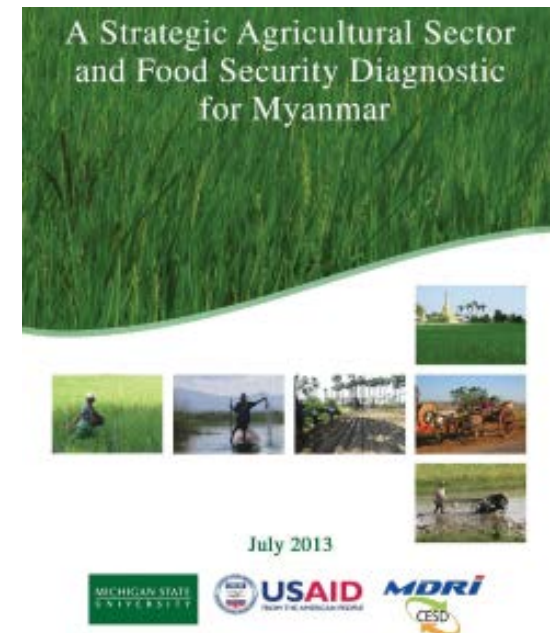
Myanmar recent events





Myanmar Food Security Program

- USAID-financed program led by Michigan State University
 - National partner: Myanmar Development Resource Institute (MDRI)
 - Five year program: October 2014 to September 2019
- Builds on earlier 2-year USAID financed scoping phase
 - 2 background papers identify lack of reliable data as a major issue
- Government demand for evidence-based rural development strategies
 - Including at regional level (decentralization)





Myanmar Food Security Program

- Training and Outreach
- Policy Advising
- Research
 - Livelihoods survey
 - Fish / seafood value chain
 - Other product and input value chains
 - Rapid Rural Assessments

- 2015-16 Work Plan:
 - Livelihoods survey in Mon State
 - Mon State Rural Development Strategy
 - Challenges, opportunities, policy actions



Why Mon state?

- Easy access
- No security concerns
- Election year
- Serves as pilot, proof-of-concept
 - Other states will follow (Shan?)

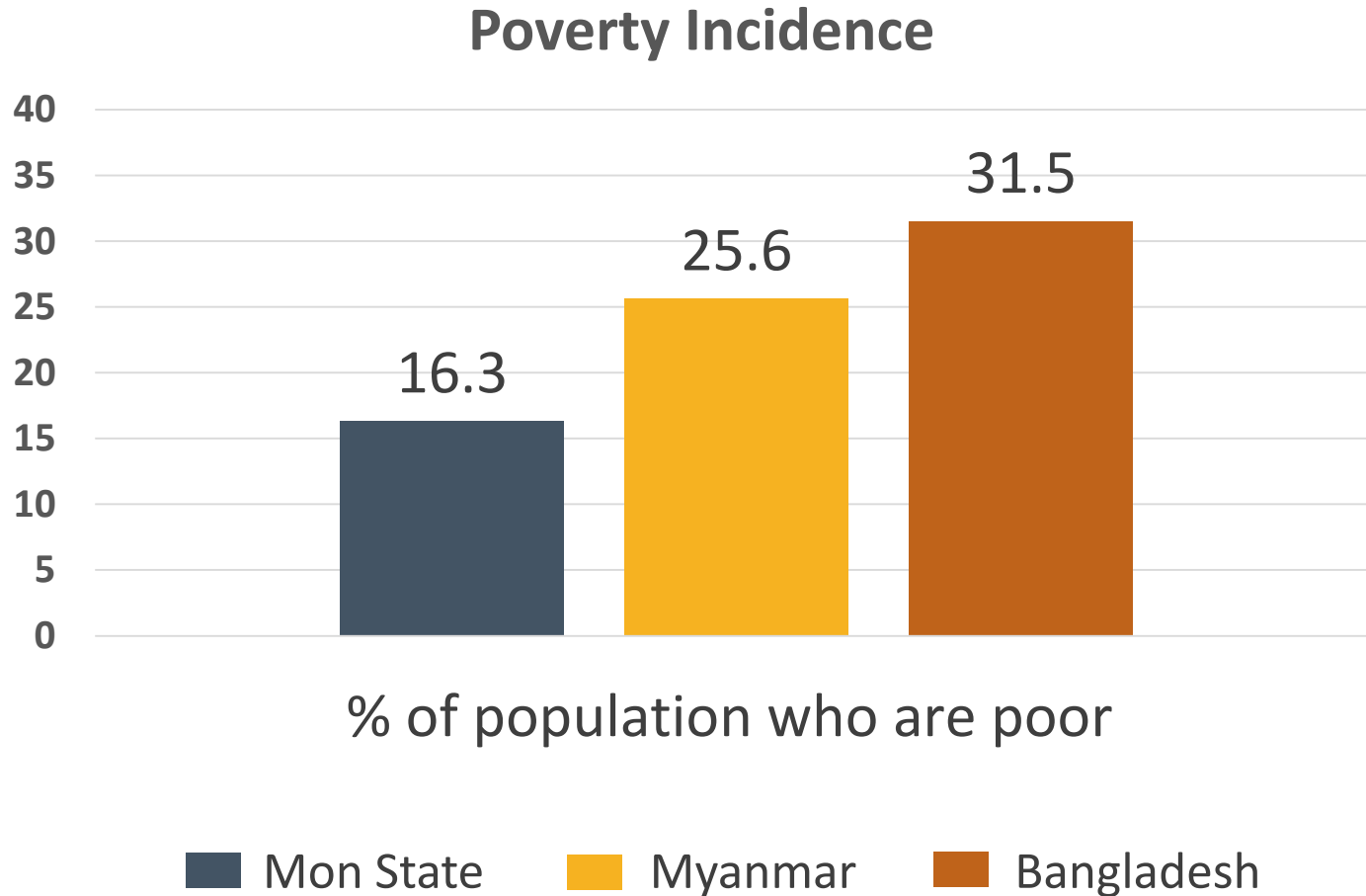
Mon State Basic Info



- South-Eastern Myanmar
- 2-3 million people
- Mawlamyaing (Moulein) = fourth largest city in Myanmar, pop about 400k
- Close to Thailand (physically, culturally, historically)
- Rural economy = rice + rubber, fruits to a lesser degree
- Relatively well off compared to other regions

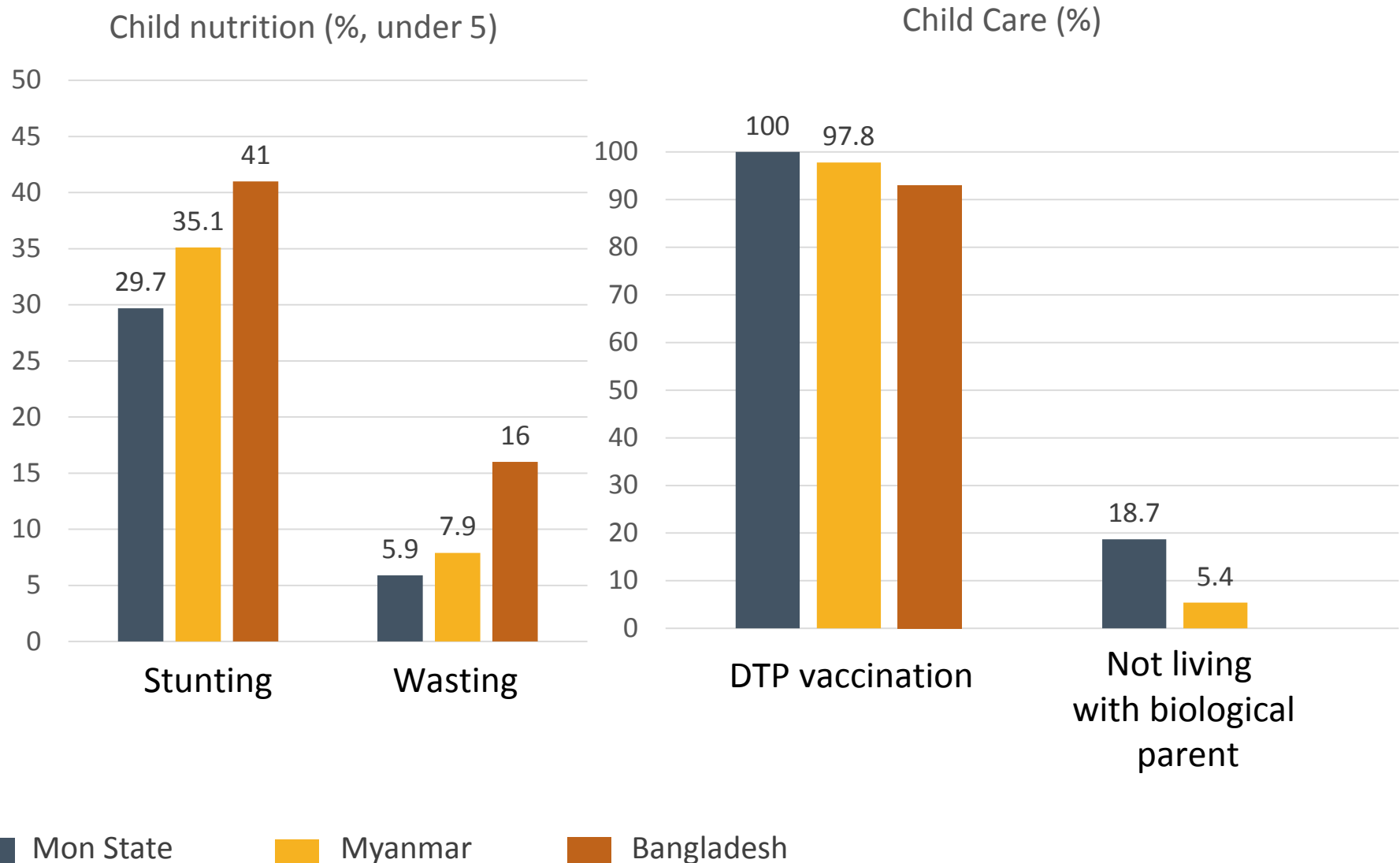


Poverty in Mon state





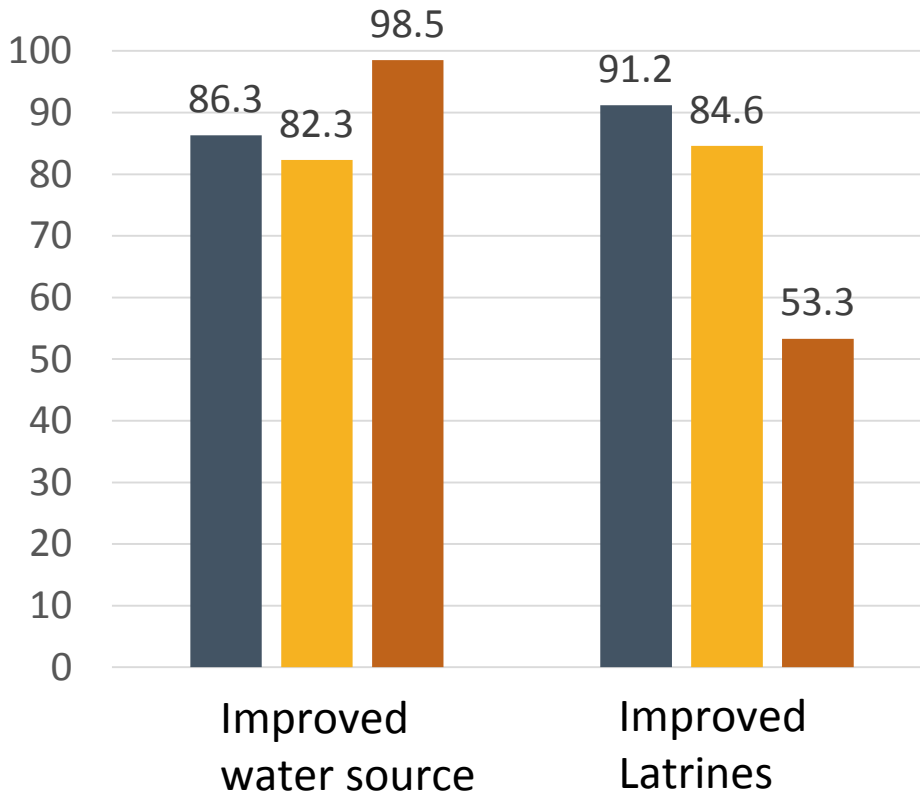
Comparative indicators: child health and protection



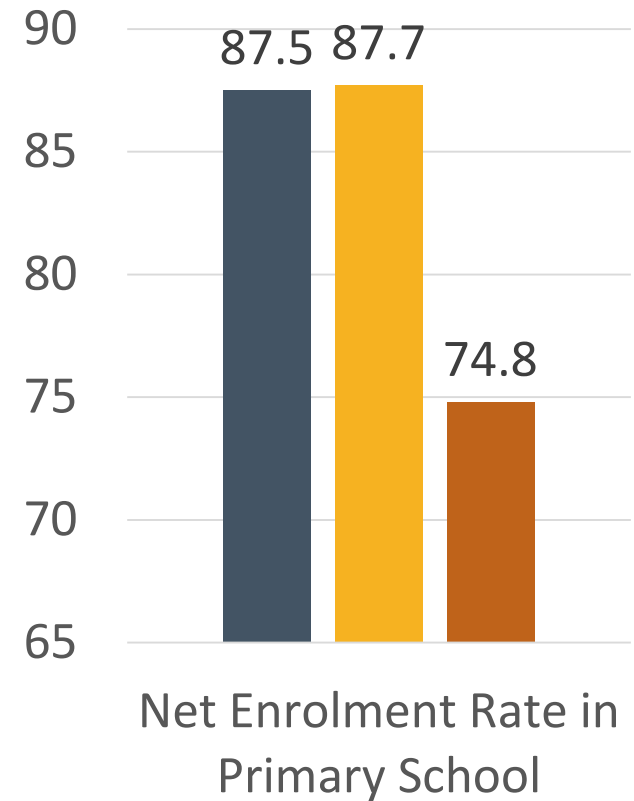


Comparisons – access to services

Access to Improved Water and Sanitation (%)



Education



■ Mon State ■ Myanmar ■ Bangladesh

Source: MICS 2009-2010 (Myanmar), DHS 2011 and WDI 2010/2011 (Bangladesh)



Fieldwork insights



Rural Mon State challenges and opportunities

- Survey design informed by scoping
- Context: labor force migration
- Challenges: Rice and rubber economies both in crisis
- Opportunities: High value added alternatives

Migration

- Mostly to Thailand (also Malaysia, Singapore, Gulf states, etc.)
- Short, medium, long-term (rarely permanent)
- Large influx of cash
- New law for worker permits in Thailand





Migration and agriculture

- Land rental/sale markets
- Labor shortages => rising wages
- National migrant workers from central Myanmar
- Rapid Mechanization
- Shifts to low-labor-intensity crops
- Transplant -> broadcast





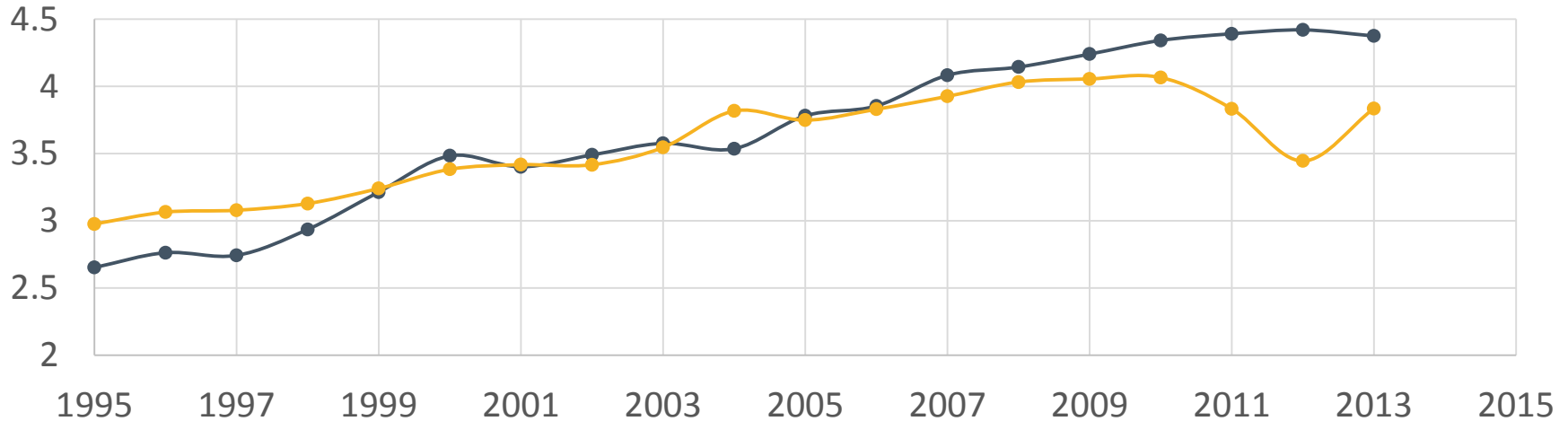
Rice production squeezed

- Costs are rising
 - Mainly labor costs
- Productivity is falling
 - Single-season
 - Irrigation systems not maintained
 - Pest issues (snails)
 - Underperforming varieties



Paddy Rice yields

Paddy Rice Yields (mt/Ha)



Source: FAOstat

—●— Bangladesh —●— Myanmar

- Data until 2010 perhaps not very reliable
- Large potential for improvement
- Dire need for research and extension



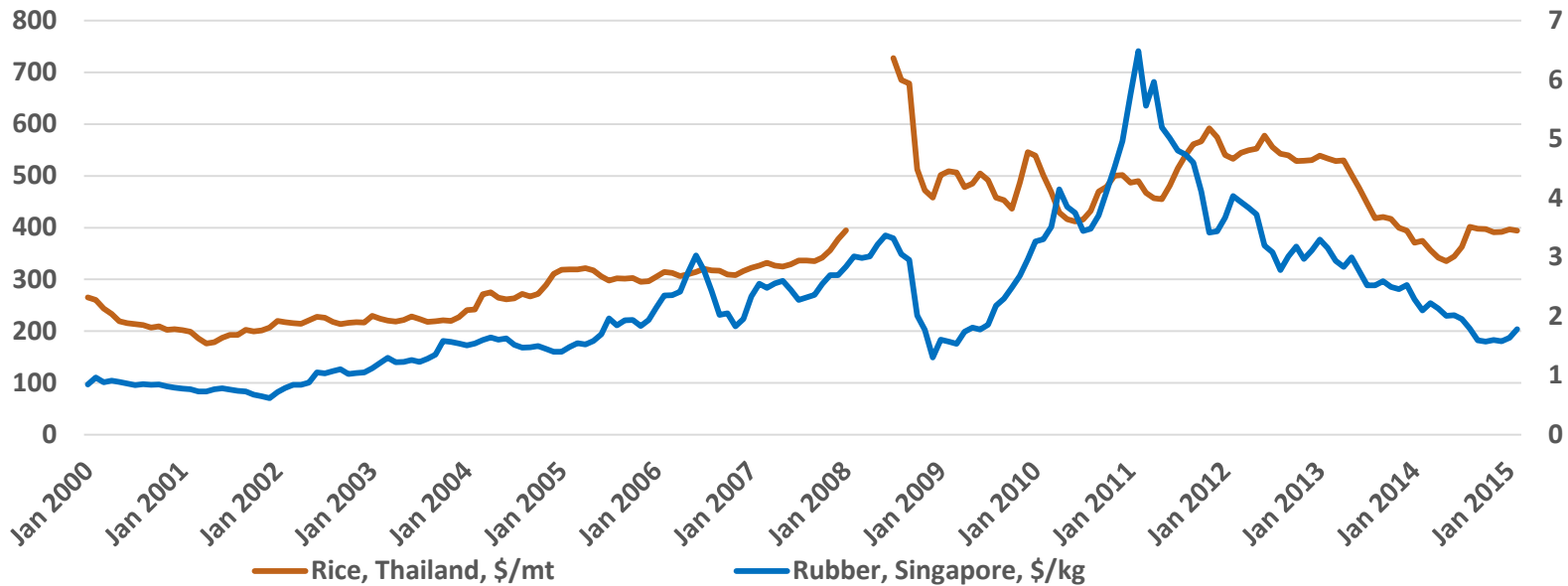
Rubber economy in crisis

- Low-quality/low-price equilibrium
- Prices low for the past 3 years
- Increasing quality requires:
 - Expensive inputs (formic acid)
 - Quality control
 - Reliable outlet
- Coordination is key



Rubber prices

International Rice and Rubber Prices



Data Source: GEM Commodities, World Bank Group
 Price adjustment to 2012 average USD made using United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Chained Consumer Price Index

In Mon:

- Many invested in early 2010's
- Prices now below profitability levels
- Labor costs rising (skilled)
- Nursery sales fell by 2/3 in past 3 years





Orchard opportunities

- Mon state is famous for quality of fruits
 - Rambutan, Pomelo, Mangosteen, Durian
- Very profitable
- Need inputs:
 - High-tech irrigation
 - Labor intensive





Vegetables

- Gourd, sweet potato, eggplant, chillies
- High value added, very profitable
- Off-season crop on paddy land (legal constraints)
- But labor requirements high





Pulses

- Not very significant in Mon state, but there is potential





Remittances for investment



- Massive influx of cash
- Used for consumption / construction / investment
- Scope for policies promoting investment



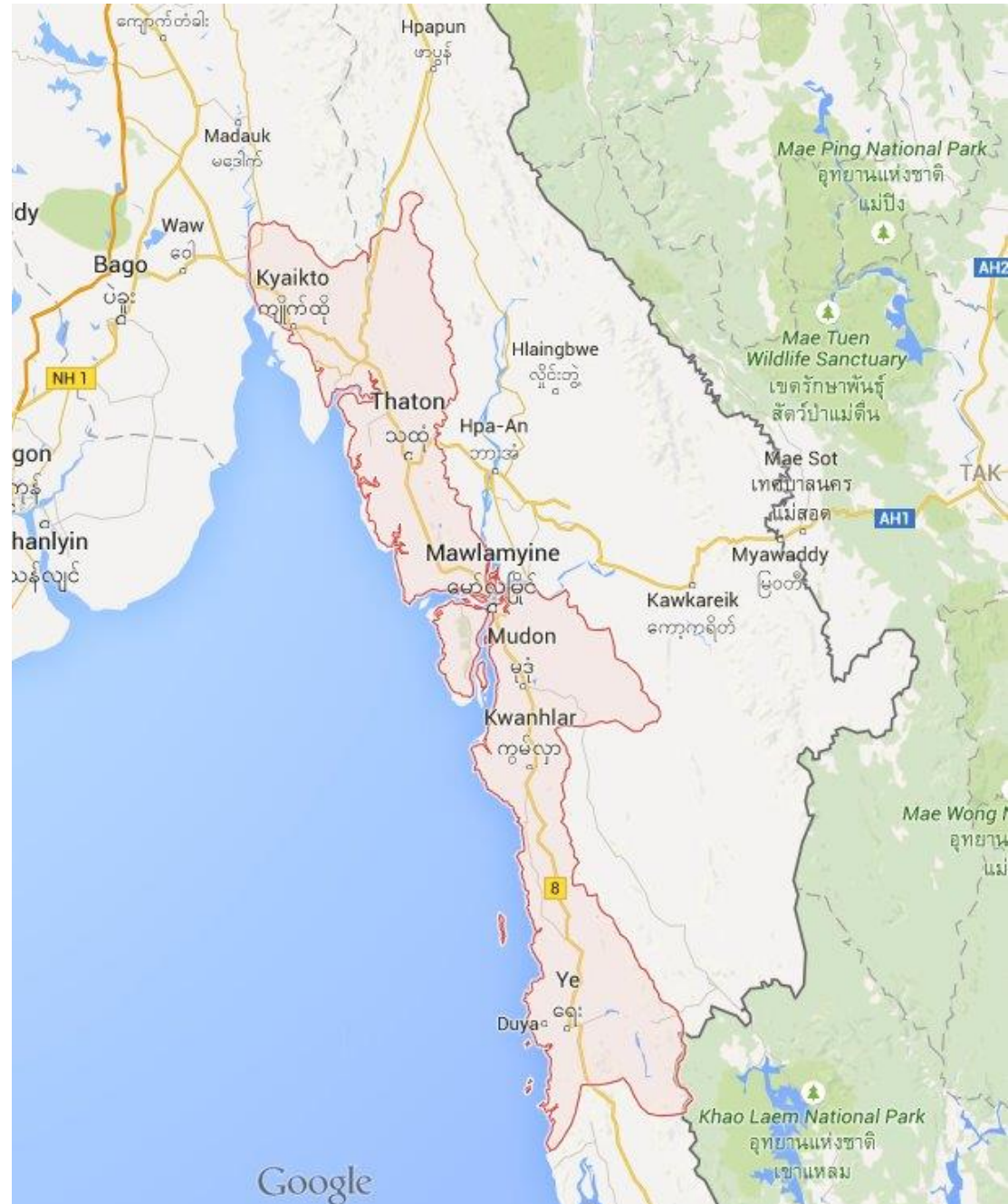


Mon State Livelihood Survey



Survey stats

- May-June 2015
- 1680 Households
- 140 enumeration areas (12 hh / EA)
- Township-representative
- Household + community questionnaires





Data collected

- Standard roster, education, activities etc.
- Particular detail on:
 - Migration
 - Land ownership, markets, etc.
 - Ag production
- Recall questions for 5 years ago (opening-up)
 - Gvt. service provision
 - Crop diversity, mechanization, commercialization etc.



Capacity building

- Survey work
 - 7 MDRI researchers
 - 60 enumerators (3/4 are female)
- Data analysis
 - Stata
 - Reporting





Expected outputs

- Livelihoods analysis
 - Map income sources
- Mon State Rural Development Strategy
 - Document/quantify the constraints, opportunities, trends, etc.
 - Set of actions
 - Case studies to complement survey data, policy relevant
- Fits into broader 5-year project



Mon data coming soon, despite monsoon





Thank you

