

PANEL

Ecology Under Duress: Seed Sovereignty and Conservation Governance in Conflict-Affected Myanmar

Convener

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Panel Description

Myanmar's agricultural and conservation landscapes are undergoing rapid transformation amid political conflict, market expansion, and institutional instability. This panel examines how hybrid seed adoption in horticulture and governance collapse in protected areas are reshaping ecological sustainability.

The first study "Fostering Local Seed System for Sustainable horticulture in Myanmar: Perception of Hybrid and Local Seeds Utilization for Sustaining Agroecology in Myanmar" analyzes the ecological and economic implications of imported hybrid seed use in Shan State, Mandalay Region, and the Dry Zone. While hybrid seeds increase yields and market demand, they are associated with higher production costs, increased agrochemical use, pest pressure, and biodiversity decline. The findings raise concerns about long-term ecological resilience and seed sovereignty.

The second study "From Protected Areas to Contested Frontiers: Conflict Ecology, Governance Collapse, and Conservation Federalism in Myanmar" investigates degradation trends in Myanmar's protected areas between 2017 and 2023. It shows that conservation governance weakened significantly after the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 military coup, enabling expanded extractive activities. The research argues that centralized conservation models are no longer viable and proposes more decentralized and federal approaches to environmental governance.

Together, the panel highlights the need to strengthen local institutions, support agroecological practices, and promote inclusive governance frameworks to ensure environmental sustainability in conflict-affected Myanmar.