**RESPONSE**

WFP’s first emergency relief operation in Myanmar commenced in 1978 in northern Rakhine, following the return of 200,000 refugees from Bangladesh, with the aim to assist the refugees in rebuilding their livelihoods. For more than 40 years, WFP has provided emergency relief food assistance, often in conflict, post-conflict or disaster situations in Myanmar. To this day, WFP continues to be at the forefront in assisting nearly half a million people displaced, rendered homeless or deprived of basic resources by cataclysmic events, whether man-made or natural.

In order to reduce long-term dependency on humanitarian assistance, prioritization and verification of IDP households are regularly conducted in Kachin and Shan IDP camps, while WFP continues to advocate for permission from the Government to conduct necessary assessments, verifications and post-distribution monitoring in Rakhine State. Conflict-affected populations in Kokang Self-Administered Zone are also targeted for relief assistance for two to three months to help resettlement in their villages of origin. WFP similarly provides temporary cash assistance to refugees returning from Thailand.

### 2018 Relief Assistance in Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE ASSISTED</th>
<th>CASH Transferred (US$)</th>
<th>FOOD (in metric tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>474,000*</td>
<td>5.3 million</td>
<td>40,072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*54% women/girls & 46% men/boys

1. In accordance with the United Nations’ position, the term Rohingya is used in this document in recognition of the right of people to self-identify. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar objects to the use of the term Rohingya.

2. & 3. Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019

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**CONTEXT**

With frequent floods, landslides, cyclones and other natural hazards, Myanmar is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which lead to massive population displacements and destruction of livelihoods, crops and other food sources. It ranks 3rd out of the most affected countries in the last two decades since 1998, according the 2019 Global Climate Risk Index.

The humanitarian situation in Myanmar remains fragile. In Rakhine State, more than 140,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims, remain internally displaced following several waves of inter-communal violence in 2012, with severe restrictions of movement and limited access to livelihoods, health care, education and other basic social services. The Government’s security operations in August 2017 followed by attacks on border guard posts resulted in 700,000 people, mostly Rohingya Muslims, fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh and exacerbated the food security and overall humanitarian situation of the remaining population. An escalation of fighting since 2018 in Rakhine State between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military, as well as the intensification of ethnic armed conflict in Kachin and Shan states since 2011, has further contributed to instability.

An estimated 823,600 people living in conflict-affected areas are vulnerable to food insecurity. More than 240,000 remain internally displaced with limited access to farmland and other livelihood opportunities.

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*Photo: Women carry WFP’s flood relief assistance in Magwe Region*
Assistance through Cash: In areas with functioning markets, beneficiaries are assisted through cash-based transfers. In remote, unsafe areas where there are significant protection concerns, food remains the preferred transfer modality. The value of cash-based transfers (CBT) is determined based on market prices, taking into consideration of price fluctuations.

Use of Technology: Through decades of crises and countless interventions, WFP has developed a unique body of expertise in addressing emergencies. This applies both to programming – the set of policies and concepts that guide our action – and to the mechanisms of preparedness and response. As a result of a rapidly developing telecommunication industry and increased access to markets and livelihood opportunities in Myanmar, WFP has successfully implemented electronic mobile transfers since 2017.

Capacity Building: As Myanmar remains highly prone to natural disasters, particularly floods, cyclones and earthquakes, WFP engages in various emergency preparedness and response initiatives to strengthen the Government’s capacity. WFP has provided capacity building trainings on Emergency Telecommunications, Emergency Logistics and Warehouse Management, and Mobile Data Collection for Assessments. WFP has further implemented the Logistics Capacity Assessment and CBT Feasibility Assessment in disaster-prone states and regions and refurbished Government-owned warehouses.

PARTNERSHIPS

WFP’s partners are the Government at different levels as well as local, international, and UN organizations to ensure maximum coordination and efficiency in saving lives, protecting livelihoods, and improving food security. Working with its partners, WFP advocates for unimpeded humanitarian assistance to all areas in need including in Rakhine State and in non-government-controlled areas in northern Shan State and Kachin State.

WFP’s relief operations are carried out with implementing partner organizations, which bring in local and international expertise to maximize aid effectiveness, or directly by WFP when partners face access restrictions.

Operational partnership and coordination takes place with UNHCR and ICRC for relief operations in northern Rakhine State. WFP with FAO co-leads the Food Security Sector for coordination of the Humanitarian Response Plan, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the food and livelihood assistance in conflict-affected areas. Under the Food Security Sector, WFP chairs the Cash Working Group, facilitating coordination, harmonization and communication set-up among its numerous stakeholders.

THE WAY FORWARD

WFP remains committed to building national capacity and resilience of communities while meeting the food security needs of conflict and disaster-affected populations. Through its five-year Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022), WFP will closely coordinate with the Government, development partners, civil society organizations, as well as communities themselves, for effective and efficient relief assistance. A transition strategy will always be applied to reduce dependency on humanitarian assistance through resilience activities such as asset creation, nutrition and school feeding. Cash transfers will be integrated into relief assistance wherever feasible to enable a smoother transition to self-reliance. WFP will continue supporting the strengthening of the Government’s capacity in emergency preparedness and response in coordination with other UN agencies and working groups of emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction areas.