Operational Context

Myanmar is amidst an important political and socio-economic transformation. The country is highly susceptible to natural disasters and climate risks. An estimated 24.8 percent of its 54 million population live near or below the poverty line. Many struggle with physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food with women, girls, elderly persons with disabilities and minorities affected most.

Wasting prevails at 6.7 percent nationally. Myanmar is one of the world’s 20 high tuberculosis burden countries. It is also among 35 countries accounting for 90 percent of new HIV infections globally.

Ethnic conflict exacerbates an already fragile situation. Over 1 million people have been displaced from their places of origin since June 2011. With restrictions on movement and lack of access to livelihoods, many conflict-affected populations rely on assistance to survive. Attacks on border outposts in August 2017 and ensuing violence forced over 700,000 Muslims to flee Rakhine State and seek refuge in Bangladesh, leading to a humanitarian crisis and activation of WFP’s corporate Level 3 response, since downgraded to Level 2.

In central Rakhine, a total of 130,600 food-insecure people continued to receive life-saving food or cash assistance from WFP. This included over 2,500 newly displaced people affected by the ongoing armed conflict. In addition, WFP also continued to provide food assistance to 4,400 beneficiaries in Rathedaung Township who are vulnerable to the lean season. WFP’s nutrition assistance reached 5,400 PLW and 24,900 children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) with fortified blended food in northern Rakhine.

In northern Rakhine, WFP extended its emergency relief assistance to 4,100 newly displaced people, in addition to 94,800 vulnerable people from 146 Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu villages in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. WFP also supported the nutrition of 19,700 children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) with fortified blended food in northern Rakhine.

Kachin: WFP continued to assist 43,300 displaced people in Kachin State using cash transfers and E-money. WFP also supported 234 IDPs from four townships with six months of cash transfers, as they returned to their places of origin. WFP also provided nutrition assistance for 1,930 PLW and children aged 6-23 months.

Shan: WFP regained access to conflict-affected communities in Kokang Self-Administered Zone (except the northernmost part because of the security situation). Ongoing armed clashes in Kutkai, Nant San and Kyaukme townships caused the new and temporary displacement of 1,000 people.

Emergency relief distributions continued to reach 7,100 displaced people from northern Shan State and 3,200 people in conflict-affected villages of the KoKang Self-Administered Zone. WFP provided nutrition assistance for 2,300 PLW and children aged 6-23 months across Shan State.

Community Asset Creation: WFP completed four road and dyke renovation projects in Rakhine and Shan states and Wa Self-Administered Region. WFP also supported 35,700 people through food assistance for assets.
Operational Updates continued

- **School Feeding:** WFP provided nutritional snacks or hot meals to 296,200 children from primary schools and early childhood care and development centres across Myanmar. WFP also organized the first technical workshop to develop National School Feeding Guidelines, held in Nay Pyi Taw. WFP and partners will discuss the first draft in November.

- **HIV & TB:** WFP supported 2,600 people living with HIV and/or tuberculosis, with food and nutrition assistance in Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Shan and Rakhine states, and Yangon Region.

- **Nutrition in non-emergency areas:** WFP's nutrition interventions benefited 6,300 children aged 6-59 months and PLW across Chin State, Magwe Region and Yangon peri-urban areas.

### A bridge between communities in northern Rakhine State

Through the food assistance-for-asset-creation activities, WFP promotes the construction or rehabilitation of assets that improve long-term food security and resilience. In Myanmar's northern Rakhine State, the programme is supporting people's access to markets and health facilities.

On a small island in Buthidaung Township surrounded by the May Yu River and Sein Nyin Pyaw Creek, lie six villages inhabited by Rakhine and Muslim communities. For a long time, this geographic isolation has created a significant constraint for over 5,000 villagers living together on the island in peace. To access a nearby market, school and health center, they had to cross the creek on an improvised, rickety bamboo-log structure which they had built with the scarce resources they had.

"Every single step along this road and bridge was very worrying. The route was even riskier for pregnant women, school girls and boys," Zawli Husson, a 67-year-old from Hpoe Kaung Chaung village, told WFP. After hearing about these challenges, WFP mobilized and supported the local community in constructing a new road and bridge in June. "The road and bridge have impacted everything in our life. Now we can even use a tuk-tuk (a tri-wheel taxi) to go to the market, health center, relatives' home, and more," Zawli Husson told WFP. This new infrastructure not only provides safe and convenient transportation for the villagers, but also cuts transportation costs in half.

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### Donors & Funding Sources to WFP Myanmar Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

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**Photo:**
Before, during and after the road and bridge construction © WFP/Photolibrary