Operational Context

Myanmar continues to present a complex and dynamic operating context where ongoing socio-economic and political challenges, including conflict, displacement, widespread poverty and food insecurity, hinder development efforts. An estimated 24.8 percent of its 54 million population live near or below the poverty line. Many struggle with inadequate physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, with women, girls, persons with disabilities and minorities affected most.

Malnutrition is a major challenge, and wasting rates prevail at 6.5 percent nationally. Likewise, Myanmar is one of the world's 20 high tuberculosis (TB) burden countries. It is also among the 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 limited access to livelihoods, many conflict-affected people urgently need food assistance.

WFP implemented its first operation in Myanmar in 1978 in northern Rakhine and established its first office in 1994. Given the protracted humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, high rates of malnutrition nationwide, and high susceptibility to natural hazards, WFP remains committed to improving coordination with its national and international partners and developing innovative solutions to meet acute needs across the country.

Read the Annual Country Report 2019 to find out more about the impact of WFP’s operations in Myanmar.

Operational Updates

- **Response to COVID-19**: In March, WFP worked closely with partners in support of the Government of Myanmar’s response to COVID-19. This included taking measures to promote hygiene practices and physical distancing in all ongoing food and nutrition activities, providing food assistance to quarantine sites for some 5,000 returnees in Yangon and procuring basic medical equipment. Based on demand, WFP is mobilizing to provide common logistics services support to the UN and humanitarian community, including supply chain coordination and an aviation service for passengers and cargo (Please refer to the latest External Situation Report for further details).

- **Rakhine and Chin**: As a result of the ongoing conflict between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed group the Arakan Army, a months-long cut-off of trade and supply routes to Paletwa and Samee towns in southern Chin State have left tens of thousands of people food-insecure. Following persistent efforts and with the support of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Chin State Government, WFP successfully delivered emergency food assistance to 2,600 displaced people in Samee. Meanwhile, WFP is trying to reach cut-off communities in Paletwa.

  Across Rakhine, despite a volatile security situation, WFP reached 16,300 newly displaced people. In northern Rakhine, WFP assisted 97,600 conflict-affected people in March with emergency food and nutrition assistance, including 3,100 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and 18,100 children aged 6-59 months in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. In central Rakhine, WFP provided 130,800 food-insecure people with food and cash assistance, including 19,600 children aged 6-59 months and 4,200 PLW who received fortified blended food.

- **Kachin**: WFP assisted 44,500 displaced people with cash-based transfers, in addition to providing fortified blended food to 1,200 children aged 6-23 months and 1,830 PLW. WFP also organised a workshop to reflect on good practices and lessons learned on the mobile cash transfers project in 39 camps in Myitkyina and Waing Maw townships. If the situation allows, WFP plans to provide digital literacy training to familiarize beneficiaries with the technology to receive SMS notifications from WFP and subsequent cash withdrawals.

- **Shan**: WFP distributed food and cash to 16,500 displaced people across northern Shan State. WFP’s monthly nutrition assistance benefited 2,650 children aged 6-23 months and 1,400 PLW.

In Numbers

- **369,000 people assisted** in March 2020
- **3,580 mt** of food distributed
- **US$ 1.2 million** cash-based transfers made
- **US$ 31.3 million** six months (April - September 2020) net funding requirements

Contact info: wfp.myanmar@wfp.org
Country Director: Stephen Anderson
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/myanmar
Operational Updates continued

- **International Women's Day:** On 8 March, WFP offices across Myanmar celebrated the International Women's Day. WFP male staff prepared small tokens of appreciation for their female counterparts to recognize women's dedication and contribution in both the workplace and their homes. WFP is committed to advancing gender equality and women empowerment, through increasing women's participation in food distributions and promoting gender parity in the workforce.

Challenges

- Due to a volatile security situation, WFP was unable to reach 750 beneficiaries in Buthidaung Township in northern Rakhine and 670 beneficiaries in Minbya Township in central Rakhine.

- Following the Government of Myanmar’s prohibition of mass gatherings to minimize exposure to the risks of COVID-19, most community asset creation and livelihoods projects across Myanmar have been suspended since mid-March.

Safe water source instils hope in Kayah State

Kayah, Myanmar’s smallest state, has endured six decades of conflict, and has only enjoyed relative peace and stability in recent years. The majority of Kayah’s population live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their livelihood, with limited access to newer farming practices that could improve their yields.

Together with 38 internally displaced households in Kayah, U Plu Reh and his family resettled in Daw Kalaw Lae village in Shadaw Township in 2019. U Plu Reh was struggling to raise his daughters with the limited profit made through his small shop. His wife had to spend a significant amount of time fetching water from a hilly stream while tending to the children.

WFP learned of their situation and mobilised villagers to take part in a freshwater pond construction project with cash incentives. Villagers can now access a stable water supply without risking their lives.

‘Not only can I afford my children’s school fees, but I can also use my wages from the project to invest in my shop’, U Plu Reh recounts with a smile. ‘Our community has also grown closer during the project. We are proud of our collective efforts in building the community asset. We really appreciate WFP’s support to our village.’

---

**Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Apr – Sept 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>425.3 m</td>
<td>138.4 m</td>
<td>31.3 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Result 1:** Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected people in food-insecure areas meet their food and nutrition needs all year round.

**Activities:**
- **Activity 1:** Provide unconditional food transfers and/or cash-based transfers (CBTs) to populations affected by crisis.

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Vulnerable people in states and regions with high food insecurity and/or malnutrition have access to food all year round.

**Activities:**
- **Activity 2:** Provide technical advice, policy support and training for the Government to improve delivery of national social protection and emergency preparedness programmes and food systems.
- **Activity 3:** Implement a comprehensive social school feeding programme in targeted schools in support of the national programme.
- **Activity 4:** Provide conditional food or cash-based assistance in support of the creation and rehabilitation of assets, combined with nutrition messaging for targeted populations.

**Strategic Result 2:** End malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Children under 5 in Myanmar have improved nutrition in line with national targets by 2022.

**Activities:**
- **Activity 6:** Provide implementation support, research-based advice and technical assistance on national policies and action plans for the Government and partners.
- **Activity 7:** Implement preventive nutrition interventions for adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and girls, and children under the age of two, and roll out community infant and young child feeding programmes, CBTs for mothers of young children, and social behaviour change communication SBCO.
- **Activity 8:** Provide specialized nutritious foods for the treatment and management of acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls, and children under the age of five.
- **Activity 9:** Provide unconditional food and/or cash-based assistance combined with nutrition messaging and counselling for people living with HIV and TB patients.

---

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

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT), Luxembourg, Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Private Donors (including Japan Association for WFP), Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Republic of Turkey, United Kingdom, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, United States of America

*Listed in alphabetical order.

---

WFP Myanmar Country Brief

March 2020

**Photo:** U Plu Reh and his family pose happily in front of their house in Shadaw Township in Kayah State. © WFP/Photo Library