



## WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME MYANMAR July 2015 Operational Report

**Boat People Crisis:** By the end of June, out of 733 migrants, believed to be from Bangladesh, 187 were confirmed by the Government of Bangladesh as Bangladeshi nationals and deported to their country of origin. Boat people from Mee Tike camp were relocated to Taung Phyo in northern Maungdaw, with a total of more than 500 migrants being accommodated in this camp. The Bangladeshi authorities continued verifications to determine the status of the remaining boat people. WFP and other humanitarian agencies on the ground were authorised access to the camp subject to prior notice and approval from the Township District Office. WFP continued delivering food assistance, with a slight reduction of rice rations mainly due to the improved nutritional status of the boat people. Food distributions were still handled and managed by the local authorities in line with WFP's regulations and under WFP's close monitoring.

**Return of Kokang IDPs:** Following the unilateral ceasefire announcement by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and improved security situation, 70 percent of the total 90,000 population returned to the Laukkaing town, Kokang. Up to 200 people were estimated to return daily to the town. The Government's Relief and Rescue Department (RRD) and other concerned bodies opened a reception centre, where screening and registration of returnees for residential identification took place. Cash and in-kind assistance was also provided at the centre. Two additional reception centres were to be opened near Laukkaing shortly. RRD estimated that immediate assistance with food and shelter would be urgently needed as the community had sustained significant losses and damage following the four months of conflict. WFP provided regular monthly food assistance to over 2,700 people internally displaced by the conflict in Wa and northern Shan. An estimated 20,000 refugees still remained in China, residing in either rented accommodation or camps supported by the Chinese authorities. The military maintained a presence due to persisting hostilities in northernmost part of Kokang. To provide an appropriate response to the crisis, WFP and other humanitarian actors have planned to undertake needs assessments in Kokang.

**From Protracted Emergency to Early Recovery:** WFP has been providing unconditional emergency relief assistance for already three years in Rakhine and four years in Kachin, whereas the situation has changed since the breakout of the conflicts. As evidenced by WFP's recent assessments, household food security of IDPs has improved due to development of some coping mechanisms. In addition, determined to support rehabilitation, reconstruction and peaceful co-existence between conflict-affected communities, the Government has initiated an IDP prioritisation exercise, resulting in reclassification of populations, return of IDPs to their places of origin or relocation/resettlement to nearby areas with greater access to livelihoods in Rakhine. Following these developments and based on the latest assessments, WFP, in close coordination with the Government, has reviewed its strategy to provide a more appropriate response to the changing humanitarian situation by decreasing relief food and cash distributions. As a result, the protracted emergency stage is expected to gradually reduce, phasing in early recovery and eventually develope for returnees and resettlers. Starting from August 2015, subject to a final agreement with the Government, reduction of food rations will take place for more than 200,000 IDPs in Kachin, northern Shan and Rakhine, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation. Ration cuts will help reduce people's dependency on unconditional food aid. It will also allow WFP to utilise its limited resources more efficiently and effectively. As part of efforts to scale up early recovery, WFP also intends to shift from food to cash transfers in camps of Kachin, where access to markets and functioning cash infrastructure are in place, giving IDPs control over the food they consume.



Kokang IDPs receiving WFP food assistance in Wa. ©WFP



Dyke construction under WFP cash-for-assets project in Pauk Township, Magway ©WFP

**New Resource Centre in Kyaukse:** On 22 June, WFP, in coordination with the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development launched a resource centre in Kyaukse. The parliamentarian of Mandalay Region, Regional Director and other distinguished guests from Kyaukse District Administration and various ministerial departments attended the opening ceremony. WFP, as part of a project funded by the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT) fund, supports the development of technical and analytical capacities of the Government through establishment of several resource centres across the country. The centres are equipped with computers, printers, analytical software, global positioning system devices and other resources supplied by WFP. The latter is also providing training to staff from the Department of Rural Development in areas such as survey design, data collection and data analysis. Opening of this centre came as third, following two similar centres in Chin State and Magway Region. WFP and DRD will open five additional centres in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan States.

**Food Security and Poverty Estimation Surveys :** In June-July, WFP launched food security and poverty estimation surveys in Rakhine and Southeast of Myanmar (Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi). In coordination with the Department of Rural Development, WFP held survey trainings in the Southeast and Rakhine during the last week of June the first week of July respectively, followed by data collection. Since 2013, WFP has been carrying out the surveys across the country. The outstanding assessments are to be completed by the end of 2015, resulting in the nation's first-ever food security atlas.

**Gender Mainstreaming Programme:** WFP in Myanmar was chosen as one of the first three countries to participate in a pilot phase of the WFP's new Certification for Excellence in Gender Mainstreaming programme. Recognising the importance of addressing different needs and priorities of women and girls, men and boys, who receive food assistance, WFP has adopted a new gender policy to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into all of its work and activities, ensuring that gender-based food security and nutrition needs are met. Towards achievement of the goal and objectives of the new policy, WFP launched the pilot programme, with three

countries initially to test the feasibility of the gender certification. Committing to this initiative, WFP in Myanmar has recruited a Gender Advisor and set up a gender focal team to facilitate the certification.

**Seasonal Floods in Rakhine:** During the last week of June, several townships across Rakhine State had experienced severe flooding, triggered by torrential rains. On 29 June, WFP conducted a needs initial assessment to estimate the humanitarian implications. Observations in six villages across Buthidaung Township indicated over 1,100 inundated houses, out of which, some 180 houses were severely damaged. More than 500 livestock and poultry were killed or washed away whereas paddy fields and seeds were flooded/destroyed. Some drinking water sources were contaminated. In Maungdaw, northern Rakhine destruction of infrastructure, including bridges, roads and houses, was reported. More than 350 people were evacuated to temporary camps, set up at monastery and school premises. The government authorities provided immediate food and non-food assistance. By early July all evacuees were claimed to have returned to their places of origin as the situation was back to normalcy. In July, following a request for food assistance from the Government, WFP will provide rice and high-energy biscuits to over 1,680 persons, affected by the flood across five townships.

#### **Resource Situation:**

In July, WFP in Myanmar has received a generous contribution of US\$4.5 million from the USA in support of relief operations in Kachin, northern Shan, and Rakhine. This grant will allow WFP to provide uninterrupted assistance until end-September.

WFP requires additional US\$20 million to avoid food pipeline break in October, just one month before the national election and meet all food assistance needs until the end of year. If no new funding is received, WFP will prioritise relief assistance to IDPs, pregnant women and nursing mothers as well as malnourished children. Contributions are required as soon as possible, taking into account the lead time for procurement and delivery of food to operational areas during the monsoon season.

The top five funding sources to WFP in Myanmar are Japan, USA, Australia, Switzerland and EU.