



WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME MYANMAR

May 2015 Operational Report

Humanitarian Cross-line Missions in Kachin State:

In April, WFP participated in one out of five cross-line missions to non-Government controlled area and distributed over 42 metric tons of food (pulses) to 1,284 IDPs in border point 6 and 8, Pang Wa Township. WFP food distribution complements the regular food assistance provided by local food security partners who have regular access to those areas. It was observed during the missions, IDPs had disproportionate access to income generating sources such as vegetable and fruit plantations. While regular food assistance has been essentially important for IDPs, water and electricity supplies were identified as most needed by the IDPs from one of the camps.



WFP food distribution in N Hkawng Pa IDP camp, Moe Mauk Township in non-Government controlled area, Kachin State as part of International Humanitarian Cross-line Missions.

Photo: WFP

New Displacement in Rakhine: Since 12 April, fighting between the Government forces and insurgents took place in Kyauk Taw Township, Rakhine State and Paletwa Township, Chin State, which reportedly affected 1,600 individuals. This includes 90 households/ 400 IDPs from four villages, who have been staying at a school in Sa Bar Seik village. The Government provided rice, cooking oil and medical supplies in late April. An assessment made by WFP in late April, in Kyauk Taw Township demonstrated that the IDPs had adequate food and 26 IDP households had already returned to their villages. The remaining households are also expected to return to their villages of origin soon. WFP will continue to closely monitor the progress until all the IDPs have returned safely to their original villages.

IDP Movement in northern Shan, Wa and Kokang:

During the reporting period, a significant number of IDPs returned/relocated to northern Shan, Wa and Kokang. More than 1,400 IDPs from camps in Nam Kham Township and 290 IDPs from a monastery camp in Kut Kai Township, northern Shan returned to their villages of origin in early April. In Kokang Region, repatriation of an estimated 2,000 IDPs from Border Point 125 camp to Laukkai town was facilitated by the Government whereas the remaining IDPs were also reported to have crossed the border into China. A major portion of IDPs, who originate from Kokang urban areas, returned from Nan San camp, China while people from rural area remained in the camps. In China, an estimated 60,000 IDPs were sheltered in camps. At the same time, the heavy fighting between the Myanmar military and an unknown group in Mone Koe sub Township forced an estimated 126 households to be displaced to a village near the Myanmar border with China, in addition to 30 households sheltered in China. Likewise, 270 people from seven villages moved into Namsalat camp, Theinne Township. In Galeng and Mone See of Kut Kai Township, just over 1,000 IDPs were estimated to shelter in camps. In Nam Tit of Wa, 670 IDPs still sheltered in deserted buildings.

WFP's Food Assistance to Kokang Conflict-affected Populations:

In April, WFP distributed one-month food ration of a total of 33 metric tons to over 2,700 IDPs in Theinne, Kut Kai and Nam Khan in northern Shan and Nam Tit of Wa. The Government estimated 60,000 people may require livelihoods support after the conflict has subsided. WFP will participate in an UNDSS led assessment in Laukkai, Kokang which is expected to be undertaken during the month of May.

WFP Myanmar Staff Deployment to the Nepal's Earthquake Response:

Readiness and experience in emergency preparedness and response enabled WFP Myanmar to contribute six staff to Nepal's earthquake response in late April and early May. Led by the Deputy Country Director, Myanmar team will render their technical assistance and expertise in nutrition, finance, logistics and ICT.



Joint UN Mission to the Southeast of Myanmar:

On 26-29 April, a Southeast delegation, including UN Resident Coordinator in Myanmar and Country Representatives of UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, visited Kayin and Mon States. The findings of the visit itself and meetings with both Kayin and Mon State Ministers reflected that WFP’s programmatic approach in the Southeast should remain focused on nutrition, food-by-prescription for TB clients and people living with HIV (PLHIV), treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) for children under two and community asset creation. In the coming month, WFP will conduct a food security survey that will guide WFP in deciding whether school feeding should be given priority to any townships in the Southeast. In 2015, WFP anticipates to reach some 7,000 people primarily through nutritional support to PLHIV/TB and community asset creation activities. Humanitarian needs in the Southeast are difficult to separate from longer term development needs. As such, WFP together with UN sister agencies will cover these areas through a separate durable solutions framework. In particular, under the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) framework for Action, the Zero Hunger Challenge and the Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH), WFP will cooperate with its strategic partners to scale up nutrition-sensitive and nutrition specific interventions through a multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approach.

Rice Soya Blended Food Shortage in May and June:

Due to late arrival, WFP is obliged to temporarily suspend the blended food distribution for pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and HIV/TB patients, with an exception to MDR-TB patients, in May and June. Nevertheless, PLW and PLHIV/TB patients will continue receiving regular monthly food rations of rice, pulses, oil and iodised salt. Regarding provision for children, the blended food distribution for children under five years of age in MAM treatment category and children under five and two years of age in development setting will be suspended in May only. Nevertheless, the children with MAM will continue to receive blanket intervention through supplementary feeding with Super Cereal Plus - Wheat Soya Blend.

Resource Situation:

In April, WFP Myanmar received a fully flexible and unearmarked contribution from Canada of CAD 1.5 million (US\$1.2 million).

Food pipeline break in the country is expected from August 2015, just a couple of months before the planned national election. WFP Myanmar requires a total of US\$34 million to meet all food assistance needs until December 2015.

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



WFP asset creation activity in Ye Township, Mon State.
Photo: RPF





Report on Transfer Modality Scoping Mission in southern Rakhine and Sittwe Town: With an objective to explore the potential opportunities and identify bottlenecks for the introduction of cash or vouchers in relief settings in southern Rakhine/Sittwe and propose next steps, a mission was carried out in four townships: Sittwe, Pauktaw, Mrauk U and Kyauk Taw, in March 2015. After a prior desk review of secondary information and assessments, focus group discussions were organized in the field with IDPs as well as discussions with key stakeholders. As Rakhine State has culturally, geographically and socio-economically diversified communities and intra- and inter-community dynamics, the mission involved a total of 11 sites, representing various ethnic and religious profiles. In each site, up to four focus group discussions were held with an average of eight people per groups, including women and reaching approximately 200 beneficiaries, Camp Management Committee/ Food Management Committee members and 90 traders. Additionally, the consultation with International and local NGOs, UN agencies and three suppliers from Myanmar Rice Industry Association took place in Sittwe.

The main findings are as follows:

1. Current perceptions of food basket: In general, the current WFP food assistance is perceived very positively by the beneficiaries, especially type and quality of the food being reported good. However, many reported that additional commodities are needed for a diverse food dietary.

2. Beneficiary preference for transfer modality: All focus groups, especially women, expressed a strong preference for in-kind distribution and were opposed to a switch to cash, highlighting the issues: lack of market access, protection concerns, lack of supply, high price fluctuation and difficulties to manage the cash on a monthly basis at household level. Vouchers were considered as a possible option in a third of the group discussions, providing that WFP could ensure stable supply at a good quality and price.

3. Beneficiary Market Access: With movement restrictions and protection concerns, physical market access is a key challenge for any market-based intervention in Rakhine.

4. Markets: Whilst a symbiotic trading relationship between communities exists, barriers to trade are layered and have a complexity of inter-linkages and power dynamics which undermine any normal market dynamics.

5. Protection and Gender: Protection and gender issues such as zero representation of women in the committees (exclusively in Muslim communities), resource management and male-led decision-making, among communities, inside communities and at household level undercut all activities and transactions in southern Rakhine and Sittwe and run throughout the findings of the mission.

6. Financial service providers: It was learned that there are several barriers in financial access for Muslim IDPs and traders. Although the trust-based informal broker system and hundi system for money transfer exists, it is operated without or with minimal regulation, formal procedures and accountability. Thus, it is not a transparent process to rely on for cash programme.

7. Targeting: A harmonized response strategy amongst stakeholders, location selection and beneficiary targeting will be key to navigating the challenges ahead.

These conclusive findings suggested that addressing the needs including (not limited to) updating beneficiaries lists; vulnerability targeting; harmonized response strategy; advocacy for the lifting of movement and trade restrictions; holistic approach; and promotion of women participation in the Committees is prerequisite for the modality. More importantly, cash transfer is not recommended in the context whereas vouchers modality may be comparatively viable upon existence of sine qua non. It is also advisable to consider a mixed basket of in-kind plus voucher. The programmatic changes were not recommended around the country elections period. WFP will therefore continue its food distributions until further changes in the operational context is observed.