



# Rakhine Operational Brief

## WFP Myanmar



### OVERVIEW

Rakhine State is located in the western part of Myanmar, bordering with Chin State in the north, Magway, Bago and Ayeyarwaddy Regions in the east, Bay of Bengal to the west and Chittagong Division of Bangladesh to the northwest. It is one of the most remote and second poorest state in Myanmar, geographically separated from the rest of the country by mountains. The estimated population of Rakhine State is 3.2 million. Chronic poverty and high vulnerability to shocks are widespread throughout the State. Acute malnutrition remains a concern in Rakhine. The food security situation is particularly critical in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships with 15.1 percent and 19 percent prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children 6-59 months respectively. Meanwhile the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) is 2 percent and 3.9 percent - above WHO critical emergency thresholds. The prevalence of GAM in Sittwe rural and urban IDP camps is 8.6 percent and 8.5 percent whereas the SAM prevalence is 1.3 percent and 0.6 percent. The existing malnutrition has been exacerbated by the 2015 nationwide floods as a Multi-sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) reported that 22 percent of assessed villages in Rakhine having nutrition problems with feeding children under 2. Moreover, WFP and FAO's joint [Crops and Food Security Assessment Mission](#) in December 2015 predicted the likelihood of severe food shortage particularly in hardest hit areas of Rakhine.

WFP is the main humanitarian organization providing uninterrupted food assistance in Rakhine. Its first operation in Myanmar commenced in 1978 in northern Rakhine, following the return of 200,000 refugees from Bangladesh. For three years, through its emergency operation, WFP provided food aid to the returnees to help them rebuild their livelihoods. In 1994, WFP returned to Rakhine to assist the repatriation of 250,000 people, whose food security and nutritional status was affected by restrictions to travel to certain parts of the State to work or trade for their livelihood, to access health and education services. Since June 2012, when the inter-communal violence broke out in Rakhine, WFP has been providing life-saving food assistance to approximately 128,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) through its sub-offices in Maungdaw and Sittwe. In addition, WFP has been providing relief assistance to flood-affected population. WFP is currently operating its programmes in Buthidaung, Kyaukphyu, Kyauk Taw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Pauk Taw, Ramree, Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships.



### PARTNERSHIPS

#### Government Counterpart

- Ministry of Border Affairs (NaTaLa)

#### Coordination with Other Government Partners

- Ministry of Development Affairs
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Planning and Economics

#### UN Agencies and WFP Cooperating Partners



World Food Programme





### CASH BASED TRANSFERS

In 2016, WFP initiated cash based transfers (CBT) for relief assistance in northern Rakhine, aiming to reach more than 50,000 people, composing of IDPs, floods-affected population and the food insecure communities in 2016. In essence, CBT is employed in relief activities specifically for IDPs with access to functioning markets to diversify household food intake. IDPs receive 8,500 MMK (US\$8.5) per person through cash for relief activities. Furthermore, CBT contributes to women empowerment through control over assistance received and decision-making for food choices as well as directly benefits local markets and host communities through cash transactions with IDPs.

### COMMUNITY ASSET CREATION

WFP started its asset creation programme in northern Rakhine State in 2008 to help the most food insecure and vulnerable populations through (re-)establishment of community assets for resilience while promoting job opportunities. Asset creation programme provides employment opportunities for the duration of the project participation. Projects such as dam renovation, road construction and erosion control activities are implemented. WFP employs in-kind food and/or CBT in asset creation projects to incentivize communities. In 2015, WFP provided food or cash to more than 10,000 people, including floods-affected people, conditional on participation in asset creation activities in Rakhine State. In 2016, WFP is implementing cash for asset rehabilitation activities in Buthidaung, Kyauk Taw, Maungdaw, Minbya and Mrauk-U Townships, with an aim to provide transient jobs to 4,900 participants through construction or renovation of dams, ponds, bridges and dykes etc.

### NUTRITION

In cooperation with Action for Green Earth and Myanmar Heart Development Organisation, WFP has been implementing nutrition programme in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung townships. WFP's nutrition programme in Rakhine composes of prevention and treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). Fortified blended food is distributed to children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) through supplementary feeding in order to prevent and support treatment of MAM. The adaptation of WHO growth standards has culminated in scaling up treatment/prevention of wasting. In 2015, WFP reached more than 53,800 beneficiaries in Rakhine State with fortified blended food through its nutrition programme. In order to prevent further deterioration in nutritional status, negatively impacted by the floods, WFP intends to provide nutrition support to 114,000 PLW and young malnourished children in 2016. Moreover, WFP aims to integrate all its programmes with nutrition intervention, making more nutrition sensitive and also to employ CBT in nutrition intervention where applicable.

### PROCUREMENT

In addition to CBT, WFP directly contributes to local economy by purchasing its food mainly locally in the country without creating inflation. In 2015, smallholder paddy farmers in Rakhine were awarded 25 contracts for 13,800 tons of rice, with a value of US\$ 5 million in total. It constitutes 33 percent of total procurement of rice in Myanmar.

### SCHOOL FEEDING

WFP started its school feeding programme in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung townships in Rakhine State in 1996, with the objective of promoting enrollment and retention rates of girls and boys in primary schools. In 2015-2016 academic year, WFP worked with the Department of Education (DoE) at Township level for implementation of the school feeding activity, which was expanded to Myebon Township. More than 67,000 schoolchildren received daily on-site school feeding with high energy biscuits. In the upcoming 2016/17 academic year, WFP aims to strengthen the partnership with the DoE to implement school feeding activities more effectively.

### SUPPORT TO PLHIV/TB CLIENTS

WFP provides food assistance to people living with HIV and TB clients (PLHIV/TB) who are undergoing anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and directly observed treatment short course (DOTs) in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. In 2015, WFP provided nutritional support to 600 PLHIV/TB and during 2016, WFP plans to provide food by prescription to 700 TB patients in northern Rakhine State, in order to support their nutritional rehabilitation and enhance treatment adherence and success.

### LIFE SAVING FOOD ASSISTANCE

WFP distributes monthly relief food rations consisting of rice, pulses, oil and salt to 128,000 IDPs. Due to the prolonged restrictions on movement and access to basic services and livelihoods, IDPs have had almost total reliance on food assistance. Therefore, WFP intends to gradually scale down the level of assistance to encourage its beneficiaries for self-reliance on food through income generation opportunities. Since late 2015, WFP has been conducting beneficiary review and household prioritization exercises. From 2016, WFP has initiated gradual reduction of assistance for IDPs remaining in camps. WFP adopts Do No Harm approach and conflict sensitivity in implementation of relief for IDPs, returnees and affected as well as host communities. Meanwhile, WFP is cooperating with food security and development partners to explore needs and feasibility of livelihoods rehabilitation for approximately 8,400 IDPs, who are expected to voluntarily resettle or return to places of origin with the Government's facilitation in 2016. Additionally, WFP intends to provide nutrition support to people, who were displaced by recent fighting between government forces and Arakan Army during April in Kyauk Taw Township.

### PROTRACTED RELIEF

Under the protracted relief activity, WFP assists the most vulnerable and food insecure households in 630 villages across northern Rakhine. During the lean season (May-November), approximately 60,000 people benefit from WFP's assistance, including 6,800 children under 5 and PLW, who also receive fortified blended food for their nutritional support. Since August 2015, WFP has adopted CBT and reached 12,500 beneficiaries received cash assistance during 2015. In 2016, WFP will expand CBT to reach a total of 37,000 people through protracted relief activities.