the region. According to the MICS 2009 rates in Myanmar continue to be among the highest of
their age (35 percent) are undernourished and too short for
than one third of all the children under five
stunting
Health Assembly targets for wasting, anemia and
challenges: Myanmar is off course to meet the World
uneven and the country is facing significant
health care access. The pace of progress has been
rapid child growth. Causes of malnutrition are
breastfeeding during the first six months of life, and
malnutrition due to the increased nutritional
requirements to support the pregnancy, exclusive
feeding practices, poor water and sanitation and
health care access. The pace of progress has been
uneven and the country is facing significant
challenges: Myanmar is off course to meet the World
Health Assembly targets for wasting, anemia and
stunting.

Response: Reducing undernutrition and
eliminating food insecurity have been WFP’s priorities. The
causes of undernutrition and food insecurity are
complex and interconnected and rooted in the
underlying contexts of poverty, women’s status,
cultural and political organisation and environmental
degradation. WFP Myanmar, therefore, adopts nutrition
-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions and
contributes to the development of a high level
mechanism for multi-setoral nutrition governance. WFP
implements nutrition activities in Chin, Kachin,
Magway, northern Shan and Rakhine, targeting to
reach 145,000 PLW and young children with more than
4,100 tons of blended food in 2016. WFP’s nutrition
activities in Myanmar focus on three key areas: i) treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM); ii)
prevention of acute malnutrition (wasting); and iii)
prevention of stunting. PLW receive a monthly ration
of Super Cereal to support their own good nutrition
and of their child during the first 1,000 days. For
children, WFP Myanmar provides a monthly ration of
Super Cereal Plus - Wheat Soya Blend (WSB), which is
manufactured from fresh wheat grain and soya beans
blended with sugar, dried skimmed milk and oil, and
fortified with various micronutrients. It meets the daily
recommended nutritional intake (RNI) for essential
nutrients required for growth and energy for physical
activity, supporting good health and cognitive
development.

Context: Despite recent progress, undernutrition
rates in Myanmar continue to be among the highest of
the region. According to the MICS 2009-2010 more
than one third of all the children under five
(35 percent) are undernourished and too short for
their age. Micronutrient deficiencies are also common
in Myanmar, further adding to the burden of
malnutrition. Young children and pregnant and
lactating women (PLW) are at particular risk of
malnutrition due to the increased nutritional
requirements to support the pregnancy, exclusive
breastfeeding during the first six months of life, and
rapid child growth. Causes of malnutrition are
multifaceted including inadequate dietary intake,
high morbidity, household food insecurity, inadequate care
and feeding practices, poor water and sanitation and
health care access. The pace of progress has been
uneven and the country is facing significant
challenges: Myanmar is off course to meet the World
Health Assembly targets for wasting, anemia and
stunting.

UN Network for Nutrition and Food Security:
The UN Network was established to strengthen UN
coherence on nutrition and currently consists of FAO,
UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. In 2016, WFP
Resident Representative and Country Director,
Dom Scalpelli, is chair of the UN Network for Nutrition
and Food Security.

The UN Network is supported by a neutral
International and National Facilitator under REACH
(Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and
Under Nutrition), which is funded by Canada
DFATD. The UN Network, with support of REACH,
is able to support Government efforts to scale up food
and nutrition actions.

In Myanmar, WFP, in partnership with the Government
and UN agencies, is actively supporting the
development of a new prioritized multi-sectoral
Myanmar Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Security
(2016-2025), as response to the Zero Hunger
Challenge. The Zero Hunger Challenge outlines a vision
for a world in which no child is stunted, each person
has access to adequate, nutrition food, where food
systems are sustainable, smallholder productivity and
income increase and no food is wasted. WFP Executive
Director, Ertharin Cousin, has taken on this challenge,
signaling that WFP will share in this goal commitment.

The UN Network is also part of SUN (Scaling Up
Nutrition) and engages at country level with the
other SUN networks such as the Government
Network, the Donor Network, and the Civil Society
Alliance. The SUN movement was officially launched in
Myanmar in February 2014, bringing together
government officials from 14 ministries as well as
representatives from the United Nations and civil
society. SUN members jointly identify priorities, actors
and responsibilities as well as timelines for nutrition-
specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions.


to strengthen the national health system and
provides technical assistance to the Government
response intervention. To complement the food
Support, WFP Myanmar promotes nutrition feeding
for infants and young children through counselling and
behavioral change communication activities. WFP also
provides technical assistance to the Government
to strengthen the national health system and
the policy framework for nutrition.

Children 6 to 59 months are targeted by the flood
response intervention. To complement the food
Support, WFP Myanmar promotes nutrition feeding
for infants and young children through counselling and
behavioral change communication activities. WFP also
provides technical assistance to the Government
to strengthen the national health system and
the policy framework for nutrition.

\[1\] Myanmar Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
\[2\] Global Nutrition Report 2015
\[3\] Lancet series on Maternal and Child Nutrition
**Investment Case:** Nutrition is one of the major foundations of development. Existing evidence shows that reduced malnutrition rate and improved nutrition status among PLW and children may have substantial returns on poverty reduction, health, productivity, and gender equality. Malnutrition and poverty form a cyclical relationship passing from mother to child. Investing in nutrition breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty for life. In Myanmar, undernutrition is one of the major causes of childhood illness and mortality. Recent research indicates that within the 1,000-day window for prevention of stunting, the first 270 days from conception to birth are exceptionally critical. In food insecure settings, providing food support to women, particularly during the last trimester and first six months of lactation, is an effective strategy for preventing undernutrition. Nutrition is also essential for improved educational outcomes. Well-nourished children perform better in school and are more likely to complete higher education. It increases their future productivity, which leads to as much as 46 percent higher earnings, contributing to the economic growth of the country. It is estimated that investing in nutrition can increase a country’s gross domestic product (GDP) by at least 3 percent annually. Undernutrition costs developing countries, including Myanmar, billions in lost revenue through reduced productivity. For adolescent girls, good nutrition and education eventually advance their status as women - they marry later and have smaller family sizes with lower dependency ratios and less frequent pregnancies. So, investing in nutrition is not only the right but also smart thing to do. Studies show that even in very poor countries with pragmatic assumptions, US$1 spent reducing chronic malnutrition has at least US$16 payoff.

**Partnerships:** As the world’s largest humanitarian agency and a prominent actor in development, WFP has long played an important role in multi-stakeholder efforts to overcome malnutrition. Based on its mandate, WFP’s mission is to work with partners to fight undernutrition by ensuring physical and economic access to a nutritious and age-appropriate diet for those who lack it, and to support households and communities in utilizing food adequately. WFP ensures access to the right food, at the right place, at the right time. To deliver on this mission in Myanmar, WFP partners with the Government in the prevention and treatment of undernutrition through a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform. Nutrition activities are implemented through further valued partnerships with five local and seven international NGOs* which carry out food distribution and provide nutrition education to communities through behavior change communication. These activities in Myanmar are made possible due to timely and flexible contributions from the Governments of Japan and Switzerland, as well as ECHO. Myanmar has put nutrition at the heart of the political agenda and various partners are now joining forces to scale up national nutrition plans and interventions. In 2013, the country joined the Scaling up Nutrition Movement. In 2014 the national Zero Hunger Challenge was launched, and in 2015 the REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition) facilitation support was established.

**The Way Forward:** WFP Myanmar will continue to invest in cooperation with UN agencies, government, civil society, and private donors, to advocate for nutrition as well as to effectively plan and track progress and resources. Apart from regular nutrition activities, WFP will continue flood response activities in Rakhine, Chin and Sagaing in 2016. WFP Myanmar also plans to upscale technical support to its field offices and implementing partners to improve nutrition education, particularly for maternal, infant and young child feeding. Furthermore, WFP Myanmar hopes to pilot conditional cash based transfers to improve nutrition in urban settings.

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*Action for Green Earth (AGE), Ar Yone Oo (AYO), Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Myanmar Health Assistant Association (MHAA), Myanmar Heart Development Association (MHDO), Action Contre la Famme (ACF), Consortium of Dutch NGO’s (CDN), Progetto Continenti (PC), World Vision (WV).