



World Food Programme

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LIVES

# WFP Myanmar Country Brief May 2020



**Photo:** A WFP staffer helps unload WHO and WFP hygiene and medical supplies airlifted by WFP to Myanmar. ©WFP/Hkun Lat

## Operational Context

Myanmar is faced with 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. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic presents particular risks in humanitarian settings in Myanmar, where internally displaced persons in overcrowded camps and communities in conflict-affected areas are at higher risk in the event of local-level outbreaks. Moreover, COVID-19 is likely to have a significant impact on livelihoods and further adverse socio-economic consequences on poor communities across Myanmar.

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 countrywide, 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 learn more about key WFP activities and results in Myanmar during 2019.



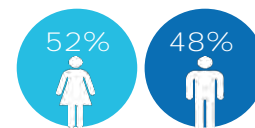
Population: **54.1 million**

Income Level:  
**Lower middle**

2019 Human Development  
Index: **145 out of 189**

Chronic malnutrition: **29% of  
children aged 6-59 months**

## In Numbers



**448,000 people assisted** in May 2020

**4,575 mt** of food distributed in May 2020

**US\$ 1.4 million** in cash-based transfers made in May 2020

**US\$ 28.6 million** in net funding requirements over next six months (June - November 2020)

## Operational Updates

- Response to COVID-19:** Since late March, WFP provided **food and nutrition assistance** to 34,800 returning migrants placed under quarantine in Kayin, Mon, Shan states and Tanintharyi and Yangon regions, as requested by the authorities. In terms of **social protection**, WFP is taking an active role in supporting government efforts in immediate and medium-to-long term socio-economic interventions. WFP is seeking to support the further scale up of the Government's maternal and child cash-based transfers programme beyond internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

As for **common services support**, with the US\$ 1 million contribution from the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, WFP has started coordinating the joint procurement of key hygiene and personal protective equipment for use by its staff and six UN/NGO partners. Furthermore, WFP is in the process of expanding the storage capacity in its Sittwe warehouse and replenishing emergency logistics stocks in preparation for the monsoon season in Myanmar (Please refer to COVID-19 Situation Report [#5](#) and [#6](#) for further details).

- Rakhine and Chin:** WFP received the green light from the authorities at the national level to deliver and preposition six months of emergency food assistance for conflict-affected and largely cut-off communities in Paletwa and Samee towns in Chin State.

Across Rakhine State, despite a volatile security situation in areas with ongoing clashes between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed group the Arakan Army, WFP reached 27,100 newly-displaced people with emergency food assistance in May. In northern Rakhine, WFP assisted 135,700 conflict-affected people with emergency food and nutrition assistance, including 4,300 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and 24,400 children aged 6-59 months in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. Meanwhile, in central Rakhine, WFP provided 130,500 food-insecure people with food and cash assistance, including 26,500 children aged 6-59 months and 5,200 PLW with fortified blended food.

- Yangon peri-urban areas:** WFP, in collaboration with UNICEF, is planning to jointly scale up nutrition support to address acute malnutrition among the extremely poor and vulnerable populations living in the peri-urban areas of Yangon.

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## Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jun – Nov 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
425.3 m	154.8 m	28.6 m

## 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 SBCC).
- **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 &amp; 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.

## Operational Updates (continued)

- **Kachin and Shan:** Given its expertise on using distribution systems in IDP camps, WFP supported the Department of Social Welfare in distributing [cash top-ups](#) for 1,400 PLW and children aged 6-23 months in IDP camps in Kachin and Shan states. WFP plans to reach 2,000 PLW and children aged 6-23 months in the second batch of distributions. Meanwhile, WFP is collaborating with the Department of Social Welfare on developing communications materials on the cash top-up, to be disseminated with the beneficiaries and their communities.

## Monitoring

- Starting in May, WFP has shifted its remote market monitoring from a monthly to a bi-weekly basis to better track food prices in all WFP's operational areas. WFP will adjust the value of cash-based transfer entitlements if prices change substantially.
- The WFP Market Monitor for May indicated a normal price level in the average prices of the four main food commodities in Myanmar compared to April. These included a decline in prices for rice (11 percent), pulses (10 percent), salt (8 percent) and palm oil (4 percent). This reflected a normalizing of purchasing behaviour after the Myanmar New Year holidays, and an apparent end to COVID-related panic-buying. WFP will continue to closely monitor trends.

## WFP launches weekly air service to support international community's COVID-19 response

WFP, on behalf of the United Nations in Myanmar, chartered a series of weekly aid flights linking Yangon and Kuala Lumpur to bring in humanitarian cargo and personnel, amid the temporary ban on commercial flights to and from Myanmar. Each aid flight has the capacity to deliver up to two mt of humanitarian cargo, in addition to personnel of the UN and humanitarian and development partners.

Financial support from the European Union and Switzerland made it possible for WFP to establish the initial weekly flight service from 10 to 24 May. On 31 May, WFP transitioned to a regional air service funded through WFP's Global Logistics Service Provision Plan. This arrangement is intended to remain in place until regular commercial flights to Myanmar resume.



**Photo:** The first of the aid flights launched by WFP in Myanmar successfully landed in Yangon on 10 May, bringing 10,000 UNICEF COVID-19 test kits to Myanmar. ©WFP/Hkun Lat