



UNITED NATIONS MYANMAR



**From the UN in Myanmar Resident
and Humanitarian Coordinator,
Ola Almgren**



December 1, 2020

Dear reader,

I hope this newsletter reaches you in good health and spirit despite the conditions COVID-19 continues to impose on us.

As this will be our last newsletter for 2020, let me reflect briefly on what has been a very challenging year, and one that we will hopefully not have to relive for a long time to come if ever.

There is no doubt that 2020 will find its way into history books due to the global health crisis triggered by the outbreak and rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus. In Myanmar, the emergence of the virus marked a disruptive event not only for the people and the Government of Myanmar, but also for the UN Country Team and many of our original plans, projects and goals for 2020.

While our first response was to focus on supporting the health emergency response of the Government, we have equally stepped up our efforts to address humanitarian challenges as well as support the government in mitigating the socio-economic effects of the pandemic. We are committed to continue these efforts in 2021 and we are equally committed to support the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in Myanmar once ready and available.

As a silver lining to the dark clouds of COVID-19, the pandemic has allowed us to further widen and deepen our partnership with the government, international donors and implementing partners in the

course of 2020. I look forward to building on these reinforced ties in the partnership we are offering, be it in support of development and the 2030 Agenda, humanitarian action, peacebuilding, and in bringing these dimensions together for durable solutions in support of the National Strategy on the Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and the Closure of IDP Camps.

Despite the many challenges we have encountered during 2020, there have also been successes that are worth noting. You will read about some of them in this newsletter and I hope that you will enjoy the contributions from across the United Nations Country Team in this issue.

Ola Almgren

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[\(Feel free to forward this email to others\)](#)

In your newsletter

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United Nations calls for action to prevent violence against women and girls

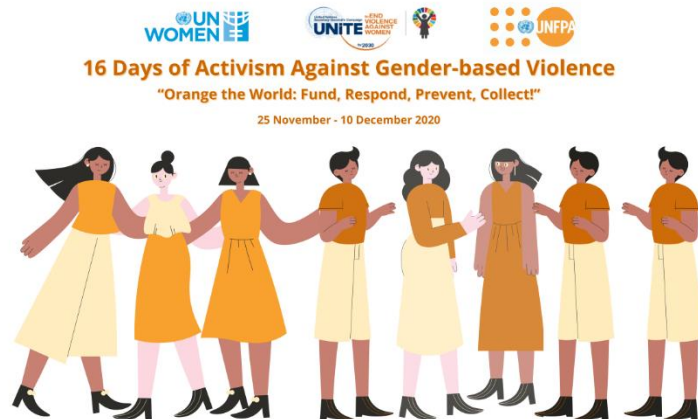
Yangon, November 25: The United Nations has called on Myanmar to adopt a comprehensive Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women Law.

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, Mr Ola Almgren, was speaking at a high-level event marking the International Day to End Violence Against Women and launching "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence."

"The adoption of the Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women law and other gender-responsive legislation would be an important step, as they not only help to protect women and girls from abuse, but also to hold perpetrators of violence accountable," Mr. Almgren said. "I am confident that the elected Members of Parliament recognise the significance of this law and will take decisive action towards its timely adoption."

Full statement [here](#).

For all activities within the 16 Days Campaign there is a downloadable file [here](#)



UNAIDS calls on countries to step up action and proposes bold new HIV targets for 2025

As COVID-19 pushes the AIDS response even further off track and the 2020 targets are missed, UNAIDS is urging countries to learn from the lessons of underinvesting in health and to step up global action to end AIDS and other pandemics

In a new report launched on World Aids Day, December 1, [Prevailing against pandemics by putting people at the centre](#), UNAIDS called on countries to make far greater investments in global pandemic responses and adopt a new set of bold, ambitious HIV targets.

The global theme is "Global solidarity, shared responsibility" – in Myanmar a key message chosen by community is "No one left behind"



for access to health services." Since 2010, In Myanmar, there has been a 37% reduction in the number of people infected with HIV and 30% reduction in the number of AIDS-related deaths.

There are currently an estimated 240,000 people living with HIV in Myanmar, including about 11,000 children under the age of 15.

The latest data, from 2019, estimated 10,000 people were infected with HIV in Myanmar; 7,700 AIDS-related deaths and 184,624 people were accessing antiretroviral therapy.



Myanmar Humanitarian Fund allocates US\$5 million to scale-up humanitarian response

The Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) – a country-based pooled fund managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to disburse its second standard allocation of US\$5 million to scale up a coordinated response to the critical and unmet humanitarian needs of the displaced people and host communities in Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine and Shan states. The allocation will support humanitarian partners who deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and will mainstream COVID-19 preparedness and response interventions. The allocation will also strengthen inter-agency efforts on a coordinated approach among humanitarian partners in Myanmar on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The MHF disbursed US\$11 million in April and July. More than 20 UN and national and international humanitarian partners and 30 sub-partners are currently implementing critical humanitarian programmes and COVID-19 preparedness and response activities funded by the previous two allocations, reaching about 1 million people in need.

To date, the MHF has received US\$16.7 million through contributions by eleven donors and member states.

More about MHF [here](#).

More information: Valijon Ranoev Head of Reporting and Public Information Unit, OCHA
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WFP integrates technology into its assistance for Rakhine IDPs...

WFP in Rakhine State has launched electronic cash transfers through mobile phones.

The new transfer system has been introduced to some 36,000 IDPs from Mrauk-U, Minbya, Kyauktaw, Myebon, Ann, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun and Sittwe townships in central Rakhine. Beneficiaries receive an SMS notification from WFP, and can then withdraw the cash rations at the nearest outlet authorized by WFP. To help households that do not currently possess any phones, WFP lends handsets for their use until when peace is restored in the region and they can return to their places of origin.

This approach minimizes the risk of COVID-19 transmissions while beneficiaries receive their rations. Moreover, providing the assistance in cash empowers the beneficiaries with the agency to make their own spending choices to improve their food security and well-being.

...and ramps up food assistance in response to COVID-19 surge...

Following a recent surge of COVID-19 in Yangon region, the centre has turned into a community quarantine site sheltering some 4,000 people.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is providing in-kind food assistance at the ThaBarWa Centre in Thanlyn, Yangon, for a one-month period. The centre has been since 2007 a home and sanctuary for monks, nuns, elderly persons, homeless people and people with disabilities from various areas of the country. 70 tons of food assistance included rice, pulses, oil and salt and will assist 4,000 people with three meals a day.

WFP's new assistance would not have been possible without the close cooperation with the Yangon Regional Government, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement/ Department of Disaster Management and Ministry of Health and Sports for their close cooperation.

Right: A woman walks past a building in ThaBarWa centre

WFP has also been providing cooked meals for some 2,000 people a day at Aung Myint Mo COVID-19 treatment center in South Dagon and at quarantine centers from 8 townships in Rakhine State. More than 73,000 returning migrants undergoing quarantine in 11 states and regions have received food and nutrition support from WFP.

..and keeps flying.

The fifth WFP humanitarian domestic flight run a round-trip from Yangon on 28 November carrying personnel to support humanitarian and development operations in Rakhine State. Meanwhile, WFP is continuing weekly international flights connecting Yangon, Vientiane and Kuala Lumpur and is committed to continue the logistics service until the commercial sector resumes operations in Myanmar.



For more information: Htet Oo Linn, Communications Officer, WFP Myanmar. htetoo.linn@wfp.org

Myanmar submits its first Summary of Information on Safeguards to the Climate Change Convention.

The United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) supports countries in implementing National REDD+ programmes. In a nutshell, partner countries can receive payments through the REDD+ initiative for ensuring tracts of forests remain standing and healthy, which helps prevent climate change.



Myanmar, as a partner country, submitted its first "Safeguards Summary of Information" to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) online platform in late August.

Summaries of Information are key requirements for countries participating in REDD+. The Summaries outline the country's progress in addressing and respecting the requirements and standards of REDD+. A country needs to produce these reports in order to be eligible for payments.

As of today, 17 countries have submitted at least one Summary on the UNFCCC platform, Myanmar now amongst them.

For more information Emelyne Cheney Regional Team Leader - Forest & Climate Change, UNEP cheney@un.org,

UN CTFMR signs Joint Action Plan with Democratic Karen Benevolent Army to end use and recruitment of children.

The first signature of a Joint Action Plan (JAP) between the Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations Against Children (CTFMR) and an Ethnic Armed Organisation was secured with the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA). "The CTFMR commends the commitment made today by the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. It is an important step towards the protection of children and communities affected by armed conflict," said the Co-Chairs of the CTFMR, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ola Almgren, and UNICEF Representative to Myanmar, June Kunugi. It is hoped it will create momentum for signature of further JAPs with other EAOs. ([report](#))

For more information: Guy Taylor Chief of Advocacy, Partnerships and Communication, UNICEF gutaylor@unicef.org

Disability Inclusion by UNHCR in Rakhine State

In times of crisis, persons with disabilities (PWDs) are even more impacted and often left behind, abandoned or under-identified. As a result, they face increased risk of exploitation and abuse, encounter barriers in accessing basic services such as healthcare and education and are excluded from livelihood opportunities. UNHCR's Age, Gender, and Diversity approach ensures that programming is inclusive and accessible to all displaced persons, including PWDs.



In Rakhine, PWDs are prioritised during shelter reconstruction. Simple interventions – such as the provision of handrails at ladders in longhouses (right) can also make a world of difference in addressing the specific needs of PWDs.



Advance notice is also given to households with PWD members for them to make alternative arrangements before reconstruction commences. Cognizant of the fact that people with different capacities can contribute to their communities in different ways, PWDs are included in decision-

making and community leadership processes. Their inclusion enables them to access accurate information, participate in social activities, contribute meaningfully to decisions that affect them, and feel valued by others.

Upcoming training projects focusing on vocational skills such as mask making, bamboo weaving and carpentry will further empower PWDs, equipping them with skills to become self-reliant.

For more information: Reuben Lim Wende, Associate PI Officer: wende@unhcr.org

Helping Myanmar's Anti-Corruption Commission

To manage the increasing caseload at Myanmar's Anti-Corruption commission, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is providing tools to allow for more reliable, efficient case management.

For two decades (UNODC) has been helping make the world safer from drugs, organized crime, corruption and terrorism. It



is assisting Myanmar's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to move from a paper-based system to the "goCASE" integrated case management system. This will streamline the case investigation process and significantly increase the efficiency of investigations by the Commission, which has seen a ten-fold increase in cases since 2016. As a key step in the deployment UNODC has handed over critical IT infrastructure to the ACC offices in Nay Pyi Taw. The case management system is part of UNODC's broader programme of support to the ACC as a key institution in Myanmar's fight against corruption. Supported by Sweden as well as Denmark, Norway and the Siemens Integrity Initiative, the UNODC's anti-corruption programme also promotes resilience in key sectors through targeted

anti-corruption risk assessments. Additional information about the handover is on UNODC Myanmar website [here](#).

For More Information: Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois UNODC Anti-Corruption Programme Manager. cauchois@un.org

Thousands participate in inclusion webinar on Ethnic Language Based-Multilingual Education

Key stakeholders are being trained to integrate local languages in Myanmar schools.

In Myanmar, there are more than one hundred living languages. To achieve equitable quality learning for all, education needs to respond to the multilingual nature of the society. Ethnic language-based education allows all children to get a better start in school and preserves ethnic languages and cultures.



This month, the Ministry of Education and UNESCO Myanmar held an inclusion webinar on Ethnic Language Based-Multilingual Education (ELB-MLE), attended by around 500 teacher educators and stakeholders and watched by over 7000 viewers. National and international experts shared their expertise on how to integrate ELB-MLE into teacher education and relevant teaching approaches in the classroom. With the success of ELB-MLE largely dependent on the teacher, UNESCO supports the teacher education reforms to realise inclusive education in Myanmar. Watch the webinar: https://fb.watch/1As4t_O3PO/

For more information: Hyekyung Kang, Curriculum Specialist (Teacher Education) Email: h.kang2@unesco.org

Online seminar with government officials on prevention of hate speech

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNESCO Myanmar held a three-day online seminar on Countering Information Disorder and Hate Speech for Government Officials. It was attended by 34 officials from 17 ministries. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Mr Chan Aye said all government agencies should be mobilized in building trust and harmony among communities, so such high levels of attendance "reflect solid commitment to these values." The seminar introduced government officials to international human rights law and the standards that regulate freedom of expression and hate speech.

Full story: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/whole-government-approach-addressing-hate-speech-and-disinformation-myanmar>

World Children's Day in Myanmar

Among the events celebrating World Children's Day (Nov. 20) was lighting up Yangon City Hall in blue, an important demonstration of support for the rights of children in the heart of the city. (Photos [here.](#))

At the same time, UNICEF convened a workshop involving a diverse group of almost 40 young people, focusing on the theme of [child-friendly cities](#). Participants, including people living with disabilities, representatives from different ethnic groups and varied socio-economic backgrounds, used a human-centered design approach to identify issues of concern including housing, sanitation, availability of public spaces and transportation, and they workshopped innovative solutions and recommendations to drive progress in these areas in Yangon.



DETAIL (ABOVE) FROM ONE OF THE ENTRIES TO UNICEF WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY ILLUSTRATION COMPETITION

Later these young people joined a virtual dialogue session with Dr Maung Maung Soe, Mayor of Yangon, as well as regional ministers and parliamentarians, where they shared their visions for a child-friendly Yangon and their specific recommendations for action. During the session, the Mayor and UNICEF Representative, June Kunugi, signed a Letter of Agreement to make Yangon a Child Friendly City.

UNICEF also joined a World Children's Day event convened by the Department of Social Welfare. One of the speakers, aged 13, spoke about the issues which concerned her the most, including education, health, peace and online violence.

For more information: gutaylor@unicef.org

"Smart Fish" management launch



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

On 24 and 25 November 2020 the Smart Fish Co-Management (SFC) ran a "virtual meeting" in coordination with

Department of Fisheries to bring together stakeholders representing various interests around fisheries co-management in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to review the objective, outputs, and activities of the project.

The core of the dialogue with all Myanmar stakeholders will be to develop the best cooperation and coordination mechanism at state, region, district, township, ward, and village levels. Part of the discussion will also be site selection criteria, to put into the field the fisheries co-management evaluation approach. Read the full [article](#).

For more information: Assistant FAO Representative (Program) in Myanmar, U Tint Khine, Tint.Khine@fao.org

FAO marks World Food Day in Myanmar

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) celebrated World Food Day and 75 years of working to achieve a world without hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. As part of the celebrations, FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI), held a virtual event under the theme "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together. Our Actions are our Future". More than 200 representatives of line ministries, development partners, and Heads of UN sister agencies called for global cooperation and solidarity to make sure the threats COVID-19 is posing to food security and agricultural livelihoods are confronted, and the most vulnerable can get back on their feet.

The Agriculture Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (AAPDRR) was unveiled on the sidelines of the occasion. Completed with FAO's support, the AAPDRR is MoALI's response and strategy to promote risk-sensitive development within the agriculture and livestock sector.

Read the full article here: [FAO marks World Food Day in Myanmar](#)

For more information: Assistant FAO Representative (Program) in Myanmar, U Tint Khine, Tint.Khine@fao.org



IOM PARTNER PDN INTERVIEWS A RETURNING MIGRANT

IOM report on impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on returning migrants

The report, “Understanding the Experiences of Returning Migrants affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Myanmar,” presents findings from a series of rapid assessments held by IOM and partners in coordination with the UN Core Group on Returning Migrants, between June and July 2020, in 10 states/regions of Myanmar – Ayeyarwady, Magway, Mandalay, Tanintharyi, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Shan. The report’s findings and resultant recommendations were informed by interviews with a total of 2,311 returning migrants and 453 community leaders, and interviews also informed geographically-focused briefs summarizing the most important findings of particular state/regions. The report, summary brief and state/region briefs (in English and Myanmar language) are available upon request.

For more information please contact: Euan McDougall, Programme Manager, emcdougall@iom.int; David Vilchez, Communications and Reporting Officer, dvilchez@iom.int



[Myanmar tourism project wins sustainability award](#)

The world's largest global network of tourism professionals has recognized ITC's work to develop sustainable tourism in Myanmar by awarding it the 2020 [Skål International Sustainable Tourism Award](#) for community and government projects.

ITC's [Inclusive Tourism](#) project works with traditional communities in Myanmar to improve and integrate their tourism offer and ensure secure and decent employment. The Netherlands government funds the project under its Netherlands Trust Fund Phase IV (NTF IV) scheme.

[Full report here.](#)

For more information project manager Guilia Macola, Associate Programme Adviser, Section of Enterprise Competitiveness, at ITC. gmacola@intracen.org



Click here to see how you can [Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



The world needs solidarity. Your contribution counts.

The United Nations is marking its 75th anniversary at a time of great challenge, including the worst global health crisis in its history. Will it bring the world closer together? Or will it lead to greater divide and mistrust? Your views can make a difference. You can be part of the world's biggest conversation by taking part in the "UN75 survey."

Covid-19 is a stark reminder of the need for cooperation across borders, sectors and generations. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, has said: *"Everything we do during and after this crisis must be with a strong focus on building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change and the many other global challenges we face."*

Your responses to this survey will inform global priorities now and going forward.

[Click here to take the two minute survey now](#)
