

# 2020 UN COUNTRY ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT MYANMAR







UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT  
COORDINATION  
OFFICE



**2020**  
**UN COUNTRY**  
**ANNUAL RESULTS**  
**MYANMAR**



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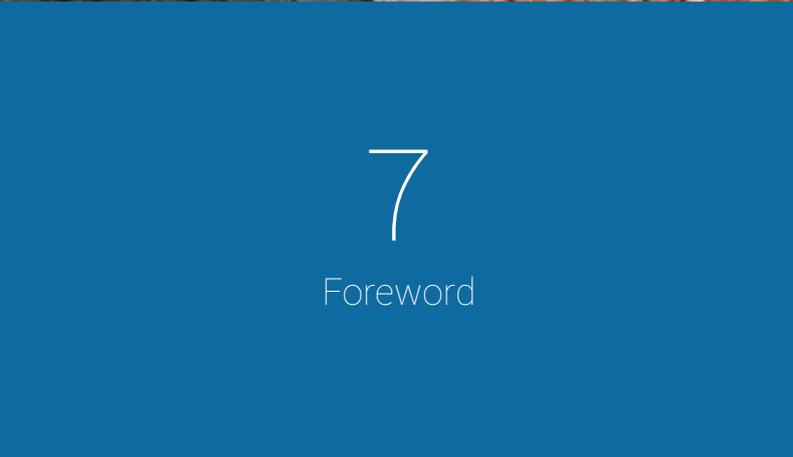
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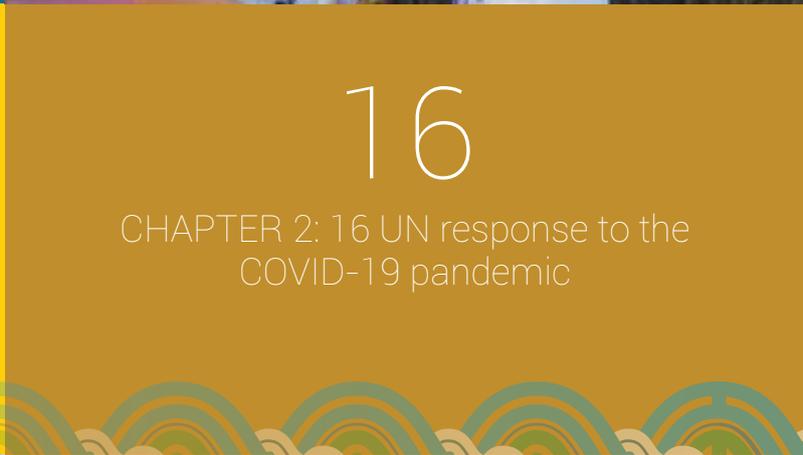
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# FOREWORD

Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic the UN's expectation for 2020 was that Myanmar would continue on a path of rapid economic growth, make progress on its reform agendas, and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. However, our outlook quickly changed at the beginning of the year when it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic would not only create a health crisis, but also reverse many of the development gains made in recent years, and further complicate an already challenging humanitarian situation. For the UN this meant that we quickly adapted our programming to new needs and changed our ways of working.

Throughout the year, the UN supported the Government's response to COVID-19 on three main fronts: public health, socio-economic impacts, and humanitarian needs. The UN contributed to a rapid build-up of capacity and equipment for testing, quarantine, and treatment. To protect the most vulnerable from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, the UN supported the scale-up and implementation of cash transfers and food handouts and worked towards enabling businesses to keep operating and workers to sustain their livelihoods. On the humanitarian front, health and non-health services were delivered to people in displacement sites, IDP camps, and to returning migrants

While our main focus was on COVID-19, the UN Country Team also continued our work across all social sectors to enhance access to quality services for all, particularly the most vulnerable. We continued interventions to enhance decent work opportunities, facilitate safe and regular migration, and promote sustainable and resilient urban development. The UNCT supported the Government, businesses, and communities in enhancing environmental governance, to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to enhance disaster preparedness. We also continued to strengthen the capacity of institutions, with a focus on increasing their

accountability, inclusiveness, and responsiveness. UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes worked to enhance the rule of law, combat corruption and the illicit economy. A further focus area for the UNCT was supporting the peace process and assistance to increase livelihood opportunities and improving social cohesion in communities affected by conflict.

At the time of writing, Myanmar is faced with yet another crisis. On February 1, 2021 the democratically elected political leaders were detained, and all legislative, executive and judicial powers transferred to the military. Since then, increasing violence and instability has followed. The actions by the military represents a serious reversal of the progress made in the democratic transition over recent years and are likely to create a significant reversal of development gains and compound the society-wide negative impacts of COVID-19.

For the UN Country Team, the events have fundamentally changed our priorities, operating environment, and relationship with national authorities. As the situation is still evolving, the future remains uncertain. However, one thing is clear, the UN will continue to serve the people of Myanmar. We are determined to keep delivering humanitarian assistance, respond to the new humanitarian needs, continue to support the COVID-19 public health response to save lives, and provide direct support to assist the people of Myanmar. While the situation may still get worse before it gets better, I am confident that through the strength of the people of Myanmar, the country will find its way back on a brighter path.

Ola Almgren  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Humanitarian Coordinator







# UN COUNTRY TEAM



## 22 Agencies Funds and Programmes operating in Myanmar





# Key Development and Humanitarian Partners of the UN in Myanmar

The UN's work in Myanmar is supported by a number of development and humanitarian partners. The main partners are the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Canada and Germany. In 2020, several new partnerships were formed. These included a new collaboration between UNDP and China through regional projects, a new partnership between ILO and New Zealand, working with Ethnic Armed Organizations in Mon State, funding from Finland received by FAO for a project in the Forestry sector and by UN Women for a new Gender Responsive Governance Programme, and first-time financial contributions from Israel, Thailand and Timor-Leste to WFP.

## Multi-Partner Funds

Many of the UN's development partners channel funding for the UN and other organizations through several thematic in-country multi-partner funds. The main Funds are the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT), the Access to Health Fund, the Joint Peace Fund, and the Global Fund, all managed by UNOPS. These funds are important tools to pool financing for strategic interventions in key priority areas for development in Myanmar. The flexibility shown by donors in 2020, allowed the Multi-Partner Funds to become an important source of financing for the COVID-19 response. Through reprogramming and additional funding, US\$ 27.2 million was made available from the Global Fund to support the COVID-19 response measures.

On the humanitarian side, the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) managed by OCHA pools humanitarian financing, which enables a coordinated emergency response and timely assistance to urgent or chronic humanitarian needs of people affected by natural disaster or conflict. The total contributions to the MHF reached \$16.7 million in 2020. The projects supported by the MHF in 2020 targeted more than 800,000 people, of which 56% are women and girls, and 43%, children and adolescents under 18.

## Strategic financing for nexus work in conflict affected states and regions

In 2020, UNOPS and the European Union established the Nexus Response Mechanism (NRM), a four-year programme designed to fund holistic and innovative programming that spans the humanitarian-development-peace spectrum. The NRM will carry out rights-based, community-centred programming in conflict-affected areas including Rakhine, Kachin, northern Shan and the Southeast, as well as emergency response programming nationwide.

Since 2018, Japan has provided funding for joint UN action under a common framework for integrated humanitarian and development work in Rakhine State. In 2020, UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR and the Office of the Resident Coordinator received a total of USD 13 million to support the creation of a conducive environment for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return, resettlement, and or repatriation of IDPs and refugees in Rakhine State. The funding was also used to strengthen coordination of nexus work in Rakhine State. The flexibility that Japan demonstrated in terms of use of funding in the COVID-19 context, allowed the UN to respond robustly to the COVID-19 challenges in Rakhine State.

## I/NGOs and Civil Society Partners

Much of the UN's programmatic work is implemented in collaboration with I/NGOs and Civil Society Organizations. In 2020, the UN had 95 different I/NGOs and Civil Society Organizations as implementing partners.

## Partnerships with International Financial Institutions

In 2020, the UN cooperated closely with the World Bank and IMF on the formulation of the framework for the UN's Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19. In addition, the UN partnered with the World Bank on the creation of an inter-ministerial Gender Responsive Task Force within the Government. Collaboration with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) took place around several research initiatives, as well as in the areas of agriculture and food security, and around support to the development of disaster recovery guidelines. The UN cooperated with the ADB on the implementation of a fintech challenge and the ADB contributed US\$200,000 towards the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan as first-time humanitarian donor.

## Key Government Partners

In 2020, the UN worked in close collaboration with the Government of Myanmar in support of Myanmar's national development objectives. The Foreign Economic Relations Department (FERD) of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations were the primary interface between the Government and the UN Country Team. The UN worked closely with FERD on broader strategic issues and coordination of the UN's presence in Myanmar. In addition, UN agencies had effective working relationships with a range of Line Ministries and other Government Entities, with and through which the UN agencies implemented its support.

## Key government partners and areas of collaboration

### Ministry of Planning Finance and Industry

Good governance; Statistical quality development, COVID-19 response planning, gender equality

### Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Peace for development; Social Protection & Disaster Management; WASH; Gender Equality, Equality of persons with disability

### Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

Labour protection and labour standards, Industrial relations, social security Board (Social protection/ social security), Skills standards, migration, labour market policy

### Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation

Agriculture and Rural development; Land Reform; Nutrition; Water Resource Management

### Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations

Strategic Infrastructure; Investment Facilitation; Job Creation

### Ministry of Health and Sports

Health; WASH; Nutrition

### Ministry of Education

Education

### Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Climate Change; Environmental Conservation

### Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

Sustainable Tourism and Natural and Cultural Heritage Protection

### Ministry of Commerce

Trade Sector Strengthening

### Ministry of Construction

Urban development



# Key developments in the country

## The Development and Humanitarian Landscape

In the years leading up to 2020, Myanmar benefited from high rates of GDP growth (about 6 - 7 % per year) and notable achievements were made in terms of improvements in people's lives. Poverty rates dropped rapidly (from 48% in 2005 to 24.8% in 2017)<sup>1</sup>, education and health outcomes progressed (while still lagging behind countries in the region), and basic infrastructure was gradually improving. At the same time, the economy remained overwhelmingly rural, with low levels of productivity.

As of the end of 2020, large disparities exist across geographic regions and population groups. Rural areas, in particular those in which ethnic minorities are concentrated, lag significantly behind urban centres across most economic and development indicators. Armed conflicts continue to undermine development progress in the areas lagging furthest behind. In addition, the conflicts are resulting in grave human rights abuses and are key drivers of displacement and humanitarian needs. Strong gender norms prevail, placing women at a significant disadvantage in terms of access to basic services and economic opportunities.

Furthermore, Myanmar's economic growth is capital intensive and closely linked to the exploitation of resources, with increasing negative impacts on the environment. Ecosystem degradation, including loss of forests, plants and species, and taking

place at rapid rates. In addition, Myanmar is highly susceptible to natural disasters and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Fortunately, no major natural disasters took place in 2020, and the humanitarian impact of monsoon flooding was lower than in previous years.

Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic the expectation for 2020 was that Myanmar would continue on a path of high economic growth (the World Bank's forecast for GDP growth in FY2019/20 was 6.4% at the end of 2019<sup>2</sup>) and that the country would continue to make progress on its reform agendas as set out in the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018 – 2030 (MSDP). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the development gains made were instead reversed and the already challenging humanitarian situation was further complicated. In December 2020, the World Bank estimated that Myanmar's economy grew by only 1.7% in the 2019/20 financial year<sup>3</sup>. As illustrated in Chapter 2, COVID-19 reversed progress on poverty reduction, disrupted jobs and incomes, affected health and learning outcomes, and put a strain on public finances. The pandemic has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable segments and groups within society, in particular those with limited cash buffers, those in vulnerable employment (mostly women), and those in displacement and conflict areas, thereby compounding pre-existing marginalization, inequalities, and vulnerabilities.

1 Based on the national poverty line.

2 World Bank (2019). "Myanmar Economy Monitor Dec 2019: Resilience amidst risk"

3 Myanmar's financial year runs from October – September. FY2019/20 is therefore October 2019 to September 2020. Source: World Bank. Myanmar Economic Monitor. December 2020.

## The Peace Process, Human Rights and Political Developments

After limited progress on the peace process in recent years, some steps were taken in 2020 to revive it. The fourth round of the 21st Century Panglong Conference was held in August 2020. The event concluded with a set of modest agreements with the hope of keeping doors open for the peace process to be re-invigorated after the general election in November 2020. At the same time, few analysts believed that the peace process as structured in 2020 and the National Ceasefire Agreement, as it stood, had the political momentum to bring into the process the major Ethnic Armed Organizations that are currently outside of the process.

Meanwhile, armed conflict continued in 2020; in particular in Rakhine State where fighting between the Myanmar Army, the Tatmadaw, and the Arakan Army had intensified since late 2018. The fighting reached a new peak in the period of March-April 2020, with clashes unfolding on a daily basis in various parts of southern Chin and Rakhine States. The pace slowed with the onset of the monsoon season, but then steadily picked up again with the return of the dry season in October.

In 2020, the proceedings (initiated in late 2019) against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice alleging violations of the Genocide Convention against the Rohingya, continued. Myanmar submitted its first report to the court in

### Progress on durable solutions for safe and dignified return or resettlement of IDPs and refugees

Myanmar's armed conflicts have resulted in large scale internal displacement. By the end of 2020, close to 340,000 people were internally displaced and more than 860,000 Rohingya refugees remained in Bangladesh.

In 2020, some progress was made on the implementation of the "National Strategy on Resettlement of IDPs and Closure of IDP Camps", launched in November 2019. The Strategy is predicated on facilitating the return and/or resettlement of IDPs,

restoring basic rights and access to services and enhancing the household and economic security of beneficiary households. Since the launch of the Strategy there has been a steady uptick in the number of IDPs willing to leave their location of displacement either by returning to their village of origin, or by moving to new locations, in particular in geographic areas that at the time benefit from greater security and stability, such as Kachin and the South East. In Rakhine, the volatile security environment in 2020 coupled with restrictions on movement for the population, and issues related to Human Rights and citizenship, continued to limit the prospects for a safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees.



May 2020. In parallel, the International Criminal Court (ICC) continued an ongoing investigation into the alleged crimes against humanity in relation to the Rohingya crisis, in which Myanmar has so far declined to cooperate.

Recent years' limitations on fundamental freedoms including freedom of expression and access to information, including internet shutdowns in particular in Rakhine State continued in 2020, and the Telecommunications Law was arbitrarily used to block access to some ethnic media websites and the websites of selected civil society groups. Hate speech on social media increased significantly in

the context of COVID-19 and in the lead-up to the election.

On November 8, 2020, Myanmar held its first general election organized under civilian rule and the National League for Democracy won almost 80% of the elected seats. The election was generally considered to be credible and was undertaken in a peaceful and orderly manner. The results of the election illustrated the strong popular mandate for the NLD. If upheld, the results would have given the NLD Government enhanced control of the law-making process and increase the operating space to undertake reforms.

### *Progress on national development goals and the impact of COVID-19*

Population (million)	Youth (15-35)	People living in rural areas	Women's participation in the workforce	Workers in informal employment
<b>54</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>&gt;80%</b>
People in need of humanitarian assistance		People living below the national poverty line (FY18/19)	GDP growth rate (FY18/19)	Annual average loss from disasters (% of GDP)
<b>~1million</b>		<b>22.4%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>



## CHAPTER 2:

# UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic

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A key focus of the work of the UNCT in 2020, was to support the Government's public health, socio-economic and humanitarian response to COVID-19. The UN's support was coordinated through three complementary and mutually reinforcing frameworks: the Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP); the UN Framework for the Immediate So-

cio-Economic Response to COVID-19 (SERF); and the COVID-19 Addendum to the Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan. Under all three areas, the UN's COVID-19 response was conducted in close coordination with the Government. This chapter summarizes the key results of the response in 2020.

*Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp*



## Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19



### MACROECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>

GDP growth 4.7 percentage points below pre-COVID-19 expectations<sup>1</sup>

Trade deficit widened to 2% of GDP

Budget deficit increased from 7.1% to 8.1% of GDP.



### JOBS<sup>2</sup>

About 7 million jobs disrupted in 2020

Disproportionate impact on casual and vulnerable workers.

Casual labour opportunities reduced by 70% in Rakhine State

81% of the households in informal settlements have at least one household member who lost their job.



### BUSINESS<sup>3</sup>

Manufacturing, retail, services, tourism and transport were the sectors most affected

Almost all business saw reduction in sales during some point in 2020

Disproportionate impact on female-owned firms. In August 2020, they were almost twice as likely to be temporarily closed.



### INCOME AND POVERTY<sup>6</sup>

Overall, 1 in 3 workers earned less than before COVID-19 in August.

In Rakhine State wage earnings had fallen by 63% in June.

94 % of households in informal settlements in Yangon reported a fall in income over the March April.

Poverty rates could increase from 22.4% in 2018/19 to 27% in FY20/21.



### AGRICULTURE<sup>4</sup>

Overall, agriculture was relatively more resilient than other sectors, but some geographic areas saw significant impact

In the Dry Zone, 75% of farmers reported decreased production levels and 99% of all farmers reported a decrease in income.



### FOOD SECURITY<sup>5</sup>

Food insecurity increased significantly in the second-half of 2020.

Households experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity went from up from 12% to 25% between August and October.

1 World Bank. (2020). "Myanmar Economic Monitor: Coping with COVID-19". December 2020.

2 ILO (2020). "COVID-19 Impact on Employment and Labour Market in Myanmar". July 2020; UNDP (2020). "Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on Rural Communities in Rakhine". September 2020; UN-Habitat. April 2020. "Impact of Covid-19 on residents of informal settlements"

3 ILO (2020). "COVID-19 Impact on Employment and Labour Market in Myanmar", ILO Liaison Office for Myanmar, July 2020.; World Bank. (2020). Myanmar COVID-19 Monitoring Platform: Firm-level impact of Covid-19 (3rd survey round).

4 FAO. (2020). "COVID-19 impact on sustainable agriculture". September 2020; UNDP. September 2020. "COVID-19 and Rural Farmers in the Dry Zone of Myanmar"

5 World Bank. (2020). Myanmar COVID-19 Monitoring Platform: Household-level impact of Covid-19 (3rd and 4th survey round).

6 World Bank. (2020). Myanmar COVID-19 Monitoring Platform: Household-level impact of Covid-19 (3rd and 4th survey round); UNDP. September 2020. "Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on Rural Communities in Rakhine". The survey was conducted in May and June of 2020; World Bank. (2020). "Myanmar Economic Monitor: Coping with COVID-19". December 2020.

## 2.1 Public Health Response

Resources mobilized for the Country Preparedness and Response Plan

# US\$ 152M

Under the Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP), UN agencies contributed significantly to the emergency health response by providing technical assistance and contributing capacity in terms of human and financial resources. UN agencies, funds and programmes contributed to the rapid build-up of capacity and to the procurement of equipment for testing, quarantine and treatment. Capacity-building was further provided to raise clinical management capacity and increase basic knowledge for prevention, treatment, and care. In addition to supporting the Government of Myanmar, the UN also supported Ethnic Health Organizations and civil society in their health response to COVID-19.

With the UN's support, Myanmar moved from zero testing capacity in February 2020 to an average of more than 20,000 tests per day at the end of the year. The UN's health response was led by WHO and supported by most members of the UN Country Team, in particular UNICEF, UNOPS, IOM, WFP, UNFPA and UNODC.

### Key activities

- Support to the overall coordination of the response by co-facilitating the Government's emergency response coordination mechanisms.
- Assessment of the infrastructure status, ICU and other medical equipment capacity, waste management system and the availability of ICU trained medical staff of 69 hospitals.
- Enhancement of human resource capacity for data management through secondment of 25 data assistants and two managers by WHO to health facilities.
- Trainings of rapid response teams on case investigation and contact tracing and technical assistance and capacity building strengthened the health system.
- Facilitation of removal of some of the key logistics challenges by WFP, including operating relief flights for cargo and passengers into Yangon when commercial flights were stopped, and later a regular flight from Yangon to Sittwe, when domestic flights were cancelled.
- Trainings of midwives, nurses and volunteers on basic concepts of gender-based violence and referrals as well as on mental health psychosocial support. Basic health staff and local volunteers were mobilized for identification and treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) children to ensure availability and access to life saving nutrition services.



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

# The Public Health Response in Numbers



**1,770,000**

People provided with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies and services.



**6,102**

Hand hygiene stations set-up



**54,406**

PPE Procured and distributed



**585,113**

N95 masks procured and distributed



**165,595**

Goggles procured and distributed



**298,714**

Face shields procured and distributed



**39.99M**

Surgical masks procured and distributed



**2.4M**

Gloves procured and distributed



**69**

Hospital's COVID-19 preparedness assessed



**118,595**

Tests kits procured and distributed



**221**

Health staff trained in management of infectious disease outbreaks

## 2.2 Socio-Economic Response

Resources mobilized for the Socio-Economic Response

# US\$ 100M

The UN Framework for the immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 (SERF), released at the end of June 2020 included an ambitious action plan with mutually reinforcing response activities by all UN agencies under five pillars: Health First; Protecting People; Economic Recovery; Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Cooperation; and Social Cohesion and Community Resilience. The Myanmar SERF was recognized in the UN's global review for being underpinned by a strong data driven analysis, having mainstreamed gender in all pillars, for placing a strong focus on vulnerable groups, and for having strong systematic linkages to national development plans and the national emergency response.

To mobilize resources for the Socio-Economic Response, the UN reprogrammed funding from grants,

### The Government's Socio-Economic Response

The Government released the "COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP)" in April 2020, which outlined the Government's immediate response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. The plan focused on short-term relief measures including soft loans and credit to businesses, cash transfers to households, medical equipment and health infrastructure, electricity subsidies, in-kind transfers to households and specific transfers to farmers. The price tag of the CERP was estimated at between 2.9 to 3.7 trillion kyat (2.5 percent to 3.2 percent of GDP). By the end of September 2020, the Government had disbursed around 1.9 trillion kyat (1.7 percent of GDP) on the CERP.

In 2020, the Government also developed a draft "Myanmar Economic Recovery & Reform Plan (MERRP)", which identified key priority areas for accelerated reform to recover sustainably from the COVID-19 crisis. However, this plan is yet to be finalized and released.

redeployed resources and mobilized additional financing through the locally managed Multi-Partner



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

Funds (LIFT, Access to Health, etc). Over US\$30 million was made available for the COVID-19 response from these funds. In addition, the UN successfully secured funding from the Global COVID-19 MPTF for an innovative project on female entrepreneurship in the context of COVID-19. This project is being implemented jointly by UNDP, UN Women and UNCDF.

The UN made significant contributions to the Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 response under the SERF. For example, UN agencies supported the implementation of cash transfers, food assistance, and maternal nutrition programmes to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the most vulnerable.

Farmers and people working in the fishing sector, were provided with agricultural/aquaculture support to allow them to maintain their livelihoods. Skills development trainings were offered to people living in IDP camps, and to returning migrants, as well as to people working in tourism and other sectors hard hit by the pandemic, to enhance their opportunities to sustain their livelihoods. UN agencies also provided technical assistance to the Government in its implementation of the national response plans, including in strengthening its monitoring mechanisms and gender responsiveness.

### Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and Gender Equality Socio-Economic Response

Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), Human Rights and Gender Equality was at the heart of the UN's analytical work and programming related to COVID-19. Out of the 18 COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments, 4 had gender as a primary focus (an additional 5 included specific analysis on the impact on women), 2 focused specifically on key vulnerable populations, 4 focused specifically on lagging geographic areas. All assessments included and analyzed disaggregated data. The strong focus on gender and LNOB in the UN's analytical work translated into well-informed programming that placed gender and LNOB at the centre.

To inform the Socio-Economic Response, UN agencies coordinated and implemented an ambitious COVID-19 research agenda. By the end of 2020, UN agencies had collectively produced eighteen COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments. The findings of these were presented in 2 summary reports as well as 6 issues of a monthly digest, which were circulated to UN stakeholders and partners in order to inform them about programming response.

## The Socio-Economic Response in Numbers



**447,309**

Households received in-kind and cash transfers under food and nutrition schemes



**36,200**

People targeted for supplementary feeding in Rakhine and Yangon



**428,019**

Households received food assistance



**193,600**

Students received meals or food rations during school closures due to COVID-19



**436,412**

Vulnerable households received cash transfers



**222,527**

People received Mother and Child cash-transfers



**11,429**

Farmers received agriculture inputs to allow them to keep farming



**1,149**

Females living in IDP camps participated in skills trainings to increase their livelihood opportunities



**677**

Returning migrants participated in skills training to increase their livelihood opportunities

## 2.3. Humanitarian Response

Resources mobilized in 2020 for the Humanitarian Response (COVID-19 and other Humanitarian Assistance)

**US\$ 177.4M**

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified an already challenging humanitarian situation. To reflect the new needs created by COVID-19, the 2020 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was revised in April. In total, the revised HRP targeted 915,000 people, including 60,000 returning migrants. Under the plan, the UN and its humanitarian partners scaled-up their efforts and implemented COVID-19 preparedness and response activities, while continuing to deliver, as far as possible, core humanitarian and life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people in the conflict-affected states, including 105,100 people displaced in Rakhine and southern Chin, and over 230,000 people in protracted displacements in Kayin, Kachin and northern Shan.

Through the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF), a country-based pooled fund managed by OCHA, 16.7 M USD was mobilized from eleven donors

and member states for the humanitarian response to COVID-19. The MHF rapidly disbursed close to US\$4 million to partners in April to support critical COVID-19 preparedness efforts in camps and displacement sites and a further US\$7.2 million in July to ensure delivery of essential life-saving humanitarian assistance.

### Key activities

- UN brought together international and national non-governmental organizations and the Myanmar Red Cross to establish state-level task teams in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan. The teams strengthened existing coordination platforms and linkages with government counterparts.
- Risk communication and community engagement activities by the UN and humanitarian partners, reached more than 400 displacement sites and IDP camps.
- The UN's broader COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts included provision of PPE, water, sanitation and hygiene assistance and other health and non-health services in camps and displacement sites.
- The UN conducted a rapid survey in Kachin State to understand the experiences of returning migrant workers due to COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in neighboring countries.

### Coordination and facilitation of logistics and procurement services

In 2020, the UN (through WFP) provided significant support to humanitarian and development actors through the coordination and facilitation of procurement and logistics services. WFP operated 35 weekly international flights connecting Yangon, Vientiane and Kuala Lumpur, as well as five domestic flights connecting Yangon and Sittwe, Rakhine State.

The flights provided access to 1,800 frontline personnel and transported over 6,800 kg of essential cargo including 20,000 COVID-19 test kits and laboratory equipment. Thirty-nine organizations benefited from WFP flight services, including UN agencies, international and national NGOs, diplomatic missions and the Government of Myanmar. In addition, WFP coordinated the joint procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for 240,000 people including internally displaced people, Government and UN staff and other partners.



# UN development system support to national development priorities

## 3.1 Collective Results

Beyond the response to COVID-19, the UN has continued to support national development priorities as outlined in Myanmar’s Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2030 (MSDP) and in sector policies and plans. The UN’s support to the MSDP is guided by the draft United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2018-2023, which includes four strategic priority areas: People; Prosperity; Planet; and Peace. The strategic priority areas are aligned with the pillars and goals of the MSDP. This chapter summarises key results under each of these priority areas as well as specific results achieved with regards to reaching those furthest left behind.

### MSDP Pillars and Goals

#### Pillar 1: Peace and Stability

- GOAL 1: Peace, national reconciliation, security and good governance
- GOAL 2: Economic Stability and Strengthened Macroeconomic Management

#### Pillar 2: Prosperity & Partnership

- GOAL 3: Job Creation and Private Sector-led Growth

#### Pillar 3: People & Planet

- GOAL 4: Human Resources and Social Development for a 21st Century Society
- GOAL 5: Natural Resources and the Environment for Prosperity of the Nation

## People



**Outcome: All people in Myanmar, particularly those affected by poverty, discrimination and vulnerabilities, benefit from improved sustainable access to social services and enhanced opportunities for human development to reach their full potential.**

**Main contributing agencies:** WHO; UNAIDS; UNFPA; UNICEF; UNOPS; WFP; UNESCO; UNHCR; UN Women; FAO



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

In 2020, UN agencies worked across all social sectors to support enhanced capacities to achieve universal coverage of social services and a comprehensive social protection floor, with a specific focus on eliminating discriminatory norms and practices and enhancing access and coverage for vulnerable groups. Across all sectors, UN agencies worked towards ensuring gender mainstreaming in national policies and for enhancing women’s empowerment. The UN’s work is centered around supporting the implementation of five prioritised national sector plans:

*The National Health Plan (2017 to 2021); The Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action for Nutrition (2017-2021); National Education Strategic Plan; National Social Protection Strategic Plan, National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women.*

**Health**

Beyond the COVID-19 public health response, UN agencies continued to support strengthening of

men who have sex and transgender people were enrolled pre-exposure prophylaxis

**191**

Key population and their partners underwent HIV testing

**>34,000**

Migrants screened for active TB

**>21,000**

Million people reached through HIV prevention campaign among youth in Kachin and Northern Shan

**>5.9**

the national health system, including in the areas of newborn and child health, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, as well as WASH services.

UN agencies supported capacity development in the area of evidence-based health spending and helped the government develop a national dashboard for economic and health data. A 'human resources for health management unit', was set up within the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) to monitor inequalities in the progress towards universal health coverage, which highlighted inequalities and inefficiencies and provided an evidence-base for better resource planning and deployment. The UN administered Global Fund and Access to Health Fund, supported testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and other communicable and non-communicable diseases, therapy and support for drug users, immunization programmes for children, and ante-natal and post-natal care for women.

Notable progress was made on HIV/AIDS prevention. UN agencies supported the establishment of Myanmar's first pre-exposure prophylaxis clinics, offering services to men who have sex with men and transgender persons, in Yangon. UN agencies further supported the finalization of the National Strategic Plan on HIV 2021-2025 and ensured meaningful participation of key populations in the process. Support was also provided to Community-led HIV testing service delivery to key populations.

UN agencies further provided targeted health support to the migrant population, including supporting the establishment of a Migration Health desk within the MoHS, formulation of a migration health policy, and providing migrant-friendly health service packages and mobile clinics, including HIV testing, throughout the country including in Rakhine State and Kachin State. In addition, awareness and outreach campaigns were conducted on sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, among the IDP population living in camps.

### **Nutrition**

The UN worked towards eliminating malnutrition - both under- and overnutrition - and food insecurity through under-nutrition treatment and prevention programmes, school feeding programmes, in-kind/cash-based food transfers, support to the alignment of agriculture with the national food system, enhancing the quality of diets through food fortification, and awareness raising campaigns for social

and behaviour change targeting better nutrition. More than 1 million people were reached through relief assistance, nutrition interventions, school meals, community asset creation and national social protection programmes.

The UN significantly increased the use of cash-based transfers and rolled out mobile money to people newly displaced by conflict in central Rakhine. The cash-based transfers along with local procurement stimulated local markets. UN agencies further strengthened the capacity of the government to collect and analyze data on food composition, diets, dietary socio-cultural beliefs and practices, food safety, food security and food systems. Smallholder rice and fruit farmers were trained on the agriculturally practices improving yields and incomes.

### **Education**

UN agencies supported increased access to quality education, in particular for the most vulnerable, by contributing to the development of a new education sector plan, support to improve teachers' skills, and through capacity for education management, planning and budgeting. In addition, the UN supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to enable continuity of education during the pandemic. Among others, more than 1,800 teaching staff in all 25 Education Degree Colleges were provided with capacity building training, resources as well as equipment to strengthen their competency in online teaching and learning. The UN further supported the MOE with



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

the development of the Teacher Competency Standards Framework (TCSF), which will be used as a professional learning tool for about 400,000 basic education teachers, including those serving in monastic, ethnic, and private schools.

### **Social Protection**

The UN continued to co-chair the Social Protection Sector Coordination Group to support implementation of the National Social Protection Strategic Plan. In this role, the UN supported the government in developing financing strategies, planning, management and coordination. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased the momentum for progress on social protection reform. UN agencies contributed to scaling up the Maternal and Child Cash-Transfer (MCCT) both vertically and horizontally and assisted in the planning of an unemployment insurance scheme. The UN further contributed to building-up the social protection system through support to the integration and development of information management systems, including the Social Security Board Information System.

### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

The UN advocated for and provided technical assistance to the Government in terms of engendering

national policies and plans in accordance with the

### *National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women.*

The focus was on strengthening the gender machinery including the Myanmar National Committees on Women through capacity building on CEDAW and other international norms. Notably, the UN's advocacy efforts and assistance resulted in a Coordination Group on gender being established under Myanmar's new Development Assistance Policy (DAP). The DAP also mandates all other coordination groups to mainstream gender in its work and it includes a requirement for all development assistance project proposals to include a description of the contribution of the project to gender equality. The UN built the capacity of the Ministry Planning and Finance on engendering COVID-19 plans and supported advocacy by national women organisations to be included in their implementation. The UN further contributed to the process of preparation and adoption of the Women Peace and Development Plans in Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, which contribute to the advancement of women at State level. The UN also facilitated an inclusive consultation process in the three states, making it the first-time women organizations were included in such a wide-ranging consultation process in the country.



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

## Results under the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan

- 930,000 people reached with food assistance
- 390,000 people ensured access to safe drinking water
- 240,000 people reached with essential healthcare
- 200,000 people reached by specialized protection services
- 83,000 children and women reached with nutrition support
- >75,000 children received critical educational support.

## Prosperity



**Outcome: All people in Myanmar, particularly those affected by poverty, discrimination and vulnerabilities, benefit from improved sustainable access to social services and enhanced opportunities for human development to reach their full potential.**

**Main contributing agencies :** FAO, ILO, ITC, UNCDF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UN WOMEN, IOM, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO, UNHCR

In 2020, the UN worked to reduce poverty and inequality by increasing opportunities, in particular for the poor and vulnerable, through interventions to support the creation of decent work opportunities, facilitating safe and regular migration, and promoting sustainable and resilient urban development.

### *Labour protection and governance*

The UN facilitated consultations with social partners to modernize several national labour laws and continued to work to support the Government, employers and workers to meet its commitments under the international labour conventions that Myanmar had ratified. The support contributed to Myanmar most recently ratifying the Minimum Age Convention 138 in June 2020 and its implementation thereafter.

To improve working conditions in industries, including the garment sector, and for domestic workers, the UN supported awareness raising activities among employer associations on national

labour laws, and provided technical assistance to the drafting of guidelines related to occupational health and safety. Trainings were also provided to members of employer and workers organizations on issues related to forced labour. The first ever national complaints mechanism through which victims of forced labour can be supported and cases reported, was established with UN support.

### *Employment creation*

Significant results were achieved in terms of increasing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities especially for women. At the policy level, the UN provided technical assistance to developing policies for industrial growth, and for building institutional capacities for greening industries. Through projects directly targeting beneficiaries, the UN supported skills trainings in conflict affected areas including in Rakhine and Kachin States. Through various programmes, over 7,000 people were reached, among which the vast majority were conflict-affected women. The trainings equipped the participants with skills, which led to increased

income for the majority of participants. In Northern Rakhine, the UN restored the livelihoods of 879 beneficiaries in 17 villages, with an average of 64% reporting an increase in income. Skills trainings were also provided to more than 5,000 female migrant workers in the garment industry, resulting in more than 80% of the participants in the trainings increasing their wages.

To facilitate growth and formalization of businesses, considerable support was provided in support of export and investment strategies and to build capacities of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Trainings on starting and growing businesses were provided, and toolkits to support entrepreneurs in terms of sustainable and responsible enterprises were developed and distributed. The trainings and resources primarily targeted women, including from rural and conflict affected areas. Support was provided to export industries and tourism companies, resulting in average growth of sales ranging from 60% to 130% depending on sectors and geographic areas. Businesses were supported in terms of complying with export regulations, resulting in the EU opening up as a new export market for Myanmar’s honey producers. In addition, a Business Integrity Handbook for Myanmar Businesses was launched with UN support.

To expand financial inclusion and increase access to high-quality, appropriate and affordable financial services, the UN contributed to laying the ground for the integration of microfinance institutions into a National Payment System, by developing and launching a pilot platform for such system. In addition, technical assistance was provided to micro-finance institutions, strengthening their com-

petitiveness and ability to attract funding. Digital and financial literacy trainings were provided to rural women in conflict affected areas, increasing the ability of rural women to access financial services.

### Safe and regular migration

The UN supported the Government in adopting a whole-of-society approach to well- managed safe, orderly and gainful migration. Support was provided to the development of the National Standard Operating Procedures (NSOPs) on Return/Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Victims of Trafficking in Persons, which was adopted in 2020, and to the implementation of the 2nd National Plan of Action (NPA) on the Management of International Labour Migration.

Pre-migration trainings and outreach activities including on financial literacy and trafficking reached almost 40,000 aspiring migrants from key migration source communities. Through multiple UN programmes, about 100,000 aspiring migrants, returning migrants, and family members were reached with information, referral and direct service provision relating to safe migration and protection. The UN has supported the establishment of Migrant Resource Centres around the country, which provided information and trainings and helped over 2,000 migrants resolve grievances over non-deployment after paying recruitment fees. In addition, UN agencies provided vocational skills training to migrants and worked with recruitment agencies to promote ethical recruitment of migrants.

Significant contributions were made to women’s safe migration and prevention from gender-based violence during the migration cycle. Through the EU-UN Spotlight funded joint program, the UN contributed to the development and approval of government guidelines and code of conduct for gender sensitive management of COVID-19 quarantine centers, which were used throughout the country. In addition, the UN provided specific training for

People equipped with employable skills in Rakhine

400

People in Northern Rakhine restored their livelihoods with UN support

400

Women reached through trainings, Facebook and Apps with information on access to financial services

>50,000

EU market opened up for honey producers

People from 5 states and regions reached with trainings to better equip them for migration

>38,000

Recruitment agencies received capacity building on ethical recruitment

207

over 20,000 women migrants on safe migration, trafficking, and gender-based violence.

**Sustainable and resilient urban and rural spatial development**

The UN continued to support the government in managing urbanization and rural development through the development and implementation of policies and plans, improving access to markets and rural value-chains, services, housing and infrastructure. The UN also supported Myanmar in finalizing the National Urban Policy in line with global frameworks such as New Urban Agenda, to guide sustainable urbanization in the country and developing “smart city strategy” for cities in Myanmar. Among other things, the UN supported the Government in undertaking an Agricultural Census. The UN further worked to strengthening capacity at township level offices in providing local services

through inclusive consultative processes. In addition, the UN strengthened national capacities at the government and community levels in integrating heritage conservation and protection in local development planning. It also built the capacity of ethnic youth groups in seven states and three regions in the appreciation and conservation of local heritage for the sustainable development of their communities.

The UN continued its work to support equitable land governance, by providing joint support to the drafting of the new land law. In addition, the UN undertook analytical work to contribute to enhancing awareness of women’s land and inheritance rights and launched the report “Securing Housing, Land and Property Rights for Women in Kachin”, which is one of the most detailed examination of issues facing women’s access to land and property to date in Myanmar.



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

## Planet



**Outcome: All people in Myanmar, especially those affected by and vulnerable to climate and disaster risks, are more resilient to climate and disaster risk and benefit from more effective environmental governance and sustainable use of natural resources.**

**Main contributing agencies:** FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UNOPS

In 2020, UN agencies continued to support the government in enhancing environmental governance and sustainability in the use of resources. UN agencies further supported climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction. Notable results were made in terms of enhancing sustainability in agricultural practices, forest management, and in disaster preparedness.

At the policy level, the UN supported the drafting of a number of key environmental plans and strategies including: the National Environmental Strategic Framework; the National Environmental Master Plan; the Environment, Climate Change and DRR-Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan; and the Environmental Impact Assessment Compliance and Monitoring Strategy. These plans are expected to accelerate mainstreaming of environmental considerations in policy development and implementation, and sector-based planning processes. The UN advocated for enhanced public participation in Environmental Impact Assessment processes, contributing to the government planning a pilot project including public participation.

### ***Environmental governance and sustainable use of natural resources***

The UN contributed to enhancing the capacity for environmental protection, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources by contributing to the drafting of a new biodiversity law and the establishment of a biodiversity trust fund, which are both fundamental building blocks

for strengthening protected areas system. In addition, the UN initiated a survey mapping participatory land use at the village level, and developed village level land use planning methodology and guidelines for the central Dry Zone, Delta, and Chin State.

Significant support was provided to enhance sustainability in agricultural practices. Trainings on climate-smart agricultural practices were provided to farmers through farmer field schools and other training programmes. In Rakhine State 2,500 women, including from IDP camps, participated in such trainings. Technical assistance was provided to ginger, avocado, and tea farmers in the Inle Lake region and Shan State. In Shan State a social-responsible contract farming mechanism was established to accelerate the transformation of the rice sector towards sustainability. The UN administered Livelihoods and Food Security Fund reached 152,000 farmers across the country with assistance ranging from boosting contract farming for seed production to agricultural mechanization to developing supply chains. Over 2.8 million farmers (about 90% women) received loans for investments in their agricultural businesses.

The UN further contributed to increased forest management capacity. Under the REDD+ programme, the UN supported Myanmar in becoming one of few countries that have put in place a Safeguards Information System, which is a significant achievement towards enhanced forest protection. In four communities in central and southern Rakhine, and in

nine communities in Mon, the UN helped establish and build the capacity of community forest user groups and community forest enterprises, focusing on enhancing the sustainability in their use of forests for livelihoods.

Farmers reached with assistance from the LIFT fund

**152,000**

Farmers received agricultural loans with support of the LIFT fund

**2.8M**

**Climate Change adaptation and mitigation**

The UN worked with the government to promote low carbon development. Two UN Country Team members came together to develop a joint programme to support government in the implementation of recently adopted Myanmar Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan and enhance the local adaptation actions. With the UN’s support, Myanmar enacted a regulation to ban the import of obsolete refrigerator and air conditioner technology, which is an important step towards reducing energy consumption. The UN further provided technical assistance in the drafting of energy effi-

ciency policies and standards to government counterparts. In addition, the UN contributed to building the capacity of both state and non-state actors to use environmental spatial data, when planning for oil and gas explorations. Technical assistance and trainings were also provided directly to about 40 industries, including the refrigeration and air-conditioning industry, to enhance their energy efficiency and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions..

**Disaster risk reduction**

The UN contributed to strengthening State level capacity for disaster preparedness and response in areas prone to natural disaster. Emergency response preparedness plans and tools were updated in coordination with NGOs and Civil Society organizations in Rakhine State, Kachin and Northern Shan state, and the South East. In Mon State the UN supported the implementation of the Mon State Recovery Plan, including through an assessment of the drivers of recurrent issues of floods and water scarcity and mitigation measures. The outcome report “Floods and Water Scarcity in Kyaikmaraw Township, Myanmar: A practical guide to what is happening, why it is happening and what can be done (July 2020)” provides concrete recommendations for risk informed approach in development and recovery planning.

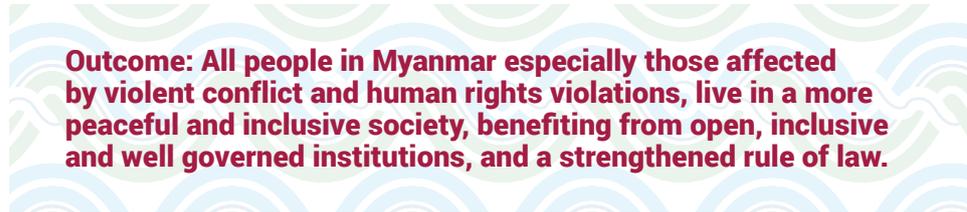


Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp





## Peace



**Main contributing agencies:** UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN WOMEN, UNODC, UNOHCHR

In 2020, the UN continued its work to strengthen the capacity of institutions, with a focus on increasing their accountability, inclusiveness, and responsiveness. UN agencies worked towards enhancing the rule of law, combating corruption and the illicit economy, with a focus on the drug trade. The UN further supported the peace process and worked towards increasing livelihood opportunities and improving social cohesion in communities affected by conflict.

### *Democratic institutions and good governance*

With the UN's support, the Union Parliament Learning Centre established an online learning platform, which, in the COVID-19 context, enabled continued training of Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff across all 17 parliaments. In addition, the UN supported the central institute for the civil service to develop e-learning plans. The UN further contributed to progress in terms of putting mechanisms in place for enhanced transparency and accountability. The UN supported the finalization of the Human Resource Management (HRM) plan, which aims to foster ethics and integrity in the civil service and supported the civil service board in reviewing the Civil Service Code of Conduct and to develop a new Code of Ethics. At the sub-national level, the UN supported the development of evidence-based, participatory and people-centric local development plans and the completion of 51 community-prioritized infrastructure projects in 22 townships in Rakhine, Mon and Bago.

Significant support was provided in the development of gender responsive governance and in enhancing the representation of women and their meaningful participation in decision-making within institutions. The UN initiated support on gender responsive budgeting, conducted a "Gender Equality in Public Administration Study", support was provided to the preparation of a gender and diversity

strategy for the civil service, and the UN worked with parliamentarians to undertake gender-responsive Parliamentary Committee inquiries.

Townships formulated  
people-centric  
development plans

22

Gender Equality  
in Public  
Administration  
Study  
conducted

### *Rule of law and human rights*

The UN continued its support to strengthen the rule of law and building institutional capacity in the justice sector, with a specific focus on supporting post-conflict justice and reconciliation. In Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan States, the UN supported through CSO partners the provision of legal advice and legal representation for people, including IDPs, who otherwise could not afford or access assistance.

To support national capacity to fulfill and protect human rights for all, the UN provided technical assistance to the National Human Rights Commission and strengthened its capacity to function by providing equipment and training for staff. The UN further engaged in monitoring and reporting on grave human rights violations against children and conducted significant advocacy work in this area. The UN worked extensively with the media to build capacity for investigative journalism, to promote the safety of journalists as well as to counter hate speech and disinformation through ethical and accurate reporting. The UN also developed awareness raising campaigns exploring issues around land rights and business as well as human rights and non-discrimination.

In the area of anti-corruption, the UN supported the establishment of 36 Corruption Prevention Units within ministries at the Union level, which represented a significant milestone towards enhancing oversight and accountability. The UN further provided technical assistance to the National Anti-Corruption Commission, and implemented an anti-corruption media campaign, reaching 510,000 people on social media. In the area of combatting the drug trade, the UN supported the government in implementing the drug law and in providing alternative livelihoods for opium poppy farmers.

**Peace**

The UN continued to support the national peace process. At the national level, the UN supported the development and implementation of a training programme for Members of Parliament on “the Role of

Parliaments in Peace-Building Processes”, which reached over 300 MPs.

At the local level, the UN worked toward building social cohesion and peaceful communities, in townships controlled by both Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and the National Government. A project to strengthen dialogue between the EAOs and township administrations in development planning processes was initiated in areas where the Karen National Union and the New Mon State Party exercise control. The UN supported the participatory development of Women, Peace and Development plans in Kayin, Mon and Kayah and their implementation. The reconciliation process in Kayah State was also supported through an inclusive tourism project that brought together national authorities, private businesses and local communities across ethnic lines in a cooperation around community tourism. The role of the project in terms of building intercommunal trust received high-level recognition from the government. The UN further supported the building of infrastructure in conflict-affected townships in Rakhine State to connect several communities to two main markets. This brought a positive impact not only in terms providing livelihood opportunities, but also in terms of increasing interactions between communities across ethnic lines.

People, including 2,689 IDPs, reached with legal assistance <b>&gt;21,000</b>	Corruption prevention units established with in the government with UN support <b>36</b>
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“Tourism can bring peace and stability to a country [...] inclusive tourism has stabilized peace for Kayah.

- former Minister of Hotels and Tourism  
U Ohn Maung

Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

## Leaving No One Behind

In 2020, as demonstrated throughout this report, the UN continued to prioritize Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and Gender Equality across all areas of its programming as well as in its analytical and research work.

Beyond what has been highlighted elsewhere in this report, the UN contributed to the establishment of the first-ever comprehensive national indicator framework (NIF) for the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP). The launch of the NIF, which is aligned with the SDG indicator framework, represented an important milestone, which will allow for the closing of significant data gaps by increasing the availability of disaggregated data by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics of discrimination relevant in Myanmar's national context. This evidence base will enable policy makers and development partners to better target their interventions and policies to those left furthest behind.

In addition, the UN engaged jointly with a number of International Human Rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and Human Rights Committee (CCPR).

To further the rights of persons with disabilities the UN supported the government in certification and registration of persons with disabilities including children, by using the social model tools. On the humanitarian side, coordinated efforts were made to strengthen the analysis of the needs of people with disabilities in the 2021 Humanitarian Programme Cycle, including through greater incorporation of disability prevalence data and direct engagement with disability focused organizations.

### Strengthened collaboration with the LGBTQI community

In 2020, the UN strengthened its collaboration with the LGBTQI community. Meetings were organized between the UN and LGBTQI organizations to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 response on the LGBTQI community and their participation in the national response.

The UN also convened a dialogue with the LGBTQI community to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. The dialogue raised awareness of LGBTQI rights in Myanmar, with a special focus on the way that COVID-19 has impacted the LGBTQI community. A Rainbow flag-raising event, with appropriate COVID-19 social distancing, was held on the UN premises to mark the day. The collaboration further contributed to establish a stronger partnership between the UN and LGBTQI networks.



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

## 3.2. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

Throughout 2020, the UN successfully developed new partnerships to help advance national development priorities and progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and to leverage financing for the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the UN worked with the government to realign budgets to support national development priorities and to strengthen efficiency in spending through enhanced procurement processes.

### *Private Sector Partnerships*

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Mobilized from Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited to the Access to Health Fund

**US\$10M**

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Leveraged in international capital investments through seed funding to enable microfinance institutions to keep ending during the pandemic

**US\$67M**

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Notably, the UN succeeded in mobilizing significant resources from the private sector to the UN managed multi-partner trust-funds, US\$ 10 million was mobilized from Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited to the Access to Health Fund. Through seed funding of US\$5.5 million from the UN administered LIFT Fund, another US\$67 million was leveraged in international capital investments to enable microfinance organizations to continue providing financial services during the pandemic.

The UN continued to partner with the private sector in areas including, improving labour conditions, female entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment, strengthening MSMEs, access to export markets and trade. Among others, the UN worked with company recruiters on responsible recruitment of migrants and to eliminate slavery and trafficking in the garment sector. In the area of agriculture, the UN developed a mobile application for agro-livestock advice together with the company Ooredoo and brought together private sector companies to work together on sustainable rice production.

### **Private Sector Partnerships to accelerate digitalization and e-commerce**

Several new innovative partnerships with the private sector were developed to accelerate the digital transformation and to quickly grow the e-commerce sector to enable business to stay operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A partnership with the tech companies Phandeyar and Seedstar was developed, through which MSME innovation and E-commerce innovation challenges to source ideas for business digitalization and an E-commerce the context of COVID-19 were launched. New private sector partnerships were also developed in the area of microfinance and digital payment solutions.

### *South South Cooperation*

In 2020, the UN expanded its support to facilitating South-South Cooperation, in particular between Myanmar and its neighbouring countries. South-South Cooperation was facilitated in the area of trade and regional integration between ASEAN countries and the UN also facilitated south-south learning between Myanmar's National Human Rights Commission and its counterparts in neighbouring countries. The UN further facilitated cooperation around innovation in agriculture between Myanmar and the Republic of Korea, and exchanges between Myanmar and China on lessons learned in preventing the spread of COVID-19 through the safe management and treatment of COVID-19 related medical waste. Cooperation with China was also facilitated on Transboundary Animal Disease Control.

### *Aligning Government budgets with national development priorities*

The UN contributed to enhance alignment of government budgets and national development priorities through a number of interventions. Through UN advocacy and support, the government committed to increasing resources to its social protection system, which resulted in both horizontal and vertical scaling-up of the maternal cash transfer programme and to investments in the establishment of a digital MIS system for the social security fund.

CHAPTER 3:  
UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The UN further supported strategic financing for environmental protection and management, by contributing to establishing government managed Multi-Partner Funds, which will pool government and funding from development partners for implementation of priorities in the areas of environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster management.

Significant efforts were made to ensure that the resources allocated to the COVID-19 response were gender responsive. The UN supported the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry to integrate a gender perspective into the monitoring framework of its response plans and to engender the COVID-19

Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan (MERRP). As a result, the latest draft of the MERRP released in late 2020 had a strong focus on gender including also gender specific recovery measures. The UN further supported the same Ministry on implementing gender responsive planning and budgeting.

Contributions were also made in terms of improving efficiency in spending, through support to the strengthening of public procurement processes. The UN conducted township level procurement trainings across townships in Rakhine State, and built community capacity in public procurement of agricultural and fishery inputs at the local level.



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

### 3.3. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

#### UN coherence and collaboration

A prime example of UN collaboration and coherence in 2020, was the UN's collective response to the Socio-Economic impacts of COVID-19. Early on during the pandemic, the joint UN framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Framework (UN SERF) was developed through a collaborative process led by UNDP. To develop the framework, an inter-agency working group responsible for drafting and formulating response activities were set up for each of the five pillars of the SERF (Health First; Protecting People; Economic Recovery; Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Cooperation; and Social Cohesion and Community Resilience). The collaborative approach led to a response under which the UN's collective expertise and resources were brought together in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner. The implementation of the framework was steered by the inter-agency working groups for each of the SERF pillars, which continued to meet throughout 2020.

As part of the Socio-Economic response to COVID-19, the UN operationalized an inter-agency working group for monitoring and results reporting on the SERF. Through this group, a comprehensive indicator framework was developed and reported on. This allowed the UN to keep track of the collective progress of framework results and to regularly provide collective progress updates to the Government and partners.

The UN further operationalized an inter-agency working group on Research and Analysis, responsible for coordinating the UN's ambitious research agenda related to COVID-19. Through the Research and Analysis group the UN built internal capacity to ensure that all research products were gender sensitive and had a strong focus on leaving no one behind. Out of the 18 COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments that were undertaken by UN agencies in 2020, 4 had gender as a primary focus (an additional 5 included specific analysis on the impact on women), 2 focused specifically on key vulnerable populations, 4 focused specifically on lagging geographic areas. All assessments included and analyzed disaggregated data. The Research and Analysis group further ensured coherence in



UN in Myanmar: Monthly Digest No. 5, November 2020

#### Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Myanmar

Understanding the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 across sectors, population groups, gender, and geographic areas is essential for designing effective policies and measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and recover better. To contribute to an increased evidence-base and inform policymaking, the UN Organizations in Myanmar are currently undertaking a multitude of socio-economic impact assessments. These range from forecasts of trends and scenarios and assessments of policy needs and responses, to deep dives into sectoral impacts and the impacts of specific population groups. This monthly digest aims to summarize the key findings of these assessments as the pandemic unfolds and more and more analysis becomes available. The assessments presented are part of the UN's COVID-19 response as outlined in the [UN's Framework for the Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Myanmar](#).



#### Assessment Information

<b>Organization</b>	International Organization for Migration (IOM) and partners.
<b>Assessment type</b>	Rapid Assessment of impacts on returning migrants.
<b>Demographics</b>	2,311 returning migrants and 453 community leaders from across 10 States and Regions.
<b>Time period</b>	June and July 2020

#### Summary

This rapid assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on returning migrants and communities of origin was conducted in June-July 2020 in 10 states and regions (Ayeyarwady, Magway, Mandalay and Tanintharyi regions, and Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Shan states). The assessment consisted of two questionnaires, one for returnees and one for community leaders. The questionnaire for returnees included questions for both internal and international migrants and covered topics including reasons for returning, economic situation and future plans. The questionnaire for community leaders focused on opinions and experiences of the communities to where migrant workers are returning.

#### Key Findings

##### Reasons for migrating

- Among the respondents, the top three reasons for having migrated were: lack of employment at home (42%), anticipated

the dissemination of findings of the studies conducted. Two summary reports were produced, and a monthly digest of impact assessment findings was shared with partners throughout the year.

#### Efficiency and cost-savings

Under the UN's Business Operation Strategy (BOS), the UN achieved a cost avoidance of US\$498,500 by conducting more back-office services jointly. The cost avoidance was mostly in the services areas: administration/common premises, ICT, finance, and human resources.

In cost avoidance from common back-office services

**US\$ 498,500**

A significant achievement in terms of efficiency was the, establishment of a UN common ICT Unit for the UN Common Premises in Nay Pyi Taw. This unit brought further integration of UN Agencies'

ICT operations and infrastructure. The newly established ICT unit delivers services to 15 different UN Agencies co-located in the NPT UN Common Premises providing helpdesk services, maintenance of common ICT equipment and hardware, ensuring smooth functioning network infrastructure and common procurement of required ICT goods and services. This opportunity allowed UN Agencies to

benefit from the economies of scale and high-quality standardized ICT services in the common premises. The services provided by the Common ICT unit were vital in 2020 as all organizations shifted most of their business onto online arrangements further requiring improved compatibility and connectivity between the UN Agencies.



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp

### 3.4. Financial Overview

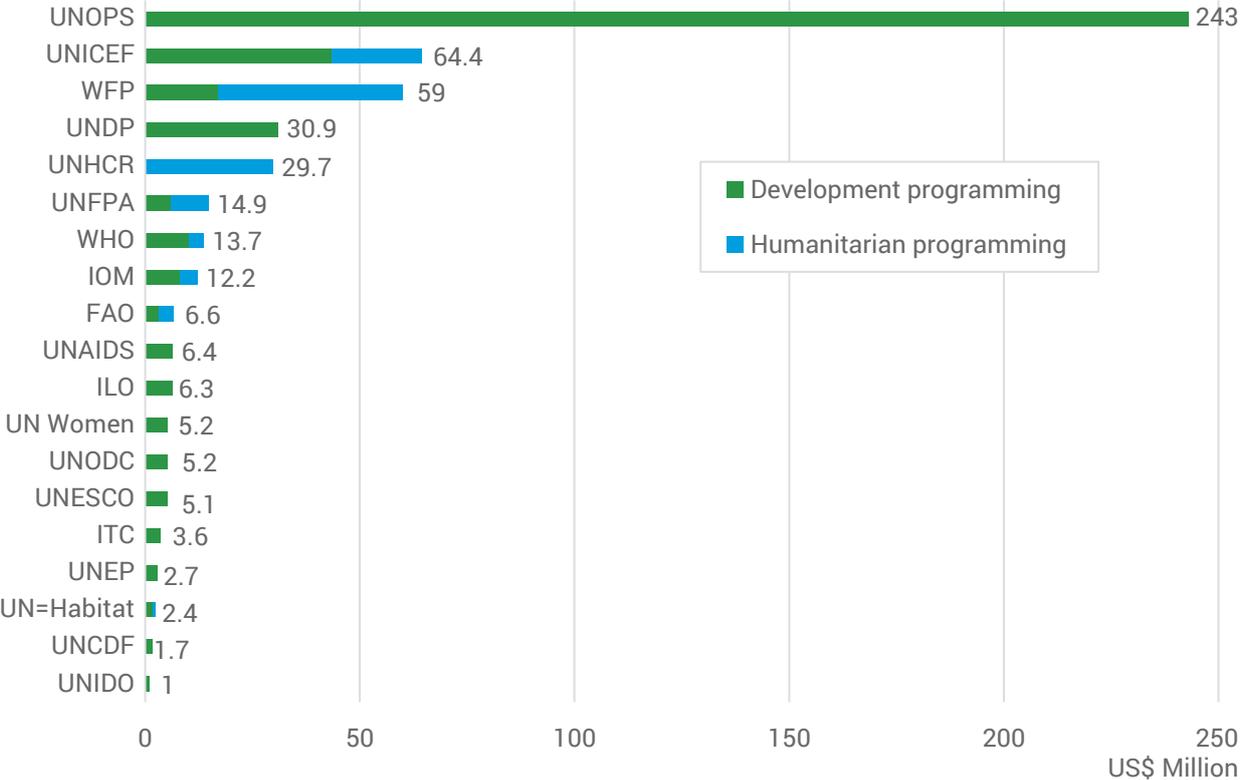
Total Programmatic Expenditures in 2020  
**US\$508 Million**

In 2020, the total programmatic expenditures of the UN in Myanmar was 508 million USD<sup>4</sup>. Most UN agencies spent below envisaged budgets due to COVID-19 negatively affecting envisaged programme delivery. 77% of total expenditure was

spent on development programming and 23% on humanitarian programming. In addition, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs spent \$4.5 million on coordination of humanitarian work, and the Office of the Resident Coordinator spent \$1.62 million on the coordination of UN activities and development work in the country.

The majority of UN expenditure (60%) in 2020 was spent locally, at district, village or township level. The top three sources of funding were: country-level funding by donors (47%), allocations from global vertical funds, including the “Global Fund” and the “Global Environmental Fund”; and Multi-Partner Funds.

#### Programmatic Expenditures by agency



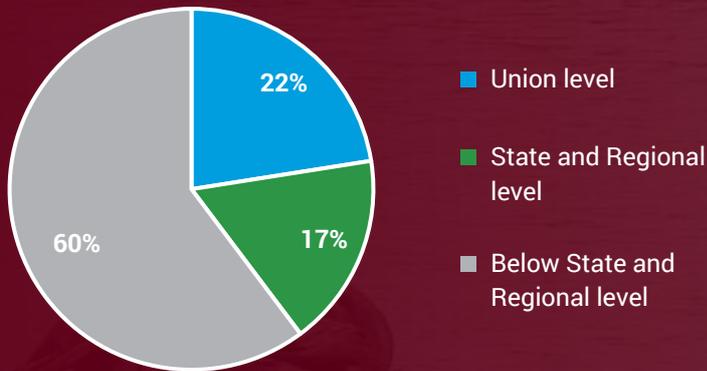
Note: \$5.9 million of UNOP's expenditures went to other UN agencies. To avoid double counting, this amount has been removed from the overall expenditure figure.

4 The amount includes expenditure of UNOPS administered trust funds. \$5.9 million of UNOPS expenditures went in grants to other UN agencies. To avoid double counting, this amount has been removed from the overall expenditure figure.

### Expenditures on UN coordination

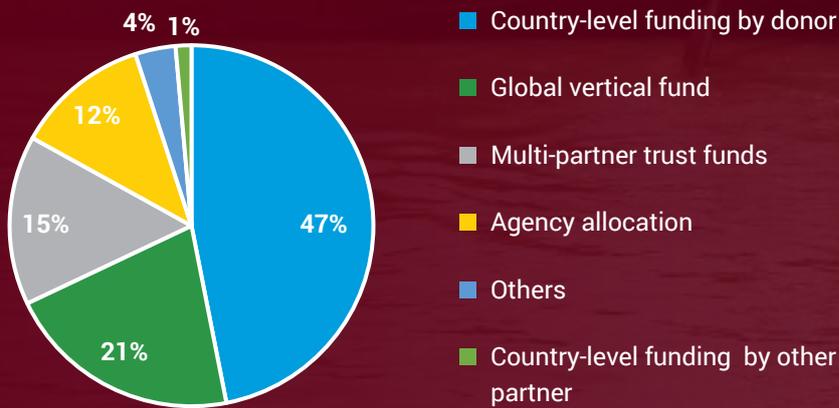


### Spending by administrative level



Note: detailed breakdown not available for expenditure by FAO, UNEP, IOM.

### Sources of funding



Notes: "Country level funding by other partner" refers to grants received by a private sector partner, a foundation, and or other organizations for a specific programme or project. The category "Other" includes country-level funding by government, funding received from International Financial Institutions, and fundraising from individuals.

# UNCT key focus for next year

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The actions by the Myanmar military on 1 February 2021, when the democratically elected political leaders were detained and all legislative, executive and judicial powers transferred to the military, and the violence and instability that has since followed, represents a serious reversal of the progress made in the democratic

transition over recent years. The actions by the military are further likely to create a significant reversal of development gains and compound the society-wide negative impacts of COVID-19.

For the UN in Myanmar, these events fundamentally changed expectations and priorities for 2021. They also changed the operational environment and will have a direct impact on the relationship between the UN Country Team and national authorities. At the time of writing, the situation in Myanmar is still evolving and the UN's focus will change with it. However, at the beginning of 2021 and until there is further clarity on the situation, the UN in Myanmar's focus will be to continue to deliver principled, needs-based humanitarian assistance and protection services to crisis-affected people and to respond to the new humanitarian needs created by the current crisis. The UN will further continue to support the COVID-19 public health response.

The UN's programming beyond humanitarian assistance and the COVID-19 public health response, will focus on activities, where benefits accrue primarily

and directly to people and local communities, as well as on programming that supports the strengthening of the rule of law, the protection and promotion of human rights, and that contributes to preserving the democratic space. Until there is further clarity on the situation, the UN will pause all policy advice to national authorities and all activities that aim to strengthen government institutions



Photo credit: @ChrisSchuepp







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RESPONSE  
VACCINES

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