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Myanmar Office

CYCLONE MOCHA

Humanitarian Situation

Report No.9

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Highlights

- Almost three weeks after Cyclone Mocha hit Myanmar, the response in the Northwest remains constrained for 48,000 affected individuals, particularly for essential WASH needs.
- Cases of children and adolescents participating in unsafe reconstruction and income generation to support their families have been reported in some parts of Rakhine.
- UNICEF partners are provided essential learning packages to mitigate learning loss due to the delay in restoring learning infrastructure, especially in the Northwest.
- UNICEF partners stepped up primary healthcare services with additional fixed and mobile clinics and cold chain equipment to strengthen routine immunization in affected areas in Rakhine.

Situation in Numbers



3.4 million

people in affected areas (OCHA)



1.6 million

people targeted for humanitarian assistance (OCHA)



500,000

new additional caseload (OCHA)

Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF Myanmar has received only 13 per cent of funds needed against its 2023 HAC appeal, representing US\$22.4 million as of 27 May. This critical funding was obtained through the generous support of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Fund for UNICEF, the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO), the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Government of Norway, the Government of Australia, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, and UNICEF Global Humanitarian Thematic Funding.

The humanitarian community in Myanmar released a multi-sectoral Flash Appeal on 23 May to support 1.6 million affected by Cyclone Mocha and its aftermath across five areas of Myanmar: Rakhine, Chin, Sagaing, Magway and Kachin. UNICEF is reviewing and updating its 2023 HAC appeal to incorporate the additional funding needed to respond to Cyclone Mocha.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The humanitarian situation in regions and states affected by Cyclone Mocha continues to be a concern, as challenges in several affected sectors will have an impact on children's survival, safety, well-being and development.

Damaged telecommunication significantly constrains the collection and sharing of information in Rakhine and the Northwest. Electricity was restored but is limited to 4–8 hours in most of the Northwest, while Rakhine State continues to experience total power outages. The delivery of humanitarian interventions remains constrained due to the bureaucracy, ongoing conflict, and restrictions on the movement of humanitarian actors and transportation of supplies. Moreover, transportation takes longer than usual, and checkpoints in strategic areas delay the arrival of supplies. The UNICEF Rakhine Field Office is restocking supplies to scale up and continue providing the needed assistance.

WASH Cluster partners reported that approximately 48,000 individuals in the Northwest – 4,000 in Chin, 24,000 in Magway, and 20,000 in Sagaing – have yet to receive critical WASH assistance, particularly access to safe drinking water, emergency latrines, and hygiene supplies. In addition, completing the initial and further assessments has been heavily limited due to restricted access and poor communication.

Children and caregivers are starting to show signs of mental health and psychosocial distress, especially in highly volatile care arrangements for children separated from their families, where temporary caregivers are feeling the strain of providing support. Thus, mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) are critical for recovery, especially for children. To address this, nutrition treatment centres have integrated MHPSS into their interventions to support children and caregivers, especially in Rohingya camps. Case management must also be strengthened to support children and caregivers affected by the difficult setup.

The 27 damaged service points for breastfeeding and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) supportive space are undergoing renovation, putting the planned supplementary feeding for 9,479 children under 5 and 4,172 caretakers on hold until renovations are completed. Given the situation, training for service providers on integrated treatment services and integrated management of acute malnutrition must be prioritized.

In many parts of Sittwe and Mrauk U, families who continue to live in damaged homes or unsafe temporary shelters risk exposure to injuries and other dangers due to the absence of safe spaces for children to play. Girls are particularly at risk in the said regions due to a lack of functioning and safe WASH facilities. In addition, children and adolescents are increasingly engaging in reconstruction and income generation activities to support their families, thus, missing out on recreational activities and exposing them to more risks of violence. In conflict-affected areas, children and women are especially at risk of explosive ordnance.

Cyclone Mocha caused heavy damage to the education infrastructure in Rakhine, Northwest and Kachin, destroying schools, learning centres, materials and supplies. Therefore, children and teachers need urgent resources and materials for the speedy restoration of learning infrastructure to mitigate learning loss caused by delayed response.

UNICEF Response

UNICEF has a presence in Sittwe and Maungdaw in Rakhine State, with 32 staff working to meet the needs of children in the State. An additional team has been deployed to Sittwe, composed of Programme and Operations colleagues, to support the team and initiate repairs for the UNICEF Sittwe office and warehouse, which were heavily damaged. In the Northwest, the response is coordinated from Hakha and Yangon.

WASH

UNICEF activated two partnerships to restore Rakhine's damaged water and sanitation services for 12,000 people. The restoration will entail repairing and maintaining water and sanitation infrastructure, providing new tube wells, constructing latrines and bathing shelters, and emptying 108 rainwater water harvesting ponds to address the saline intrusion. Over 33,000 affected individuals are set to receive essential WASH supplies, including hygiene kits and soaps. Furthermore, UNICEF reached approximately 2,488 affected households (13,711 individuals) in Buthidaung and Rathedaung with water purification chemicals and hygiene kits.

WASH Cluster

In Rakhine, cluster partners have started emptying 108 ponds to address saline water intrusion affecting 6,977 households (41,516 individuals) in Sittwe, Rathedaung, and Ponnagyun. The cluster has distributed 3,220 hygiene kits to at least 2,488 households (13,711 individuals) and 311 boxes of water purifiers in Sittwe, Rathedaung, Mrauk U, and Myebon. Furthermore, the cluster continues to support internally displaced persons in nine sites – Ah Nauk Ywe, Kyein Nyi Pyin, Kein Thar, Zedi Taung, Zedi Taung East, Zedi Taung West, Pope Par Yone, Dhamma Yone – with emergency water, hygiene kits, water purification tablets, and ongoing renovation and construction of latrines.

In the Northwest, cluster partners continue to gather information about the WASH needs in affected areas. In addition, partners are preparing to distribute hygiene kits, renovate water sources, and construct latrines to support at least 2,856 families in the affected townships.

Health

UNICEF partners in Rakhine continue to operate 8 fixed and 16 mobile clinics in 9 townships daily – providing primary health care services, including 1,317 consultations, antenatal care for 75 pregnant women, and treatment of 28 cases of acute watery diarrhoea and 48 cases of acute respiratory tract infection. Through contractors, UNICEF repaired 13 refrigerators following assessments of cold chain and vaccines in damaged health facilities and depots in Rakhine. To improve routine vaccination in Rakhine, UNICEF provided the State Health Department with 30 units of cold chain equipment comprised of 22 solar refrigerators, 3 freezers, 5 ice-lined refrigerators, and 31 sets of solar panels for 8 townships. Furthermore, UNICEF provided operational and communications support to 13 rapid response teams from rural health centres in Sittwe and Rathedaung. UNICEF is working with 236 community volunteers to assist in operating the mobile clinics and deliver health promotion and preventive activities.

Nutrition

Five out of seven treatment centres for acute malnutrition resumed services in temporary spaces in Sittwe camps. During the reporting period, UNICEF partners reached 2,270 children 6–59 months old with active screening and admitted 13 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Moreover, 476 pregnant and lactating women received multiple micronutrient tablet supplementation and IYCF counselling services. UNICEF is addressing the gap in SAM treatment in northern Rakhine townships by providing partners with mid-upper arm circumference tapes and ready-to-use therapeutic food to identify and treat approximately 500 SAM children.

In the Northwest, UNICEF partners are providing IYCF counselling to 14 mothers and caregivers in several townships. Additionally, a UNICEF partner treated 13 SAM cases in Magway and provided IYCF counselling to 13 mothers and caregivers.

Nutrition Cluster

For the reporting period in Rakhine, 3,255 children under 5 and 765 caregivers received nutrition assistance – including treatment, prevention, follow-up services for 144 children with SAM and 233 with moderate acute malnutrition, and micronutrient tablets for 154 pregnant and lactating women – through staff and partners.

The Nutrition Cluster is concerned about the affected communities in Ponnagyun, where an estimated 5,861 children – including 125 SAM and 446 MAM cases – and 4,183 caregivers need nutrition services but have not received any assistance to date. Furthermore, the cluster identified an urgent need for integrated nutrition and MHPSS for affected individuals, especially in Rohingya camps. As a result, partners are stepping up advocacy with other clusters for a joint cross-sectoral response.

The Nutrition Cluster assisted in the dissemination of a message on appropriate IYCF to caution against unsolicited donations of breastmilk products. The move will heighten awareness about the risks of breastmilk substitutes on the health of infants and encourage support to protect and promote optimal IYCF practices. Additionally, this will minimize the violations of the Code for Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, related World Health Assembly resolutions, and most importantly, the Myanmar Order on Marketing of Formulated Food for Infant and Young Children and other humanitarian organizations' policies and guidelines. Ultimately this will help protect the health of children and infants.

Child Protection

During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners provided MHPSS in Rakhine, including psychosocial first aid, to 83 children (40 girls, 43 boys) and 74 adults (38 females, 36 males) through safe spaces and mobile child-friendly spaces. The same individuals received key child protection messages on MHPSS, gender-based violence, explosive ordnance risk education, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

UNICEF continues to work with local organizations to support affected individuals with MHPSS and child protection supplies. UNICEF plans to engage an additional 6 local community-based organizations to ensure a wider reach and timely delivery of interventions.

In the Northwest, UNICEF provided additional 80 mobile child-friendly spaces and 76 help desks, supported 598 children with case management services and helped reunite 6 with their caregivers, and provided 133 child protection kits. At least 30 participants from 13 partner agencies benefitted from cyclone preparedness awareness sessions supported by UNICEF.

Following the encouraging reception of the online MHPSS campaign among young people and caregivers in Chin, Sagaing, Rakhine, and Magway, UNICEF is expanding the initiative to reach 2 million individuals, including those in other affected areas. The campaign contains information on normal reactions to distress and the importance of connecting with others for support and developing positive coping mechanisms during a crisis.

Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AoR)

Child Protection AoR partners set up mobile and static child-friendly spaces, 104 in Rakhine and 85 in the Northwest – reaching 9,952 children and caregivers in Rakhine and 8,117 in the Northwest with MHPSS and psychological first aid. Furthermore, 2,971 individuals in Rakhine and 13,746 in the Northwest received key messages on child protection. The communities also received 535 child protection kits (422 in Rakhine and 113 in the Northwest).

Partners established help desks, 47 in Rakhine and 76 in the Northwest, to help children and caregivers with rapid reunification. To date, 962 children (364 in Rakhine and 598 in the Northwest) are benefiting from case management and follow-up through the support of community-based facilitators and volunteers.

Mine Action AoR

Partners continue to deliver explosive ordnance risk education in affected areas. Furthermore, partners reach communities with safety messages through direct presentations, social media and radio campaigns, posters, and other materials. Aid workers involved in the response in the Northwest receive regular safety training, with their counterparts in Rakhine set to receive the same activity in the following weeks.

Education

UNICEF is working with the Education Cluster in the ongoing assessment. As an interim measure, UNICEF delivered 1,000 tin roofing sheets in Sittwe to aid the rehabilitation and renovation of temporary learning spaces and schools in Rakhine, which will benefit children and teachers in time for the opening of schools in the 2023–2024 academic year. To support the assessment, UNICEF worked with partners to analyse the data from affected areas and inform the distribution planning.

Education Cluster

Education Cluster partners continue distributing home-based learning materials to children in Seik Phyu, Magway Region, benefitting 197 children (86 girls, 111 boys). In the Northwest, partners distributed 4,000 emergency school roofing sheets in Hakha, Matupi, Thantlang, Tedim, and Tonzang in Chin State. The State Education Department received 50 per cent of the roofing materials, while religious leaders received the rest for distribution to schools.

In Rakhine, partners conducted a rapid needs assessment in 18 locations, including 4 camps and 14 villages in Sittwe, Minbya, Mrauk-U, and Ponnagyun. They provided awareness sessions on inclusive education to 26 community volunteers (16 males, 10 females).

Social Behaviour Change (SBC), Accountability to Affected Population (AAP)

UNICEF launched an e-course in AAP, expounding on the quick AAP guide, to help UNICEF-led clusters, programmes and partners better engage with the communities. UNICEF also made communication materials with lifesaving and behaviour change messages available on the websites of UNICEF and the Myanmar Information Management Unit. UNICEF supported the translation of audio messages on breastfeeding and maternal and child health into Rakhine and Rohingya languages for use in communities and camps in coordination with the working groups and committees in Rakhine.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

OCHA coordinates the overall humanitarian response with all clusters, with coordination mechanisms established at the national level and in Rakhine and the Northwest. Advocacy for operational access to affected communities is being undertaken through the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) at national and sub-national levels. Under the leadership of OCHA in Rakhine, ICCG meetings are being held twice a week to review incoming information on needs and to determine the capacity of humanitarian organizations to deliver.

UNICEF will continue to provide leadership for the Child Protection AoR, Education Cluster (co-led with Save the Children), Mine Action AoR, Nutrition Cluster and WASH Cluster. Cluster coordination meetings have been held for all clusters/AoRs. UNICEF is also participating in the Myanmar Cash Working Group. However, significant concerns exist about the need for more humanitarian funding and several supply gaps.

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<https://www.unicef.org/myanmar/stories/cyclone-mocha-latest-example-dire-climate-threat-facing-myanmars-children>

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