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Monthly newsletter

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



November 3, 2020

Dear Reader,

On 24th October, the United Nations celebrated UN Day on the organization's 75th anniversary. Recognizing the many global, inter-connected, challenges the world continues to face, added to by the global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year the UN Secretary-General had decided to mark our anniversary by stimulating a broad, inclusive, conversation on the future we – the Peoples that make up the United Nations - want and the UN we need.

Within the constraints to meet in person caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, over the last few weeks we have engaged on this theme through virtual platforms with government officials, diplomats, academics, public health experts, youth, LGBTIQ representatives and many more to discuss a shared vision for the UN. The voices of young people are of course particularly important when discussing the future of the United Nations. Moving forward the UN Country Team has decided to further strengthen our engagement with youth in Myanmar, something we all look forward to.

While calling for global solidarity and cooperation to deal with the COVID pandemic, the UN Secretary-General also reiterated another important message on UN Day – his call for a global ceasefire. This call is also relevant for Myanmar and I still hope all parties to conflict will heed the Secretary-General's call, and find the space and a process to arrive at lasting peace in all areas still suffering the consequences of conflict. Looking forward, on 25th November, UN agencies will come together through 16 Days of Activism to raise awareness about the need to end violence against women and girls. I am looking forward to working with UN agencies and partners to support this campaign and amplify its message.

Lastly, with national elections less than a week away, I encourage all my national UN colleagues to exercise

their democratic right and duty to cast their vote, to apply all necessary COVID precautions in doing so – keep your distance, don't forget your mask, sanitize your hands among them - and I express my hope and wishes for a peaceful election day as Myanmar continues on its democratic journey.

Ola Almgren

(Feel free to forward this email to others.)

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WFP launches domestic flights in Myanmar to support COVID-19 response and humanitarian operations

A United Nations chartered flight, operated by the World Food Programme (WFP), departed from Yangon October 24 transporting medical supplies and front-line aid workers to support the COVID-19 response and humanitarian operations in Rakhine State. WFP arranged this humanitarian flight because domestic commercial air services have been temporarily suspended in Myanmar in September, as part of the Government's efforts to control COVID-19 transmissions. Moreover, access by road and sea between Yangon and Sittwe is currently not practically feasible.

Another flight was arranged on October 31 and the next flight will be November 14.

[Details](#)

For more information kun.li@wfp.org

UNICEF Myanmar expresses deep sorrow over the death of a boy killed by an explosive device

UNICEF Myanmar expresses deep sorrow over the death of a boy who was killed by an explosive device, launched by an unidentified armed element, on Monday 19th October in Mrauk-U, Rakhine State. UNICEF is deeply concerned about the alarming increase in reports of killings and injuries of children as a result of intensified fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (AA) in Rakhine State.

The safety and rights of children must be the primary consideration in all contexts. UNICEF strongly urges all parties to conflict to take all necessary measures to protect children and keep them out of harm's way, including by protecting civilian facilities from the impact of conflict.

As Myanmar continues to work to tackle COVID-19, UNICEF urges all parties to conflict to exercise maximum restraint and to intensify efforts to ensure that children affected by the pandemic and the protracted conflict continue to have access to humanitarian assistance and services.

Our thoughts go to the families of the victims and to all children who remain in harm's way.

For more information: Gutaylor@unicef.org.

“World Cities Day” Event jointly held by Ministry of Construction and UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat in partnership with the Department of Urban Housing and Development (DUHD) of the Ministry of Construction (MoC) of Myanmar celebrated “World Cities Day” on Friday 30 October 2020 on a Zoom virtual platform.



The United Nations General Assembly designated 31st of October as World Cities Day, by a resolution, in 2013. The Day promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable development goals around the world. The 2020 Theme is Valuing Our Communities and Cities. It afforded an opportunity to reflect on our cities informal settlements and consider their future in light of the impact of COVID 19 and its social, political and financial upheavals.

The event was graced by the presence of His Excellency U Han Zaw, the Union Minister of the Ministry of Construction. Members of the National Urban Committee; senior officials and advisors from Department of Urban and Housing Development; development partners; representatives from Embassies, UN agencies; professional associations and Urban professionals. A total of 98 participants attended the online forum.

[Full story](#)

Empowering Youth to lead and act innovatively for climate change while responding to COVID-19

The UNDP supported "Innovation Hub and Hackathon series" have helped Myanmar youth discover novel ways of building the world back better for the post-COVID-19 era.

Hackathon 2019 winner Kyaw Zin Hted has been inspired to develop a Sein (meaning Green, alluding to Nature) application. He intends to use the easily accessible application to foster the spirit of nature conservation among public.

"We encourage individuals to plant seeds in their gardens or plots. In this way, people would feel closer to nature, together with nature thereby instilling the care and love for nature in people's minds, conserving nature and biodiversity."

For innovative youth like Kyaw Zin Hted, COVID-19 is an opportunity as it brings forward the necessity of 'New Normal' lifestyle which could lead to harmonization with nature to build a better world for generations to come.

[Full report](#)

for more information: Ms. Mir Nadia Nivin, nadia.nivin@undp.org

Myanmar now exporting honey to the EU

'It is a milestone for the country that the EU recognizes the National Residue Monitoring Plan as a reliable instrument to monitor chemical residues in honey,' says Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre. 'This is what creating added value is all about and I am pleased that we may now be able to sample this amazing product in Europe.' [Full story](#)

For more information Ms Véronique Rondeau, rondeau@intracen.org

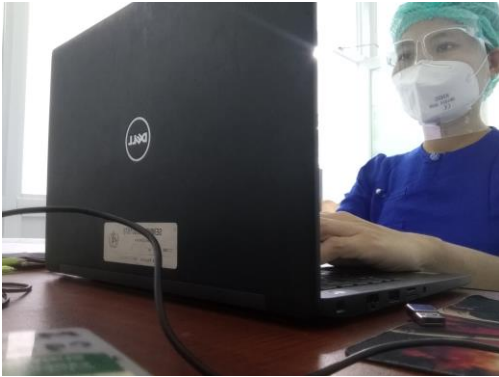
ILO: Collapsing demand amid lock downs cripple Asia-Pacific garment industry

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered government lockdowns, collapsed consumer demand, and disrupted imports of raw materials, battering the Asia Pacific garment industry especially hard, according to a [new report](#) released on Wednesday by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Feature: Courage in the eye of the storm

The WHO in Myanmar turns to its virus experts to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Team Leader of the WHO HIV, Viral Hepatitis and TB teams in Myanmar, Dr Fabio Caldas de Mesquita says: "Data is the light at the end of the tunnel."



"You need to be brave to work in infectious diseases," says Dr de Mesquita.

"Many applicants for jobs in Myanmar refused the work when they discovered they were going to be working on COVID-19 at hospitals."

[Full story](#)

New: UN Myanmar COVID-19 Socio-economic impact Monthly Digest #4, Oct 2020

To contribute to an increased evidence-base and inform policy making, 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.

The latest report includes data on agriculture, food security, small and medium business, poverty and food security.

Full report:

For more information: Ms. Elin Bergman, Development Coordination Officer, Economist
(elin.bergman@one.un.org)

Gender-based violence actors to improve coordination during COVID-19

UNODC and UNFPA organized the Multi-agency Round-table on Gender-based Violence Response Coordination in the Context of COVID-19 on October 16th in light of the increasing need to address the GBV prevention and response challenges which have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Round-table brought together senior representatives from the Myanmar Government, UN Agencies, and civil society organizations, providing a venue for them to share their experiences addressing GBV, to discuss strategies for increasing GBV coordination, and to develop a strategic action plan for improving responses to GBV in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Participants endorsed closer collaboration moving forward and discussed steps for improving coordination between all actors along the GBV response chain. Additional information about the round-table is available on [UNODC Myanmar website](#).

For more information: ryan.winch@un.org

UNDP donates computer, related equipment to MNHRC

The United Nations Development Programme donated 22 laptops and 11 printers to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on 27 and 28 October to be used in the activities of the promotion and protection of human rights in Myanmar.

The computers and related equipment were donated as part of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 being implemented by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Director-General and Commission members accepted the donation.

UN Myanmar supports 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) will take place under the 2020 theme *Orange the world: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!*

The United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign *UNiTE by 2030 to end violence against women* released the global theme in support of the 2020 campaign activities.

The local effort in Myanmar seeks to strengthen legal frameworks for the passing of the *Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women* (PoVAW) bill including associated policy and service initiatives, and also call for immediate action to respond to GBV in COVID-19 context and beyond, such as more Funding for ending VAW, and more evidence through data collection to better Prevent and Respond to VAW.



The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) - Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR), Myanmar National Committee on Women (MNCW), UN agencies and NGOs/CSOs have annually organized commemorative events and campaigns on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls and its 16-days of activism to call for action to stop violence against women and girls.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence runs from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day) and is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

For more details phan@unfpa.org, Cecilia.truffer@unwomen.org

UNEP: Saving the lives of gold miners

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is supporting Myanmar's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) to develop a National Action Plan to reduce and eventually eliminate mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

An [estimated](#) 173,000 people work in Myanmar's artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector. UNEP has been working with the Government of Myanmar to reduce the impact of mercury on miners. Part of this support is building Myanmar's capacity to ratify and implement the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#), a multilateral environmental agreement that aims to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

Conducting the assessment and monitoring compliance with existing regulations requires special equipment. UNEP, in collaboration with the Japan Association for UNEP, donated a mercury meter to the Government of Myanmar from technology company CASIO Japan, which is supporting UNEP's mercury regulation activities.

A [2015 study](#) in Myanmar found that miners had more than twice the amount of mercury in their body compared to non-miners.

Full story: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/mercury-monitoring-myanmar-gets-boost>

For more information: adam.hodge@un.org

UN in Myanmar commemorates 75th anniversary

Message from HE U Win Myint,

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations Day, October 24.

HE President U Win Myint has extended warm congratulations, and best wishes for the greater success of the Organization in its discharge of the mandate entrusted to it by the UN Charter. He says the maintenance of the international peace and security and the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples through international cooperation are particular needs for our times.



"...Myanmar believes that a rules-based multilateral system, with the United Nations at its heart, should be a beacon of hope for developing and small countries. We look to the United Nations as the protector of developing small countries, especially at a time when the world is full of unfairness, injustice, inequality and multiple standards even in the application of international law.....

"...We appreciate the key leadership role of the WHO and the fundamental role of the

United Nations system in mobilizing and coordinating the comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most pressing task for the humanity today is to work together to ensure timely access to safe and affordable COVID-19 vaccines for all countries, and to prevent developing countries from falling into economic and financial crises and an exacerbation of poverty...."

[full statement](#)



Happy #UN75! The International Trade Centre has planted 75+ trees to celebrate the United Nations' Anniversary and green growth!

The International Trade Centre has been supporting trade development and diversification in Myanmar to benefit small businesses. ITC is committed to continue contributing to the UN efforts in the country, including for post-COVID economic recovery.

For more information: Sylvie Cochin, betemps@intracen.org

Many members of the UN Country Team joined in with the "UN75 - Shaping our Future" world's biggest conversation, and offered their thoughts through audio visual on social media.

[Min Jeong Kim, UNESCO Myanmar Head of Office.](#)

[Ramanathan Balakrishnan UNFPA Representative](#)

[Nicolas Burniat UN Women](#)

[Dr Stephan Paul Jost, WHO Representative](#)

[Benedikt Hofman Country Manager UNODC](#)

[Xiaojie Fan, Representative FAO](#)

[Akio Nakayama IOM Myanmar's Chief of Mission](#)

[Sylvie Cochin, International Trade Centre](#)

[June Kunugi, Representative, United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#)

[Cecile Fradot, Representative: UNHCR](#)

[Donglin Li, Liaison Officer / Representative ILO-Yangon](#)

[Bijay Karmacharya, Country Programme Manager of UN-Habitat Myanmar](#)

MIMU: Information is priceless in Myanmar

The UN information management team responds rapidly to the COVID-19 crisis in Myanmar.



As New Year's 2020 celebrations across the world calmed, unease about COVID-19 skyrocketed. By the end of January, the WHO declared a global health emergency, and the next day, the [Myanmar Information Management Unit](#) (MIMU) launched the [MIMU COVID-19 Webpage](#) to be a central space for situation updates and prevention information. [Full story](#)

\$600m raised to support humanitarian response in Myanmar, Bangladesh and the Region'

The international community has pledged over US \$600 million as part of an international response to aid Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh as well as support humanitarian needs in Myanmar and other countries in the region. The new pledges were secured at a [virtual conference](#) on 22 October jointly hosted by the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It addresses a significant funding gap and to considerably expands the nearly USD \$636 million in humanitarian



assistance already committed in 2020 under the Bangladesh Joint Response Plan and the Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan.

Conference participants emphasized the importance of addressing root causes and for safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable solutions for an estimated 860,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and 600,000 Rohingya individuals that remain in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Additionally, the conference also

advocated for continued humanitarian access and assistance to the some 171,000 internally displaced persons at various locations in Myanmar.

For more information: Reuben Lim Wende: wende@unhcr.org

Protecting migrant workers - new report from ILO

The ILO's *Developing International and Internal Labour Migration Governance* report calls for inclusion of migrants in social protection packages, and greater flexibility to allow migrants to travel to countries of destination to fill existing labour shortages safely and without bearing the costs of quarantine and testing.

[Full report](#)

For more information: Ms. Jackie Pollock, Chief Technical Adviser of the Migration Project, ILO-Yangon pollock@ilo.org

From our web pages

[OCHA weekly report](#)

[Turning the tide against child labour – for Khin's sake](#)

[WFP launches domestic flights in Myanmar to support COVID-19 response and humanitarian operations](#)

[No time for fear: Myanmar's women frontline workers march to the beat of those in need](#)

In the media

[WFP to lend cellphones to IDPs for mobile money transfers.](#)

[Calls for investigation into killing of two children in Buthidaung Twsp](#)



Click here to see how you can

[Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



The world needs solidarity. Your contribution counts.

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

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

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

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



This newsletter is produced on behalf of the UN Country Team in Myanmar

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