

Myanmar

Part 1: Situation update in the country

The situation in Myanmar continued to be overshadowed by the aftermath of the events of August 2017 in Rakhine State, which led to the exodus of more than 730,000 Rohingya refugees into neighbouring Bangladesh. Myanmar has been in the international spotlight ever since. Ongoing conflicts in Kachin State and northern Shan State continued to have humanitarian consequences, including displaced populations. UNICEF maintained a significant programming component in those three states, to address humanitarian issues and to support the foundations for development which are essential for lasting peace and stability.

The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, launched in August 2018, sets out the national development vision in a single document. The Plan is founded on three pillars: peace and stability, prosperity and planet, people and planet. The Plan sets out a framework to support the activities of development partners, including UNICEF. Various mechanisms complement the Plan and facilitate the planning, implementation and monitoring processes in various sectors.

Humanitarian situation

Over the course of 2018, the number of people in Myanmar in need of humanitarian assistance increased by 78,500, from 862,851 to 941,351.

The situation in Rakhine State continued to dominate the attention of humanitarian actors. Despite a bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh, practically no refugees voluntarily returned, as they did not consider the conditions in Myanmar conducive to do so. Some preparations for returns were made, such as the construction of reception centres and transit camps. A memorandum of understanding between the Government of Myanmar, UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Development Programme was signed on 6 June 2018, as a first step for establishing a framework for cooperation between the UN and the Government aimed at creating conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the refugees. Some progress was made with the implementation of the memorandum, including assessments carried out in 50 locations in Northern Rakhine in which some 1,200 individuals were consulted. Thirty five quick impact projects were approved by the Government, with a further 30 under review. Key issues identified in the report of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, including freedom of movement and a pathway to citizenship, remained unresolved. Without progress on those issues it is unlikely that significant returns of refugees will take place in the near future.

The humanitarian situation for the population remaining in the three northern townships of Rakhine State (Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung) remained dire. Until recently, first-hand information was difficult for the UN to obtain due to access restrictions. Recent assessments conducted by UNHCR and UNDP revealed a population living very precariously, with limited access to food, livelihoods and means to access basic necessities. The poor nutritional status of many children worsened following months without access to therapeutic nutrition services, which were only being re-established at year end. Lack of staff, particularly in the more isolated areas in the townships, contributed to poor access to education and health services. Children

were particularly vulnerable to protection issues. Underlying all those challenges, there was a basic lack of trust between communities and the security forces. In the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2019 some 324,000 people were considered to be in need of assistance in those three townships, 74 per cent of whom were estimated to be women and children.

Conditions in central Rakhine remained difficult, particularly for the Muslim population, which has been largely confined to internally displaced persons camps since the inter-communal violence of 2012. Some 128,000 Muslims remained in those camps, or camp-like settings, with children making up approximately 53 per cent of that population. They continued to face restrictions on their freedom of movement, which contributed to limiting their access to livelihoods and essential services, including health and education. The camps are often poorly located, vulnerable to flooding, and are overcrowded and unsanitary. The populations largely rely on the assistance of the international community. Yet access was challenging in 2018, particularly due to complicated administrative procedures around the issuing of travel authorizations. Protection incidents in the camps appeared to be increasing and children were at increasing risk of being neglected or abused. The long-term psychosocial damage caused by living in such camp conditions is a grave concern.

The recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, accepted by both the Government and development partners, remained the agreed pathway toward making progress in Rakhine State. The Government held two workshops with development partners to review progress against the recommendations. In certain sectors, such as education and health, important steps have been taken, including with UNICEF support. Schools have been reopened, rehabilitated and reconstructed in Muslim, Rakhine and mixed locations, and teachers trained. The Ministry of Education took responsibility for paying the salaries of the volunteer teachers formerly supported by development partners. The Government worked with the UN and others to try to ensure health facilities were accessible by all, that they had adequate trained staff coming from the different population groups, and that services reached all those in need. Significant progress in freedom of movement and citizenship, fundamental to any long-term solution, remained elusive.

Toward the end of 2018, the situation in Rakhine State was further complicated by an intensification of the conflict between the Myanmar Army and the Arakan Army (AA, not to be confused with the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, ARSA). Should this conflict continue, there could be further displaced populations in the state in need of humanitarian assistance.

Conflict in other parts of the country, notably Kachin State and northern Shan State, continued to have humanitarian consequences. In both locations, conflict intensified in 2018, despite the ongoing 21st Century Panglong Peace process. In Kachin, more than 97,000 people remained displaced across 140 camps or camp-like settings, with children making up approximately 46 per cent of that population and women accounting for 26 per cent. Although children in the internally displaced people camps did have access to local schools, Kachin had the highest rate of children dropping out of school in the country. Girls and boys affected by the conflict were exposed to severe protection risks, including trafficking, separation from primary caregivers, early/forced marriages and negative coping mechanisms, including drug abuse. Limited access, particularly to non-government-controlled areas, made provision of adequate protection services virtually impossible. Children also were exposed to the risks of landmines. In 2018, UNICEF and partners documented 264 casualties (38 per cent were women and children). Compared to the previous years, incidents in Kachin were on the rise. By November 2018, the number of casualties (113, including 12 deaths) in Kachin reached 149 per cent of

the 2017 number. There was no humanitarian demining taking place in Myanmar. Similar challenges were seen in northern Shan State, with more than 8,800 people remaining displaced.

In the 2018 Report of the UN Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict, the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) was newly listed as a party that kills and maims children and that perpetrates rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. Verified incidents included rape of girls in Rakhine State and the killing and maiming of 220 children (133 boys, 51 girls, 36 sex unknown). This listing was in addition to the Tatmadaw's previous listing for the recruitment and use of child soldiers, for which it was listed as having put in place measures aimed at improving the protection of children.

In September 2018, an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, established by the Human Rights Council, issued a report that described serious violations of human rights law as well as international humanitarian law in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states. This included the systematic targeting of civilians, including women and children. The report concluded that many violations amount to the gravest crimes under international law. The Government of Myanmar objected to the formation of the fact-finding mission and did not accept the findings.

The international concern over the events in Rakhine and elsewhere in Myanmar led some donors to reconsider their strategies for funding development work in the country. This has increased the funding challenge for the UNICEF programme.

Development situation

The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2030, launched in August 2018, sets out the national development vision and how it relates to the global sustainable development agenda. The Plan provides a single national strategy that encompasses the various sector plans and strategies. Along with the Development Assistance Policy, the document sets the framework for development partner support for the coming years. The Plan reflects many of the policy options for children that were outlined in the 2016 New Vision New Results for Children Forum, supported by UNICEF. Further steps are required to ensure that children are given the highest priority in the national agenda.

The revised Child Law of 1993, which was still under review by the National Parliament, was intended to bring Myanmar in line with all relevant international conventions relating to children. Some amendments were introduced that would diminish the protection of girls and boys, notably related to the minimum age of marriage; the right to education up to the age of 18; violations against children during armed conflict; penalties for children under juvenile justice; as well as key definitions relating to child labour, physical and psychological violence. The Law had not yet fully passed the parliamentary process, so opportunities remain in 2019 to address those issues.

In 2018, the Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017 was published. The survey includes key data concerning the situation of children in the country and confirms a long-term decline in dependency ratios in Myanmar. For example, the total dependency ratio declined from 73.9 in the 1983 Population Census to 51.3 in the 2017 survey. Lower dependency ratios often reflect higher educational levels of the head of the household and fewer children for each working age adult.

The survey contains important data on the WASH situation in the country. It showed high use of surface water in Rakhine State and Ayeyarwady Region. Approximately 5 million people in Myanmar collected drinking water directly from surface sources such as rivers, dams, lakes and ponds, without treatment. Open defecation remained high in Rakhine, Kayin and Chin States. Nationally, the percentage of households reporting open defecation was cut in half since 2014, down from 14 percent to 6 percent.

Net total enrolment rates in schools continued to rise compared to 2005. Enrolment dropped off between primary and middle school years, and even further as children transitioned into high school. There was marked improvement in middle and high school enrolment rates between 2005 and 2017, particularly in rural areas. The enrolment rate was noticeably lower for boys than girls, particularly at high school level, where there was a 9 percentage point difference.

The World Health Organization health profile for 2018, based mainly on analysis of the 2015/16 Demographic and Health Survey data, illustrated the importance of disaggregated data to ensure progress on the SDG agenda to leave no one behind. Significant disparities existed between urban and rural areas, for example in the under 5 mortality rate and in sanitation coverage. Stunting was approximately twice as high for children whose mothers had no education, compared to those with mothers educated beyond secondary level. Antenatal care coverage for the richest quintile was almost 100 per cent, whereas it hovered around 60 per cent for the poorest. Under-five mortality rate for boys was 12 percentage points higher than for girls. Birth registration reached more and more children, and was up to approximately 83 per cent in 2015 compared to 72 per cent in 2010.

The 2018 Education Budget Brief, prepared by the Ministries of Education and Planning and Finance, showed that the budget allocation for education more than doubled over the past six years, as a portion of the total budget, and represented 7.75 per cent of total government expenditure, making it one of the top five budget holders. Seventy seven per cent of the budget was allocated to the Department of Basic Education, with 17 per cent going to the Department of Higher Education. Approximately 85 per cent of the Department of Basic Education's budget was directly transferred to states and regions, based primarily on the number of students in basic education, with somewhat higher allocations going to more challenging states, such as Chin and Rakhine, and Yangon Region receiving a lower allocation.

The Central Statistics Organization under the Ministry of Planning and Finance led the development of the National Indicator Framework for the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan. UNICEF was a key member of the task teams involved in this important process, which is linked to the national monitoring of progress against the SDGs. The process was ongoing and was an opportunity to ensure that priority indicators for children were included in the national monitoring framework.

Operational situation

2018 was the first year of the UNICEF Country Programme 2018-2022. It was also expected to be the first year of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). However, although this was prepared it is not yet finalized and signed, due to ongoing discussions with the Government.

During 2018, the UN agencies, including UNICEF, considered their levels of presence in the political capital of country, Nay Pyi Taw. The majority of government ministries and staff have been located there since 2012 and this has necessitated frequent travel by UNICEF staff to

attend meetings. In February 2018, at the time of the launch of the draft Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, the State Counsellor urged the international community to move to the capital in order to strengthen their relationship with the Government. The UN agencies were proactive in taking up this invitation and in 2019 senior staff from the World Food Programme, UN Development Programme and UN Population Fund will be based there. Several agencies, including UNICEF, rented space in the offices of UMFCCI creating a 'One UN House'. UNICEF will locate seven positions in Nay Pyi Taw from January 2019, to facilitate the close collaborations required with government counterparts for the work on health systems strengthening and on social protection. A review of the UNICEF Country Programme Management Plan was initiated, with the intention of producing a strategy for further increasing presence and clarifying representational responsibilities over the coming months and years.

Part 2: Major results, including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the Country Programme Documents

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

UNICEF's plan for 2018 was to continue its primary partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sports to support health systems strengthening, with a focus on the expansion of the emergency paediatric care programme, immunization, the management of childhood illnesses and the scale-up of integrated nutrition services, including in humanitarian settings. UNICEF supported efforts to scale-up prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and advanced early childhood development and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In partnership with the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health and the Myanmar Paediatric Society, UNICEF expanded the emergency paediatric care programme in Ayeyarwaddy, Magway and Sagaing Regions, and the Myanmar newborn care programme in Ayeyarwaddy Region and Kayin State. This led to case fatality reduction in newborns of 40 per cent from preterm/low birth weight-related complications and of 70 per cent from pneumonia in 21 District Hospitals. More than 25,786 newborns were delivered and managed by the emergency paediatric care programme team in 11 district hospitals. UNICEF also supported the installation of newborn care corners in areas with high infant mortality rates. A total of 1,900 sets of newborn care corner equipment were distributed for rural health centres and 150 sets were distributed for hospitals, contributing to 80 per cent of newborns receiving postnatal care within two days of birth. In partnership with HPA and MHAA, 108,611 children and women in humanitarian situations in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan utilised antenatal care, delivery care, post-natal visits and referrals for emergency obstetric and newborn complications (against a target of 65,000). Some 5,940 children 9-18 months old in Rakhine were immunized against measles (against a target of 21,000). The shortfall was due to continued restricted access and virtually no returnees from Bangladesh in 2018.

UNICEF continued to collaborate with the World Health Organization to strengthen universal immunization coverage. UNICEF's support contributed to equitable coverage of children under 1 year receiving DTP-containing vaccine at the national level. Data will be validated by a coverage survey in 2019. UNICEF also supported the central expanded program on immunization in implementing the effective vaccine management improvement plan and strengthening sub-national level cold chain management through installation of remote temperature monitoring units in cold rooms in four major sub-national cold stores. Support was also provided to build capacity of cold chain personnel and for construction of a sub-depot in

Sittwe, Rakhine state. UNICEF also successfully piloted a harmonized paper-based logistics management information system that will be scaled up nationally by 2020 with implementation of the web-based vaccine visibility tool in 22 large sub-depots for national level stock management. UNICEF, together with the World Health Organization, supported the Ministry of Health and Sports to successfully apply for GAVI Alliance approval of a measles and rubella vaccination campaign and the introduction of Rota Virus and Human Papilloma Virus vaccines in 2019 and 2020, respectively. UNICEF also played a critical role in supporting Myanmar to obtain a GAVI Alliance Health System Strengthening grant this year, and worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Sports, World Health Organization and GAVI Alliance to develop key plans and procedures to guide its effective implementation over the coming years (2018-2021). In 2018, UNICEF also supported the development of a national immunization communication strategy tailored for hard-to-reach communities in collaboration with ethnic health organizations and civil society organizations.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization and the USAID-funded Maternal Child Survival Programme, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Sports to roll out facility-based integrated management of neonatal and childhood illness (F-IMNCI) package in prioritized areas. Through UNICEF's Rakhine Health System Strengthening initiative, the multi-donor 3MDG health fund was mobilized to scale up the F-IMNCI training for hospital staff across all 17 townships in Rakhine State. A total of 190 staff received competency-based training in managing common childhood illnesses, while WHO and MCSP covered 39 townships across Bago region and Northern Shan.

UNICEF and its partners continued to improve the capacity of volunteers and ethnic health workers to manage childhood illnesses in humanitarian areas. By October 2018, 1,997 children 0-59 months with suspected pneumonia received appropriate antibiotics from UNICEF-supported partners and ethnic health workers.

To strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health and Sports to prepare for and respond to emergencies, UNICEF supported the Ministry to develop a communication for development (C4D) and community engagement plan with multiple stakeholders. The plan will be reviewed and piloted in early 2019.

Significant programmatic results on nutritional outcomes for women and children were achieved in 2018 with advocacy, facilitation, technical and financial support from UNICEF. At the policy level, highlights included a functional nation-wide market surveillance of breast milk substitute code violations, although enforcement challenges remained given inter-ministerial coordination bottlenecks and conflict of interest pressures by code-violating private companies. The USI order was drafted to improve enforcement and a new coordination committee oversaw the new national plan and revitalization efforts for USI. UNICEF's efforts and contributions to the scaling-up nutrition country network over the past years, in collaboration with other UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations and World Bank, resulted in the Government's launching of the inception phase and steering committee for the Multi-Sectoral National Plan of Action for Nutrition (2018-2022), involving four sectoral ministries (Health, Education, Social Welfare and Agriculture).

The capacity of the Ministry of Health and Sports to deliver quality, integrated nutrition services continued to improve in 2018. A total of 3,749 basic health staff and clinical staff from Rakhine, Chin, Magway and Kachin (more than 60 per cent of health workers in those states/regions) were trained and equipped to provide IMAM services, and an additional 5,529 basic health staff

and community health volunteers were trained in infant and young child feeding (more than 80 per cent of health workers in those areas). The main challenge moving forward is to ensure quality coverage of services through routine supportive supervision and monitoring. Continued access constraints, particularly in Rakhine, limited coverage and quality of humanitarian nutrition efforts and resulted in under-achievement of targets. Only 24 per cent of targeted children with severe acute malnutrition were reached (2,160 out of 9,000). Gradual improvement in access toward the end of 2018, coupled with new funding for Rakhine, mean that UNICEF can expand its partnerships in 2019 in those high burden areas.

UNICEF played a key role in 2018 in strengthening coordination between the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement on social behaviour change communication for nutrition under the maternal and child cash transfer national programme, which improved communication materials for beneficiaries and resulted in plans to develop an evidence-based national nutrition social behaviour change communication strategy in 2019. With private donor funding, and in collaboration with communication for development, UNICEF launched an innovative breastfeeding campaign in partnership with Save the Children, GIZ, Alive and Thrive and multi-donor trust funds. The campaign reached 42,000 mothers in person and 5.2 million people through social media.

Advancements on multi-sectoral approaches and collaboration for nutrition were made in 2018. An urban food security and nutrition survey was completed jointly with the Ministry of Health and Sports and the World Food Programme, with results expected mid-2019. In the coming year, UNICEF plans to strengthen nutrition cluster leadership and capacity, particularly in information management and linking to the national HMIS, with support from Global Nutrition Cluster and the UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office. UNICEF played a critical role in supporting the Ministry of Health and Sports to develop and print the national standardized health messages booklet, integrating nutrition and WASH messages, which was translated into 55 ethnic languages. More than 40,000 copies of the booklet were distributed to reach all baby health staff in Myanmar.

As lead technical agency on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, UNICEF contributed to health workers' capacity and government leadership to provide such services in 320 of the 330 townships in Myanmar. Early infant diagnosis was improved in quality and timeliness in delivering results to caregiver. By November 2018, of 3,209 HIV exposed children, 1,760 infants (55 per cent) received early infant diagnosis by the age of 2 months. Among them, 57 cases (2.84 per cent) were confirmed as HIV positive. Basic health staff received prevention of mother-to-child transmission training, especially for point of care HIV testing, providing anti-retroviral prophylaxis and referral mechanism for HIV infected mother-baby pairs to anti-retroviral treatment centres during pre-service training and on-the-job training at township and state/regional level. UNICEF also supported the National AIDS Programme to establish electronic patient management and record system (OpenMRS) to improve patient management and data linkages across the continuum of care. The software installation and training on its use were gradually scaled up and included 16 new ante-retroviral treatment sites from Mandalay and Naypyidaw regions during 2018.

In 2018 UNICEF Myanmar continued to advance the early childhood development agenda. UNICEF further refined its strategy with support from the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and ensured that key interventions and strategies were integrated into the Government's new Multi-Sector National Plan of Action on Nutrition. In the health sector, platforms and programmatic entry points continued to be used to advance early childhood

development. These included the integration of early stimulation and growth monitoring promotion in the national nutrition infant and young child feeding programme, and kangaroo mother care and WASH in health facilities as part of the quality of newborn care under the emergency paediatric care programme and MNCP, currently covering 18 district hospitals. A nutrition-WASH-early childhood development theory of change workshop was conducted in Shan region in collaboration with several ministries and with UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office support. The workshop identified key programmatic entry points in health, nutrition, WASH, child protection, communication for development and social policy to strengthen integrated early childhood development in Myanmar.

In March 2018, UNICEF and other UN partners supported the midterm review of the National Strategic Plan for Young People's Health 2016-2020. The review further defined an effective, integrated operational plan for adolescents and young people's health, to promote their healthy living and lifestyles. Through UNICEF's advocacy and technical support, consensus was achieved among government and development partners for inclusion of adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights as a component of national policy. Due to the cross-cutting and cross-programmatic nature and need for a multi-sectoral approach for young people's health, the Ministry of Health and Sports planned to develop an integrated national social policy for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. UNICEF was a key technical partner for that effort.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

In 2018 UNICEF's commitment was to contribute to strengthen systems for improving access to and quality of early learning, inclusive basic education, education for boys and girls who are out of school and children affected by emergencies. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, UNICEF supported implementation of the National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021 and Early Childhood Care and Development Policy.

The primary education completion rates improved, from 64.2 per cent in 2015-2016 to 67 per cent in 2017-2018 for boys and from 69.6 per cent to 71 per cent for girls. Completion rates for lower secondary education also increased, from 65.1 per cent in 2016 to 76.2 per cent in 2017-2018 for boys, and from 76.6 per cent to 83.7 per cent for girls. The kindergarten enrolment slightly decreased, from 1,001,076 children (511,967 boys and 489,109 girls) in 2017 to 961,160 (490,184 boys and 470,976 girls) in 2018.

UNICEF facilitated the Government's work to advance operationalization of the 2014 early childhood care and development policy, including the finalization of the first costed strategic plan in that area, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. UNICEF also facilitated the updates of indicators to assess quality of early learning services and development of modules for in-service kindergarten teacher education programme.

Under the leadership of Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, UNICEF led the work to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate and gender sensitive materials for children aged 3-4 years in partnership with 25 Ethnic Language and Cultural Committees. Materials were developed in 10 languages by mid-December. They will be used to support young children's learning in their home languages, which will contribute to promoting social cohesion.

Per the National Curriculum Framework, local governments in five states developed local curricula with UNICEF support. To date, materials for lower grades of primary school have been developed in Chin and the Chief Minister of Kayah allocated funds from the state government budget to develop materials. Local curricula provide an opportunity to contextualise the content of teaching and learning and to promote inter-cultural respect and understanding.

A total of 7,500 adolescents, including 3,941 girls, in 177 target secondary schools participated in a pilot initiative revitalizing school-based student clubs, with the ultimate goal of reducing dropouts in two states and two regions. The Ministry of Education, with UNICEF support and in partnership with civil society organizations, is expected to produce evidence to inform the revision of its guidelines on student teams and group activities to promote students' participation in school.

To improve the quality of education, with UNICEF support, more than 8,000 teachers reinforced their competency in child-centred teaching methodology through in-service teacher training. The training took into account gender responsiveness and benefited more than 618,000 children. Head teacher training became government-owned training for all 46,000 head teachers, to reinforce their instructional leadership skills and knowledge on new topics, including inclusive education and early learning. UNICEF support for innovation in assessment advanced under the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Matrix initiative, with the first main survey in Myanmar planned for January 2019.

To strengthen equity-based planning and budgeting for education at the sub-national level, with UNICEF support, 35 townships developed evidence-based, disaster risk-sensitive Township Education Improvement Plans. Following the successful completion of the Out-of-School Children Study in 2018, more than 530 stakeholders from 11 ministries at sub-national level supported awareness raising on this issue within their localities, focusing on communication for development and attention to children with disabilities. With UNICEF's expertise and support, an education budget brief was developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning and Finance. It served as a capacity building exercise for the ministries and will inform equity-based education planning and budgeting.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to finalize the alternative education subsector framework, through a consultative process that brought the Government and non-governmental organizations together to agree on key features of the framework to support out-of-school children. A total of 7,896 children (3,367 girls and 4,529 boys) participated in the non-formal primary education programme, which provides a second chance education opportunity to out-of-school children 11-14 years old to complete primary education and have the chance to go to middle school.

In Rakhine State, despite the increasing complexity of the operating environment, especially in northern and central Rakhine, UNICEF continued to play a key role in ensuring that children affected by conflict had continuous access to education. UNICEF-supported construction work enabled more than 7,600 children to access 14 child-friendly schools in 2018, reaching, cumulatively, more than 30,000 children learning in 93 child-friendly schools throughout the state since 2016. A total of 13,301 children (5,966 girls, 7,335 boys) received education through temporary learning classrooms in internally displaced persons camps in central Rakhine. A total of 69,990 children (35,695 boys and 34,295 girls) aged 3- 17 years across the

state received education and recreational materials. In December, an agreement was reached between UNICEF and the UK Department for International Development to initiate the Learning Together initiative in 2019 in northern Rakhine. The initiative will promote inclusion and social cohesion in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Rakhine State Government.

In humanitarian situations, 26,472 children (13,765 boys and 12,707 girls) aged 3-17 were supported by UNICEF to access formal and non-formal basic education (approximately 62 percent of the 2018 target). A total of 78,007 children (40,564 girls, 37,443 boys) received education in emergency supplies to enable learning, exceeding the 2018 target of 29,900. UNICEF also continued to co-lead the education in emergencies programme. As a result of UNICEF's continuous leadership and advocacy conducted jointly with other partners, the Ministry of Education's engagement in the Education in Emergencies sector increased.

UNICEF continued co-chair the Ministry of Education-led Basic Education sub-sector working group and cooperated with other partners to assist the Ministry in strengthening the Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Group. UNICEF collaborated with other development partners to support Myanmar's successful access to a US\$73.7 million grant from Global Partnership for Education, approved in November 2018.

Goal area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

In 2018 UNICEF focused on solidifying the gains in child protection systems development, streamlining tools, generating new evidence and integrating development and humanitarian work wherever appropriate and possible.

UNICEF continued to support the Government of Myanmar in strengthening the national child protection system. Social welfare workforce strengthening progressed through expansion of the national case management system led by Department of Social Welfare to 49 townships and complementary support for the national case management by non-governmental organizations in seven townships. Progress also was made through harmonization of various case management tools to align with the Department of Social Welfare forms; task-shifting of approximately 300 medical social workers managed by the Ministry of Health and Sports to address the child protection caseload; and development of the annual national case management workforce development plan with the Department of Social Welfare. In 2018, 3,395 cases (1,852 males, 1,543 females) of child protection were addressed by the case management system. This resulted in additional social work capacity for child protection and in enhanced quality in management of statutory cases at the sub-national level.

UNICEF continued to work with the UN Population Fund to create a harmonized approach to gender-based violence and violence against children response, under a common framework of operation. In 2018 an integrated standard operating procedure (SOP) of the Case Management System, including gender-based violence perspectives, was finalized. The revised version will lay the foundation for the Department of Social Welfare and non-governmental organization partners to harmonize their approach in delivering services to all vulnerable groups.

UNICEF was a major contributor to legislative processes concerning children and child protection. UNICEF was the only UN agency that continued providing regular and direct technical advice to the Government of Myanmar in the finalization of the revised Child Law, which was benchmarked with international best practices. UNICEF mobilized high-profile high-level human rights missions (OSRSG-Children and Armed Conflict, Special Rapporteur on

Myanmar, Special Envoy on Myanmar, Independent International Fact Finding Mission) to convey key advocacy messages on the revised Child Law throughout the year.

With the Tatmadaw listed for two additional grave violations against children (killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence) in 2018, UNICEF faced the formidable task of engaging the Government in setting up separate measures and mechanisms, in addition to the existing Joint Action Plan to end under-age recruitment. In 2018 there was significant progress in the Children and Armed Conflict agenda. Capitalizing on the visit of the SRSG-CAAC to Myanmar in May, UNICEF, as co-chair of the Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), led high-level engagements with the Government and the Tatmadaw. A common children and armed conflict advocacy agenda was established, Heads of Agency-level Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism meetings were revitalized, the UNSC Working Group member states briefing was introduced, and regular conference calls with OSRSG-CAAC were organized.

The evidence of emerging patterns of violations triggered necessary changes in the MRM strategy to expand interventions to end and prevent all six grave violations. UNICEF adopted more evidence-based and risk-informed programming for MRM through regular 'hotspot' analysis of the MRM data and mapping of actors. Coverage was expanded with the introduction of trained 'eyes and ears' in remote conflict-affected areas. There was systematic tracking of trained monitors and their performance, and regular updates of the structured risk registry in key conflict-affected areas.

UNICEF assisted children affected by emergencies through psychosocial support, a life skills programme, mine risk education, and case management. As of November 2018, approximately 116,170 children benefited from humanitarian action. A total of 36,295 children received psychosocial support, including access to child-friendly spaces with inter-sectoral programming interventions. A total of 13,226 adolescents were reached with life skills programming that built key protective skills and resilience. More than 3,000 children who were survivors of abuse or violence received case management services in humanitarian settings. UNICEF, as child protection sub-sector lead, progressively applied the 'localization' approach wherever appropriate, to expand the programme's reach to remote, hard-to-access areas and contribute to the sustainability of child protection response in emergency.

In 2018, UNICEF Myanmar launched a new migration programme in the framework of the European Union-funded cross-regional programme, 'Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South, and Central Asia.' The programme focuses on increasing cross-sectoral coordination among social welfare, justice and immigration authorities and addressing the needs of children on the move internally and across the borders who are facing detention or other protection concerns. Inclusion of children on the move in emerging child protection systems in Myanmar is one of the main objectives of the programme. Through the programme, UNICEF Myanmar strengthened links with other protection partners and UNICEF offices within the East Asia and Pacific region.

UNICEF accelerated efforts to build the knowledge base on child protection. In 2018, a number of analyses and studies related to use of deprivation of liberty, children on the move and violence against children were initiated. These included a Legal Analysis of the Rights and Protections for Children in Conflict with the Law in Myanmar; secondary analysis of DHS/census/MICS on the situation of violence against children; and operational research on social norms underpinning violence affecting adolescents in Myanmar.

In 2018 the Department of Social Welfare's portfolio was split, resulting in the creation of an additional unit, the Department of Rehabilitation. This could be a welcome programmatic development as it could potentially reduce the silo mentality for some thematic areas, such as migration. At year end, functions and responsibilities of the new department were still under development, and matching human resources were not available. Division of labour and operational modalities between the two departments were not yet fully resolved, with no additional human resources appointed at sub-national level. This slowed the pace of programme implementation.

Goal area 4: Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

Ensuring equitable access to and utilization of sustainable, universal, safe, adequate and affordable WASH services across the lifecycle of vulnerable people in the targeted states and regions remained the focus of the UNICEF WASH programme. Priorities included strengthening the enabling environment and capacity development of government partners in rural WASH service delivery and WASH in institutional sub-sectors. Protracted emergencies resulted in large numbers of internally displaced persons who required longer-term humanitarian support. UNICEF continued to provide humanitarian assistance, including WASH cluster leadership and coordination support.

UNICEF's technical assistance included defining SDG targets and baselines; development of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030) with a specific focus on ensuring WASH in Schools (WinS) and WASH in Healthcare Facilities (WinHCF). Improvement of Education management Information System indicators and ongoing support to the Department for Rural to set up a water supply monitoring system were also progressing. This put in place a strong nationally-led foundational requirement to link local level indicators to global indicators and created consistency in WASH sector planning, monitoring and reporting. UNICEF supported the sector through initiation of national sanitation policy development, Thant Shin Star guidebook for WASH in Schools and water supply guidelines. Emphasis was placed on institutional and human resource capacity development of government partners to fulfil sector roles and responsibilities, including training for Department of Rural engineers, Department for Basic Education staff, and basic health staff.

Coordination and the tracking of budgets and expenditures under different ministries and departments remained a challenge in the WASH sector.

With support from UNICEF, 110,000 people gained access to basic water supply facilities through construction of community-managed household water connections. This effort was scaled up through the Department for Rural (DRD) to 1,269 communities covering more than 1 million people in 2017/2018, at a cost of US\$9.69 million. The Department allocated US\$17.52 million for 2018/2019 to cover 1.5 million people from 2,169 communities. The national WASH strategy states that communities must contribute at least 30 per cent of water supply system costs. This has created challenges for the poorest communities to participate in community-managed household water connection systems. This issue needs to be reviewed during the National WASH Strategy review process. Women's participation in Water User Committees, planning and implementation of water projects was significant.

With approval from the Ministry of Health and Sports, the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy development process began, in partnership with the World Health Organization and the

Department of Public Health. A new open defecation-free campaign modality was developed and was being demonstrated in Southern Shan State in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports. In this new modality, the basic health staff and rural health centres are the centre points for leading the open defecation-free campaign initiatives. The Ministry agreed to move from the community-led total sanitation approach to the community actions for total sanitation approach, which encompasses demand creation and supply chain strengthening work. Mainstreaming of such work within the Ministry system began. With direct support from UNICEF, 214 villages became open defecation-free, through which 151,018 people were living in clean environments. Implementing partners ensured women's and school children's participation in every stage of the open defecation campaigns. For the first time in Myanmar, an entire township (Myinmu township, with 84 villages) in Sagaing Region was declared open defecation free. The average open defecation free conversion rate was 66 per cent.

Policy support, capacity building and strengthening national monitoring systems were undertaken with the Ministries of Education and Health and Sports. A focus was placed on embedding relevant SDG indicators into respective ministry information management systems. Innovative approaches to deliver WASH in schools directly through the Department for Basic Education and parent teacher associations delivered promising results. Through UNICEF support, a total of 304 schools (covering approximately 37,642 children) and 34 health centres (covering approximately 27,079 households) received basic WASH facilities. The World Health Organization and WaterAid were notable supporters of WASH in health care sector development and worked closely with UNICEF to push technical working groups forward to review research and develop standards.

Gender analysis, including collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data, was strengthened through support to monitoring systems. Inclusion of gender sensitive indicators in the WASH in schools guidelines, school girls' participation in daily group hand-washing activities in schools, and establishment of menstrual hygiene management rooms in project schools were considered.

UNICEF continued its partnerships with national and international nongovernmental organizations for humanitarian assistance in conflict and disaster affected areas. UNICEF provided WASH cluster leadership and coordination support at national and subnational levels. WASH cluster partners contributed significantly to achieving WASH cluster targets.

Multiple protracted and complex humanitarian crises continued to impact Myanmar's WASH sector, affecting more than 941,351 people (26 per cent internally displaced persons). UNICEF supported multiple activities to enhance coordination, preparedness, advocacy, capacity development and knowledge management. Humanitarian responses were localized in Kachin and northern Shan, nevertheless INGOS remaining predominant in Rakhine. Hygiene supplies provided as part of humanitarian response included appropriate menstruation management materials for girls and women. Sanitation facilities in internally displaced person camps included clean, safe and sex-segregated latrines with doors and locks and means of sanitary disposal.

Transitioning between the WASH cluster and government processes was not very successful in conflict-affected states. The Government increased leadership and coordination on response to floods at national and sub national levels. UNICEF and the WASH cluster provided capacity building support to key government partners, which contributed to preparedness and timely and efficient humanitarian action. UNICEF reached an estimated 333,910 people with humanitarian

WASH response through civil society organizations, government counterparts and direct implementation across seven states and regions covering protracted internally displaced persons emergencies and monsoon floods. Protracted crises led to increased linkages between humanitarian and development actions. WASH development programmes continued in states where humanitarian response was ongoing.

Goal area 5: Every child has an equitable chance in life

Through dedicated technical support and evidence-based advocacy, UNICEF contributed to strengthening the policy environment and integrated social programmes aimed at improving equity for children in Myanmar.

The launch of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan in 2018 represented a comprehensive and nationally-led development vision for the country, and included a set of actionable strategies and action plans. That Plan and recently formulated social sector plans, such as the Multi-Sector National Plan of Action on Nutrition and the Costed Medium-term Social Protection Sector Plan, reaffirmed Myanmar's robust commitment to achieving equitable development outcomes. The development of the National Indicators Framework accompanying the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan is a step forward for Myanmar to clearly identify priorities and mechanisms to measure them. The framework was developed in a consultative manner under the leadership of the Central Statistical Organization, and was expected to be completed by mid-2019. The draft version includes numerous child-relevant indicators and many of the national priority SDG indicators for children, as identified with UNICEF support through collaboration with civil society organizations the Department of Social Welfare. Child poverty, expressed both in monetary and multi-dimensional terms, was included as a priority indicator for children. This represents an opportunity to fill the current data gap.

The Union Budget Law 2018/19 allocated 13.8 per cent of total resources to social sectors' Ministries (Education, Health and Sports, Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement), compared to 11.7 per cent in 2018 (6-month transitional budget) and 12.8 per cent in 2017/18. This confirms a positive trend of consistent government commitment to invest in social sectors. Support remains more visible in the social welfare and education sectors compared to health. UNICEF's flagship contribution in 2018 remained its support to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement's PFM, focused on strengthening the Ministry's strategic planning capacity, and which contributed to another increase in its budget allocation (to 0.41 per cent of total Government budget for Fiscal Year 2018-19). UNICEF expanded its work on public finance for children through a formal partnership with the Budget Department of the Ministry of Planning and Finance for the first time. Progress was also made in support to local planning through the process to develop a local social plan for Shan State, which reached its final stages by the end of 2018.

UNICEF's efforts on birth registration in 2018 focused on translating the important commitments of the revised Vital Registration Manual (endorsed in 2017) into practice. Three birth registration campaigns were conducted in three States/Regions (Naypyidaw, Tanintharyi and Shan South), during which the application of the universal approach was implemented. The campaigns helped to address the backlog of unregistered children by targeting all unregistered children under the age of 10. Campaign data indicated that the gap in birth registration in those areas was closed, through the registration of nearly 130,000 children under 10. Qualitative data was collected during the campaigns to help understand some of the barriers and enablers to birth registration. That information will be used to guide future

campaigns.

UNICEF provided significant policy advocacy and sector coordination support to the Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement in its facilitation role of the Social Protection Sub-Sector Coordination Group. Key achievements in this role included the endorsement of Myanmar's first-ever Costed Medium Term Social Protection Sector Plan (October 2018) and the development of a draft roadmap to make social protection more shock-responsive in Myanmar (November 2018). UNICEF's ability to engage world-class technical expertise to complete both of those products was highly appreciated. Synergies were maximized between processes for both, which were consultative and comprehensive. UNICEF also continued its role as a lead technical partner for the expansion of the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer programme, especially in Rakhine and Chin States. In Rakhine, UNICEF led a Technical Reference Group (comprised of UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Programme, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee) that advised the Department of Social Welfare to help design the programme to be implemented in a universal, inclusive and systems-base manner. This was delivered through a package of implementation and monitoring and evaluation tools. Through progressive utilization of the TRG recommended tools, more than 65,000 beneficiaries were reached in all townships and internally displaced person camps of Rakhine state by December 2018. In Chin state, UNICEF contributed to improve the maternal and child cash transfer programme design, through the support to the Department of Social Welfare to incorporate findings from the Post-Distribution Monitoring exercise. UNICEF played a critical role in the design and rollout of the social behaviour change communication component of the programme, aimed at improving social behaviours around ante- and post-natal care, child and maternal nutrition, and early child development. From 2016 to 2018, the maternal and child cash transfer programme reached almost 100,000 women who were pregnant and children 0-2.

In 2018 UNICEF continued its commitment to build capacity to deliver high value gender equality results. Through strategic investments, UNICEF boosted gender expertise in the Department of Social Welfare, and jointly conducted a gender mainstreaming training for 50 frontline workers from civil society organizations, faith-based organizations and Department of Social Welfare staff. The training focused on advancing the well-being, rights and socio-economic position of women and girls.

UNICEF continued to reach the most vulnerable children and adolescents living in conflict-affected areas in northern/central Rakhine, Kachin and Shan. UNICEF initiated evidence-informed reprogramming of adolescent-targeted interventions that included life skills training, civic engagement/community development and psychosocial support, all of which were intended to provide skills to prevent or mitigate violence, abuse and exploitation. This included tackling life-saving issues such as mine risk and risky migration that can end in trafficking and exploitation. Close links with the gender-based violence sub-sector working group and education in emergencies sector working group were sought to improve adolescent programming and ensure needs were met in humanitarian settings. In Kachin, Shan and Rakhine, many adolescents were exposed to grave violations by armed forces and groups, including use and recruitment, sexual violence, use of schools and killing and maiming. UNICEF, as a co-chair of the Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, responded with necessary age- and gender-appropriate victim support, reconciliation and prevention.

Adolescent participation in WASH activities contributed to achieve WASH programme results,

mainly in WASH in schools and open defecation-free campaigns. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health and Sports, UNICEF developed the Minimum Requirements for WASH in Schools and a guidebook that addresses adolescent girls' needs and concerns, including menstrual hygiene management.

In 2018, UNICEF supported 88 secondary schools with improved WASH facilities benefitting 18,346 school children (51 per cent of them girls). Many joint WASH activities were organized, including WASH clubs, hygiene promotion, group hand washing and peer to peer education. Menstrual hygiene management sessions contributed to increasing dignity for girls and understanding and respect from boys.

Gender disaggregated toilets were established in internally displaced persons camps. The family hygiene kits provided in camps included sanitary pads and underwear as per cluster standard. The WASH cluster supported ongoing research on menstrual hygiene management improvements, including innovative small-scale incinerators to provide effective disposal of used sanitary pads.

During the open defecation free campaigns, especially at the triggering stage, separate adolescent groups were formed that contributed to planning and implementation of campaign activities. Adolescent girls and women living in open defecation free communities in 214 rural villages had access to safe and secure sanitation facilities.

Participation of adolescent girls in school WASH activities and open defecation free campaigns contributed to social development in rural areas and increased the capacity and confidence of young girls.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

2018 was the first year of the new UNICEF Country Programme, so it was expected it would take time to put in place the various planning, programming and operational elements needed to commence implementation. With the facilitation and coordination of the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Multi-Year Work Plans for 2018-2019 were finalized and signed off by the respective government ministries and by UNICEF before the end of the first quarter of the year. Based on those plans, an extensive process involving soliciting and evaluating expressions of interest was undertaken to identify suitable civil society organizations as partners for the relevant activities. This process led to a more transparent and justifiable selection of partners and provided an extensive database of potential future partners.

The monitoring and evaluation framework for the country programme was put in place, with extensive use of the standard indicators as well as the development of a results tracking and monitoring framework that facilitates the regular review of progress against key indicators for all sections.

The country context poses significant challenges across the whole programme, particularly in terms of the need to address both humanitarian and development priorities, as well as the constraints in mobilizing adequate funding. The rapidly changing context means that UNICEF needs to constantly keep close oversight of programme direction, funds, budgets and staffing levels and be prepared to make adjustments as necessary. The ongoing review of the CPMP is an example of this oversight.

Lessons learned and constraints experienced in the each particular goal area are summarized below.

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

UNICEF and its partners faced continuing physical access constraints in humanitarian and conflict-affected areas, which slowly improved towards the end of the year, but led to underachievement of some HAC targets in the health and nutrition sector.

The emergency paediatric care programme greatly increased the ability of staff to implement changes in practice. Integration of technical training and quality improvement initiatives were supported with mentoring triggered corrective actions. Some systems, particularly around information management, showed less progress. This suggests the important role of senior hospital leadership in supporting the implementation measures to create an enabling environment for trainees to apply their newly acquired skills.

Key lessons learned in nutrition included the importance of strengthening partnerships and forging alliances with other UN agencies and partners, including the World Bank, donors and nongovernmental organizations to leverage resources in a sector that has limited funding, as well as to conduct joint advocacy. Joint advocacy played a catalytic role in high-level government multi-sectoral coordination and partner-coordinated plans led by the Ministry of Health and Sports to scale-up nutrition in conflicted affected areas. The Scaling Up Nutrition country network, in which UNICEF continued to be an active player, was a critical platform in Myanmar, bringing together key stakeholders toward these efforts.

Social behaviour change communication support on the maternal and child cash transfer programme was delayed due to coordination challenges between the Ministry of Health and Sports and Department of Social Welfare. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health and Sports to develop a national social behaviour change communication/communication for development strategy in 2019, which will be rolled out in parallel with maternal and child cash transfer expansion.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

One of the lessons learned through the review of the child friendly school teacher training completed in 2018 was the need to emphasize the institutionalization process. Taking this into consideration, UNICEF supported the establishment of a reference group to oversee a review that ensured government ownership and led to the decision to develop a national framework for In-Service Teacher Education, also known as Continuous Professional Development. This work was part of UN joint work in this area. UNICEF collaboration with UNESCO will further support the Ministry of Education in this area.

During 2018, programme implementation was affected by several challenges. Funding limitations affected UNICEF's ability to support Education in Emergencies. Only 43 per cent of the targeted amount was mobilized. Going forward, UNICEF will increase efforts to mobilize resources, jointly with other UN agencies and partners. The Government's long approval process for activities and lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities among different stakeholders adversely affected work plan implementation. UNICEF promoted dialogue and consensus building among those players. Limited access to some conflict-affected areas limited UNICEF's ability to monitor programmes.

UNICEF will continue to explore options to address that challenge.

Going forward, UNICEF will continue to partner with the Government and others to ensure that all children in Myanmar have their right to quality education fulfilled.

Goal area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

Alliances with other UN agencies and institutions played a critical role in 2018. This included partnerships with the UN Population Fund UN Women, the International Labour Organization and RCO to ensure shared technical and advocacy positions on child marriage, age of sexual consent, criminalization of child abuse and introduction of the minimum age of entry into employment in relation to the revised Child Law. Collaboration among UN heads of agencies was leveraged to advance the children and armed conflict agenda as part of human rights protection and promotion in Myanmar. UNICEF made sure heads of agencies were regularly informed of technical level discussions and agreements, which contributed to creating a common voice and advocacy messages on children and armed conflict across the UN System.

Goal area 4: Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

Innovation is a prerequisite for scaling up of rural sanitation (open defecation-free campaign initiatives) and school WASH programmes. The new programming models and approaches introduced by UNICEF for mainstreaming open defecation campaigns (in Southern Shan) and school WASH programme (in Kachin and Chin) into the government system achieved positive results.

Results in the rural water supply sub-sector were very encouraging. UNICEF introduced community managed household water metering systems in 226 villages in 2017-2018, and the Department for Rural replicated and scaled up this approach to 1,269 villages in 2017-18.

Goal area 5: Every child has an equitable chance in life

Implementation of activities was often affected by turnover of staff, changes in prioritization within the Government, or miscommunication. This can be addressed by improved micro-level joint planning with counterparts at the beginning of the year and clearer communication, including through assignment of focal points.

Looking forward

Going forward, UNICEF Myanmar will transition to the second year of the country programme using the approved multi-year work plan 2018-19 as the basis for activities. The CPMP review process will be completed during the first quarter of 2019, resulting in a strategy to address working efficiently between the country office and field offices; increasing presence in Nay Pyi Taw; and affordability based on funding availability. During the second half of 2019, a substantial review of progress against the MYWP 2018-19 will be carried out, which will then inform the preparation of a one year extension and provide some indication of the issues that will need to be looked at in more detail leading up to the midterm review of the country programme in 2020.

END/