



Food Security Update- March 2013

Early Warning and Situation Reports

Purpose and Interpretation: Monthly Food Security Updates (FSUs) outline the key events occurring throughout Myanmar that are currently impacting the food security situation. By highlighting these events, it is possible to identify townships where food security status is likely to deteriorate in the short term, facilitating decision-making and response. Methodologically, WFP classifies the severity of shocks as Low, Moderate or High, depending on the likelihood that a shock is significant enough to result in deteriorations in key food security indicators as defined by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN). Indicator scores are then summed to determine a shock severity score. This methodology is summarized below:

FSIN Food Security Classifications	FSIN Key Indicators	Impact on Indicators	Indicator scoring: Low=1; Mod=2; High=3
Generally food secure	Food stocks	Low/ Mod/ High	Shock severity scoring is sum of indicator scores, categorized as follows: Low severity<8; Mod severity>8 and <14 High 14 and above
Moderately food insecure	Purchasing Power	Low/ Mod/ High	
Highly food insecure	Market stocks	Low/ Mod/ High	
Severe Situation	Dietary diversity	Low/ Mod/ High	
Emergency Situation	Hunger Coping	Low/ Mod/ High Low/ Mod/ High	

Early Warning Report--- Key Shocks Reported in March

Severity	Shock	State	Township	Shock severity score	Recent FSIN classifications ¹			Direct effect and likely human impact
					Pre	Mid	Post	
Low	Forest fire	Chin	Matupi	6	■	■	■	<p>Forest fires impacted 1,000 acres (80% of which is used for shifting cultivation) in the Mara region of Matupi township, effecting at least 20-30% of villages or close to 5000 people.</p> <p>As most affected land was planned for cultivation in 2014, this should not impact the food security situation in the short term. However, additional slash and burn activities on the same land next year is likely to have an impact on soil quality and thus yields, affecting production and ultimately food stocks.</p>
Moderate	Communal violence	Mandalay	Meiktila Tharzi Yamethon Tatkon	9	Area not previously monitored by FSIN			<p>Disputes between traders sparked an outbreak of ethnic violence in Meiktila and surrounding townships. In Meiktila, close to 13,000 people were displaced, with an unknown number of houses and religious buildings destroyed. Overall, 22 IDP camps were initially established.</p> <p>Findings from a multi-sector rapid assessment indicate that food needs are currently being met and few households are experiencing shortages. Findings also indicated that IDPs in 4 of the 22 camps returned to their homes within a week of the violence. This said, fears of continued violence remain, threatening livelihoods and household incomes. If fear and uncertainty persist, reduced incomes will translate into lower household purchasing power, lower food stocks and deteriorations in dietary diversity.</p>
High	Nothing to Report							



Actions Taken/ Needed

Forest fire—In Chin, WFP will continue to monitor the situation to ensure the fire does not affect the coming cropping season. Once the impacts of the fire are better understood, it may be possible to put in place mitigation measures that would help minimize future crop losses.

Communal violence --- In Meiktila, WFP and partners immediately provided food assistance to displaced persons in the form of a two week ration. Overall, 63.6 MT of food (Rice, Oil, Pulses, Salt and Blended food) were distributed to more than 10,000 IDPs. WFP will continue to provide food to the displaced, per government request. WFP was also active in the multi-sectoral assessment coordinated by OCHA in the aftermath of the violence.

¹ FSIN food security classifications are made pre-monsoon, mid-monsoon and post-monsoon. Classifications included in the table above detail the last three classifications observed in periodic monitoring rounds prior to the monthly report.



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Situation Report

Conflict continues to threaten health and livelihoods; Water shortages are exacerbating problems

Water shortages have become a problem in most IDP camps as the summer season begins. Water shortages and dusty, unclean environments are blamed for an increase in diarrheal disease and measles in Zai Awng IDP camp in Sadaung.

Kachin

IDP populations remained relatively stable in March, showing only slight increases in Non-Government Controlled areas. According to the Relief and Resettlement Department, there were a total of 35,224 IDPs in Myitkyina, Bhamo, Moe Nyin and Putao districts and 47,481 in Non-Government Controlled areas. WFP, in collaboration with partners, provided assistance to more than 30,000 IDPs in March, distributing 497 MT of food.

N. Shan

Water shortages are currently being experienced in parts of northern Shan State. WFP is reporting that rainwater collection ponds are depleted (and other water sources also dried up) in Htite Pyin Shan Village Tract in Laukai Township and Xing Tang Village Tract in Konkyan Township.

Sugar cane harvesting is on-going but yields throughout northern Shan state are reduced due to irregular rains last year. Likewise, 10 Metric Tons (MTs) of sugarcane were damaged by fire in Muse Township further aggravating losses. With reductions in overall yields, sugar cane prices are higher than normal.

In Kutkai township, measles was reported at Mone See IDP camp and limited outbreaks of diarrhea were observed in Mine Yu IDP camp. WFP continued relief assistance to IDPs, with 133 MT of food distributed to 8,078 displaced persons in March.

Rakhine

In central Rakhine, concerns continue to mount regarding the impact of the coming rains on the health and well-being of IDP populations in flood prone areas. Overall, 13 camps have been identified as flood prone and there are serious concerns that water sources will be contaminated in the event of floods, leading to outbreaks of water-borne diseases. In response, UNHCR has prioritized the building of temporary shelters in new relocation sites in Pauktaw and Myebon.

WFP continues to provide assistance to IDPs in Sittwe, Kyauktaw, Kyauk Phyu, Min Bya, Mrauk U, Myebon, Pauktaw, Ramree, Rathedaung and Maungdaw. WFP delivered 2,100 MTs of food to over 126,000 IDPs in March. WFP has also finalized proposals for Cash-for-Work projects for selected non-displaced populations in Sittwe. Projects will begin after the Water Festival.

Concerns have been expressed over the nutrition situation in Maungdaw as access to ACF nutrition centres has become more difficult. This is related to the tightening of security at checkpoints at the entrance to downtown Maungdaw. (Source: ACF)

Water shortages are impacting the health of both villagers and livestock

Magway

With water ponds drying faster than normal, households in Chauk, Yenanchaung and Pauk are forced to purchase water from tube well owners or walk to surrounding villages where water is still available. As detailed in a recent food security update from the Dry Zone, shortages are now affecting hygiene conditions in certain villages and continue to place additional pressures on the health of livestock. In fact, there are reports of significant diarrheal outbreaks amongst cattle in Thit To Kan, Nyaung Sin, Yar Ma, Kan Thit Kone, Na Yway Taw and Hten Su villages in Chauk township. The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department visited these villages to assess the situation.

Concerns over water shortages are compounded by reports of pulse crop failures related to irregular rains during the last monsoon. The impact of these crop failures on food stocks and household purchasing power will need to be monitored as the summer season progresses.

Reports continue of generalized crop failures in Chin

Chin

According to partner reports and WFP field staff observations, food stocks are running low across Chin State. In Matupi, close to 50% of farmers report at least 1-2 months of food stock remaining while the rest report less than one month. In Tedim township, by contrast, food stocks in many villages are largely expired with households forced to buy rice or maize from surplus producing villages or from the township market in Tedim.

As detailed in the February Monthly Update, the length of the food gap remains a concern and WFP will continue to monitor reports of acute shortages as they emerge. Chronically insufficient harvests, however, need also to be addressed with longer-term, developmental projects to address the root causes of these issues.

Source of information for Monthly Updates

WFP synthesizes information from a variety of sources, including observations from WFP and partner field staff, information from WFP and partner assessment activities, community reports or requests for assistance, government requests for action and information from media outlets. Monthly Updates can be accessed online at <http://www.wfp.org/countries/myanmar/food-security/reports-and-bulletins>.

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