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myanmar

Humanitarian Country Team Advocacy and Communication Strategy

2013

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1. introduction

The formation of the Myanmar Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in early 2010 provided the opportunity to develop a unique platform for strategic advocacy and communication on behalf of the wider humanitarian community. The period of 2011 and 2012 saw significant political changes in Myanmar including political and economic reforms encouraging freedom of expression and an opening up to foreign trade and investment. The humanitarian and operational environment also changed significantly with new humanitarian challenges and populations requiring support - particularly in Rakhine and Kachin States - adding to already significant numbers of people displaced by previous conflict.

Current events require a renewed focus on humanitarian advocacy and communication to ensure effective response to humanitarian needs in Myanmar. The rapidly changing environment in Myanmar poses major challenges for humanitarian advocacy and communication efforts with much of the focus on Myanmar's rapid development and political reform process. This often results in insufficient analysis of protection concerns, conflict drivers as well as structural and institutional challenges, adherence to humanitarian principles, and respect for the required conditions for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

There has been some limited progress over the past 12 months in support of enhanced humanitarian advocacy and communication. An HCT strategy was developed for the Rakhine response in 2012 and an independent study carried out in 2013 in Rakhine State aimed at better informing operations there, particularly in relation to communicating with affected communities.

In 2013, an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) team also reviewed the performance of the HCT and recommended that an HCT Communication Strategy on Myanmar be developed. As a result, the HCT agreed to scale-up joint advocacy efforts in order to address urgent underlying factors undermining progress across the country. This includes inequality between groups, chronic poverty and poor access to livelihoods and basic services, lack of freedom of movement and humanitarian access, application of the rule of law, issues of impunity (particularly of the security forces), and protection of human rights including the right to a nationality (citizenship).

This strategy is guided by and builds upon these recommendations by drawing attention to key humanitarian, including protection, issues across Myanmar, and proposing actions required to better address the root-causes of vulnerability and humanitarian need including with a view towards durable solutions and enhanced development outcomes. The strategy also identifies the key stakeholders most likely to influence the humanitarian situation across Myanmar. Associated tools and tactics are also highlighted.

Results-based humanitarian assistance across Myanmar necessitates strong and effective humanitarian advocacy aimed at addressing the environmental, institutional, policy, legal, resourcing and other issues constituting and/or influencing the root causes of humanitarian need and vulnerability. The strategy recognizes that in addition to expressions of individual agency concern, collective messaging frequently leads to better advocacy outcomes. The strategy both seeks to bring about long-term advocacy goals and supports calls to action deemed feasible and realistic within short-term windows of opportunity. The strategy thus brings together and builds upon various elements developed collectively over the last 12 months into one coherent vision.

This strategy has been jointly prepared by the Humanitarian Advocacy and Communication Group (HACG) and endorsed by the HCT on behalf of its members. It thus constitutes a collective commitment to undertake joint messaging wherever possible, while ensuring the existing advocacy forums such as clusters, or for example the Humanitarian Protection Working Group continue in parallel to maintain a distinct and strong voice on relevant issues. As a minimum, at all times, complementary messaging will be prioritized by the member agencies of the HCT.

The strategy is a living document that will be updated at regular intervals and while its focus is currently on humanitarian operations in Rakhine and Kachin, as international humanitarian organisations access to other areas increases, it is anticipated the strategy will evolve to include the whole country over time to reflect the evolving nature of the potential humanitarian situation in the future.

**2. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT**

Myanmar ranked first on OCHA’s list of most at-risk Asia-Pacific countries in 2012. Despite being a resource-rich country with a strong agricultural base, its population of an estimated 60 million people is among the poorest in the world. Years of conflict, violations of human rights and unresolved ethnic tensions have contributed to the displacement of up to 600,000 people nationally in addition to an exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries.

**Humanitarian Caseloads**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Number of Affected People** |
| Kachin State | 100,000 displaced in camps in Kachin and northern Shan States (over 50,000 in non-government controlled areas)  |
| Rakhine State | 140,000 displaced people in 76 camps and 36,000 people living in isolated and host communities |
| Meikhtila  | 6,800 displaced people since March 2013 |
| South-East Myanmar | Up to 400,000 people in 36 townships internally displaced |
| Thailand  | 147,000 people (84,900 registered refugees and an estimated 62,000 unregistered asylum-seekers from Myanmar in nine camps along the Thai-Myanmar border) |
| Bangladesh | 230,000 (30,000 registered refugees and 200,000 unregistered individuals from Rakhine, mostly Rohingya Muslims) |

Rapid progress resulting from democratization, peace processes and economic development across Myanmar are an indication of the significant changes instituted since the 2010 national elections and the appointment of the new government in March 2011. While Myanmar’s current progress and reform is nothing short of remarkable, a number of humanitarian issues remain.

**Armed Conflict and Inter-Communal Violence**

Over the course of 2011-2013, multiple humanitarian emergencies have broken out. Across Rakhine State, over 140,000 people remain displaced due to two major episodes of inter-communal violence in June and October 2012, accompanied in part by involvement, collusion or lack of action of State forces to protect those affected and take action against perpetrators. While humanitarian organisations and donors continue to deliver emergency relief across Rakhine State, advocacy needs to be enhanced to better ensure humanitarian needs are met and the root causes of inter-communal violence are addressed. Addressing development of the region, and long-standing and ongoing overtly discriminatory public and private policies, as well as citizenship, economic and other grievances of the population will be essential in ensuring durable solutions aimed at ending the need for humanitarian assistance.

Similarly across Kachin State, an estimated 100,000 people remain displaced due to recent conflict between the Kachin Independence Army and the Myanmar Government. The recent agreement to de-escalate the conflict is welcomed by international humanitarian organisations. While humanitarian assistance will remain essential, if the progress on peace negotiations continues, there will be an increasing need for early recovery and enhanced development assistance to create pre-conditions (physical, material and legal safety) for safe return will be required to ensure the safe and sustainable return of IDPs and refugees.

In the areas along the Myanmar-Thailand border, there has been some progress towards the resolution of armed conflicts but humanitarian needs remain together with growing demand for development assistance.

In Meikhtila, despite the July 2013 conviction of 19 men for the March 2013 attack on a local madrassah and the subsequent lifting of the state of emergency, some 7,000 people affected by inter-communal violence remain displaced from their homes. Several instances of similar outbreaks of violence across the country have led to other incidents of temporary displacement - a deeply worrying trend. This needs to be closely monitored and countered with preventive action to avoid additional humanitarian emergencies.

Natural Hazards

Myanmar is vulnerable to a wide range of natural hazards. The recent past has witnessed devastating floods, earthquakes and two major cyclones. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis affected 2.4 million people with another 183,000 people affected by Cyclone Giri in 2010. In August 2012, over 280,000 people were affected by flooding across the country. In May 2013, Rakhine State was affected only marginally by Cyclone Mahasen. Effective humanitarian advocacy is needed to better ensure disaster preparedness/mitigation and adequate disaster response measures are in place for a nation that will increasingly witness natural hazards as a result of climate change. Mahasen also demonstrated the increased vulnerability of conflict-affected people to disasters, with many of the areas of conflict mentioned above also being areas of high vulnerability to disaster (e.g. Rakhine). Increased resources from the international community, regional organisations and from the government will also be needed to ensure that disaster preparedness commitments can be scaled up and fully implemented.

**Funding**

Since 2011, donors have committed increasing resources to address the humanitarian needs of displaced populations across Myanmar. While the Kachin and Rakhine response plans have received significant support against estimated needs, a substantial percentage of this funding – 19 per cent as of June 2013 - has had to be provided by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and many humanitarian needs across Myanmar remain unmet. In addition, very limited funding has been made available for DRR activities. Humanitarian advocacy across Myanmar will also therefore aim to better inform donors of the sizable, unmet humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities that remain across the country.

**3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator

The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) is the chief spokesperson on all humanitarian matters affecting Myanmar[[1]](#footnote-2). The RC/HC also leads the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

The Humanitarian Country Team

This strategy is a product of the Humanitarian Advocacy and Communication Group (HACG) on behalf of the HCT. The HCT, with the technical support of the HACG, is responsible for ensuring that this strategy is implemented by international humanitarian organisations as broadly as possible.

International humanitarian organisations as represented by the HCT in Myanmar are not a homogenous entity. Members have their own mandates, programmes and activities and are subject to their own respective policies. Any joint actions and activities, including on advocacy and communication, are therefore voluntary in nature.

However, under the auspices of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 which recognizes the need for humanitarian communities everywhere to strengthen coordination – including for the purpose of effective humanitarian advocacy – the HCT in Myanmar recognizes that coordinated communication sends a strong message locally, regionally and globally that we are a united community working towards the same goals.

International humanitarian organisations in Myanmar, led by the HCT are committed to the concept of "one team, one voice" raising key concerns and engaging duty bearers including by using agreed HCT key messages whenever possible, appropriate, useful and relevant. “One team, one voice” does not mean that only the HC/RC or any other HCT member speaks. Rather, independent advocacy and communication by individual humanitarian organisations is encouraged including in the interests of creating a “force multiplier” advocacy effect.

OCHA, as part of the office of the RC/HC, supports the HCT as Secretariat, including on advocacy and communication across all humanitarian issues. Humanitarian workers will speak in the context of overall cluster/sector needs. Humanitarian workers will actively link with and build partnerships with other relevant stakeholders in order to enlist their support (see “Key Stakeholders and Target Audiences”).

The Humanitarian Advocacy and Communication Group

This strategy has been jointly developed by members of the HACG. The HACG consists of advocacy and communication representatives from humanitarian agencies across Myanmar. The HACG came together in July 2013 and is in its formative stages with active participation at this early stage by OCHA, OHCHR, Oxfam, UNHCR, UNIC, UNICEF, and WFP. It is expected that overtime, more representatives will join, including through the identification by clusters/sectors of advocacy and communication focal points committed to further developing messaging, stakeholders, audiences, tools and communications approach by sector.

Upon the group’s request, OCHA is currently preparing a draft terms of reference for the HACG for discussion. On behalf of the HCT, future HACG activities will encompass but not be limited to: implementation of this strategy; the HCT's strategy for communication with affected communities; enhanced inter-agency humanitarian information management; and drafting of an Emergency Communication Plan for Inter-Agency Contingency Planning.

Wherever appropriate, the HACG’s work will dovetail with and complement other in-country advocacy and communication capacities including the **UN Communication Group** for Myanmar – represented by communication focal points from 15 UN entities and chaired by UNIC. Regionally, there is also the **Communications Network** that is very active on humanitarian issues in Myanmar and assisted with developing the Communication Strategy for Rakhine in September 2012. This Network is chaired by OCHA's Regional Office in Bangkok.

Cluster/Sector Coordination Groups

In November 2012, the HCT took the decision to activate the health, shelter/NFI/CCCM, and WASH clusters for the Rakhine and Kachin emergencies. The Clusters/Sectors established since then are:

Health Cluster – led by WHO

Food Sector – led by WFP

Education Sector – led by Save the Children/UNICEF

Early Recovery Sector – led by UNDP

Shelter/NFI/CCCM Cluster – led by UNHCR

Protection Sector – led by UNHCR

Child Protection Sub-Sector – led by SAVE/UNICEF

Nutrition Sector – led by UNICEF

WASH Sector – led by UNICEF

These cluster/sectors include participation by UN humanitarian agencies, INGOs, local NGOs and the Red Crescent/Red Cross Movement. Sectoral coordination is currently organized around over 100 Technical Working Groups/Sub-Groups. In addition, geographic working groups also focus on specific locations of concern.

4. Guiding Principles

This strategy recognizes that in order to be effective, humanitarian advocacy in Myanmar must promote, protect and respect human rights, seek durable solutions and find ways to promote and support the resilience of people and their communities. Grounded in international law including international human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law and all other relevant international and complimentary domestic norms, guidance and standards, this strategy is guided by the following principles:

1. **The Government’s Primary Responsibility to Protect**: International humanitarian organisations working in Myanmar can only support the Myanmar Government's humanitarian assistance provision, in accordance with its duty to first and foremost take care of those affected by natural disaster and other emergencies (e.g. displacement situations) occurring on its territory. International humanitarian organisations recognize that the magnitude and duration of some emergencies in Myanmar may be beyond the response capacity of relevant authorities and thus work to both supplement national responsibilities and to strengthen the capacity of relevant authorities to respond.
2. **Respect for Human Dignity**: International humanitarian organisations, donors and relevant Myanmar authorities are required to uphold international law at all times. In accordance with international human rights law, this includes upholding the respect and dignity of all affected individuals. It also includes ensuring protection under the law is made available to all.
3. **Humanitarian Principles**: International humanitarian assistance is provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality and is never based on extraneous considerations such as social status, gender, ethnicity, religion, or any other identifying characteristic. Rather, humanitarian assistance should be based on need and vulnerability alone. In accordance with relative need and vulnerability, international humanitarian organisations are committed to assisting crisis-affected people from all communities across Myanmar - be they camp, urban or rural communities whether displaced or not. We affirm the primacy of the humanitarian imperative - that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict wherever it is found across Myanmar, and that nothing should override this principle.
4. **‘Do No Harm’** International humanitarian organisations are aware that attempts to provide humanitarian assistance may sometimes have unintended adverse effects which can increase vulnerabilities. In collaboration with affected communities and relevant authorities across Myanmar, we aim to minimize any negative effects of international humanitarian action on either local communities or the environment. In the delivery of our assistance, we are committed to confidence, credibility and trust-building. We have strictly humanitarian motives and are committed to ‘do no harm’ in all that we do.
5. **Peacebuilding**: We recognize and seek to demonstrate at all times that we have no position on and no role to play in conflict other than to ensure those most in need receive emergency, lifesaving relief and are not affected by repeat incidences of conflict which can create further need and vulnerability.
6. **Protection of Vulnerable Groups**: Vulnerable groups are often in need of enhanced protection. International humanitarian organisations in Myanmar thus pay special attention to needs of vulnerable, higher risk groups including internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, stateless persons, migrants, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women, children, the elderly and human rights defenders. In the interests of ‘do no harm’ and peacebuilding, international humanitarian organisations also work closely with their development counterparts to better ensure development for all. This is important as in areas with particularly low development indicators, humanitarian assistance can sometime unintentionally result in the disproportionate servicing of some groups at the expense of others leading to conflict over limited resources.
7. **Rights-based and People-centred Humanitarian Response**: International humanitarian organisations work together to save lives, alleviate suffering, eradicate poverty, and protect human rights. Our rights-based approach encapsulates a range of established human rights and includes but is not limited to the right to life with dignity, the right to receive humanitarian assistance, the right to physical integrity and protection of person, and the right to a nationality (citizenship). Importantly, we also work to enable communities to become self-sufficient in support of inclusive, peaceful and sustainable solutions to conflict and natural disasters across Myanmar. We recognize that the active participation of the affected people including those in most vulnerable situations, is essential to providing humanitarian assistance in ways that best meet their needs. We endeavour to support local efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to conflict and disaster, and to reinforce the capacities of local actors across Myanmar at all levels.
8. **Effective Community Engagement**: International humanitarian organisations seek to involve communities in the design, planning, management, implementation and evaluation of all programmes. At all times, we commit to upholding democratic, participatory approaches to the delivery of humanitarian assistance across Myanmar. Given that affected communities are typically best able to understand their own needs and vulnerabilities, we are of the collective view that generally the best humanitarian assistance we can deliver will be community-led and driven by those who have been affected. It is important that obstacles to effective participation are also addressed.
9. **Durable Solutions:** Displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances. Finding a durable solution to internal displacement is a gradual and often long-term process of removing fundamental causes of displacement and reducing displacement-specific needs, not an event. The overall guiding principle for national and international actors in providing a durable solution is to give primary consideration to the needs, rights and legitimate interests of the displaced persons themselves, taking into account cross cutting issues such as age and gender. Durable solutions to displacement include voluntary return, (re)integration and/or resettlement (relocation) based on an individual and informed choice. The conditions conducive to the safe return of a displaced population, as well as for local integration or resettlement elsewhere (relocation), are generally defined by three elements of “safety”: physical, material and legal safety. Each situation in Myanmar will have different benchmarks which will have to be identified and met for durable solutions to be pursued appropriately and successfully.
10. **Early Recovery:** International humanitarian organisations across Myanmar recognize there is a clear relationship between emergency, durable solutions, recovery and development and that emergency measures should always aim to strengthen resilience and build back better. The humanitarian community also recognizes that it is not in the interest of the government as well as the people for a prolonged humanitarian assistance phase. The planning and coordination for recovery should start right on the onset of humanitarian assistance delivery. Towards this end, the government should be in the driver’s seat in ensuring that humanitarian phase has a definite end point and recovery planning is institutionalized and mainstreamed. The main aim of early recovery efforts should be to lay the foundation for longer term development. In order to support early recovery, wherever possible, relief expenditures aim to strengthen local institutions, develop human capital, improve local infrastructure and enhance local productive capacity.
11. **Relief and Development Simultaneously:** Our advocacy will remind the international community that in addition to emergency relief needs, Myanmar has some of the lowest development indicators globally and that a sustainable peace across Myanmar is largely dependent on poverty reduction, including through the equitable distribution of Government and international assistance. Inclusive economic growth and sustainable development are essential for prevention of and preparedness for natural disasters and other emergencies in Myanmar. In this regard, international humanitarian organisations will strive to work in tandem with long-term development plans. Humanitarian actors will also stress the need for resources to increase preparedness for emergencies. Contributions for humanitarian assistance will be provided in a way which is not to the detriment of resources made available for international development cooperation. In most humanitarian scenarios across Myanmar, there will be a strong need to both deliver humanitarian and development assistance simultaneously in the interests of conflict sensitivity.
12. **Effective Coordination**: International humanitarian organisations across Myanmar recognize that under the mantle of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, the UN has a unique role to play in providing leadership including by coordinating the efforts of international humanitarian organisations to support relevant Myanmar authorities in responding to emergencies. We will work together to streamline and strengthen existing coordination mechanisms at central and state / region levels across Myanmar in the interests of better ensuring the prompt, smooth delivery of relief assistance in accordance with international law and complimentary domestic law. This includes working to ensure the UN system’s resources across Myanmar are commensurate with the additional resourcing requirements which effective coordination demands.
13. **Accountability and Transparency**: International humanitarian organisations are primarily accountable to those we seek to serve and is committed to ensuring our responsible engagement in addressing situations of conflict and disaster. This includes ensuring the involvement of the affected communities across Myanmar in decision-making on humanitarian assistance and accountability of humanitarian organisations.
14. **Appropriate Use of Language**: International humanitarian organisations across Myanmar recognize that rhetoric can play a role in fuelling conflict. In all our communication we commit to avoiding references to specific social groupings wherever doing so could inadvertently further divisions and/or increase polarization. However, where it is ethical and appropriate to do, for example in order to highlight discrimination or inequality, and where groups self-identify and use such terminology, it will be used in accordance with any relevant international standards and/or UN directives. International humanitarian organisations focus on non-discrimination and differentiate only in relation to need and vulnerability, and we are committed to ensuring that our language reflects this at all times. See Annex I: Glossary of Humanitarian Terms.

In order for international humanitarian organizations to effectively operationalize the aforementioned Guiding Principles, authorities across Myanmar must uphold two fundamental obligations. These include:

1. **Humanitarian Access**: Being able to reach affected people is a fundamental requirement for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. This means unfettered, unrestricted humanitarian access to all people in need of assistance across Myanmar with responsible Myanmar authorities facilitating our work in providing humanitarian assistance particularly the supply of food, medicines, shelter, education, healthcare, livelihoods development and protection for which access to affected communities is essential. Relevant authorities are also required to expedite the accreditation of staff and provide customs clearances for humanitarian goods and services as a matter of urgency.
2. **Security and Safety of Humanitarian Workers**: All and any parties to conflict in Myanmar are obliged to ensure the safety, security and freedom of humanitarian workers at all times. Violence, abduction, harassment or intimidation of humanitarian workers is against international law and is punishable by Myanmar domestic law.

5. Overall Aim

This strategy aims to better (1) meet the humanitarian needs of affected communities across Myanmar; and (2) prevent future crises and repeat incidences by drawing attention to key humanitarian assistance including protection issues and by mobilizing key influencers and decision makers into action.

Strategic Objectives

This strategy will kick start the process of achieving this overall aim by:

1. Identifying and prioritizing key humanitarian issues and human rights concerns that affect people in need across Myanmar including in relation to the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance including protection;
2. Identifying weaknesses in existing information and ensuring the creation of more robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms aimed at providing data and trend analysis enabling the humanitarian community to better undertake effective advocacy;
3. Increasing awareness among key stakeholders about humanitarian needs, trends and results;
4. Strengthening cooperation with Government (including local government) and non-government partners and advocating for increased humanitarian space to ensure better access to people in need;
5. Highlighting concerns related to the protection of human rights of displaced people, stateless persons, those affected by crises and other people in particularly vulnerable situations including by encouraging appropriate action by the authorities;
6. Enhancing respect for protection of human rights by authorities, including through the rule of law and ensuring accountability of the State, including security forces, judiciary and civilian administration;
7. Improving accountability and transparency of Government and international humanitarian organisations through improved two-way communication with affected communities; and
8. Advocating for the progress, development and implementation of durable solutions, early recovery and increased longer-term development, recognizing that durable solutions cannot be achieved without recovery efforts. As a consequence the need for reliance on humanitarian assistance will be reduced over time.

**6. KEY ISSUES**

This section outlines key advocacy issues and respective key messaging including evidence-based supporting points wherever possible and the associated actions required.

Overarching Key Messages:

Under the leadership of the HCT, international humanitarian organisations across Myanmar are particularly concerned that:

1. Despite recent positive change and reform in Myanmar, humanitarian need and vulnerability has increased substantially over the last two years due to civil and inter-communal violence and the effects of natural disasters.
2. Donor support has been generous to date but significant humanitarian need remains.
3. Members of the Humanitarian Country Team need but do not currently have full and unimpeded humanitarian access to all affected communities and thus are unable to deliver life-saving relief to the most vulnerable individuals. Restrictions must be lifted and include the waiving of security clearances, transparent and timely issuing of long-term travel visas, and the speedy facilitation of all essential humanitarian relief imports by customs.
4. Every person across Myanmar needs to enjoy the fundamental right to freedom of movement and have access to basic essential services.
5. Durable solutions must be identified for all persons affected by humanitarian need and vulnerability - regardless of circumstance - across Myanmar.
6. Peace, stability and reconciliation are crucial to Myanmar’s future. Now is the time for concerted peace-building efforts towards inter/intra-communal harmony, positive change and reform.
7. All humanitarian and development actors should invest in the assessment, analysis and expertise to ensure that their programmes are conflict sensitive.
8. Left unresolved, communal mistrust across Myanmar is likely to deepen fear and impede Myanmar’s positive integration into the international community. This mistrust be addressed through building dialogue between and across communities and addressing impunity. The Government must contribute by ensuring that hate speech is prosecuted, while legitimate free expression is not. The Government must counter any tendency in State or independent media and public officials to target, stigmatize or stereotype members of population groups on the basis of race, religion, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin.
9. In accordance with international human rights standards, the Government must address underlying structural and institutional obstacles, including long-standing discriminatory legislation, policies, programmes and action. It must introduce accountability mechanisms, access to justice, redress and reparation for past violations and in order to prevent future violations. Ongoing violations must be stopped. If left unresolved, these issues will negatively impact the humanitarian situation.
10. Myanmar is in need of both humanitarian and development assistance if stability and a sustainable peace are to be forthcoming. Donor support needs to be responsible, coordinated and transparent.
11. Myanmar is vulnerable to a wide range of natural disasters. It must be recognized that the impacts of natural disasters and complex emergencies often intersect and there is a need for more resources and government action on scaling up preparedness for disasters and to improve community resilience to natural disasters. This means stronger legislation, more financial resources and making disaster preparedness and mitigation a priority.

Priority 1: Addressing Humanitarian Need

**Key Message:** **Despite recent positive change and reform in Myanmar, humanitarian need and vulnerability has increased over the last two years due to civil and inter-communal violence and the effects of natural disasters.**

* Across Myanmar, more than half a million people are displaced as a result of conflict.
* Humanitarian need is present in camp, host-communities, urban and rural settings across Myanmar.
* People across Rakhine and Kachin States are in need of humanitarian assistance and vulnerability is on the increase due to a prolonged displacement crisis.
* Humanitarian assistance must be provided to everyone who is in need, led by the Government in partnership with the humanitarian actors.
* International humanitarian organisations are responding where they have access, and with the funds available, but this is far from adequate. Some affected communities have not received any humanitarian assistance at all and many in IDP camps are living in unacceptable, deteriorating conditions, with extremely limited freedom of movement and facing significant protection issues.
* Humanitarian assistance, while a significant lifesaving measure, can only ever be regarded as a temporary mitigating solution.
* Underlying factors require urgent redress as a matter of priority including investing in equitable development, decreasing structural, economic and societal inequalities, the non-discriminatory application of the rule of law, addressing issues of security force impunity, respecting the human rights of all people across Myanmar, and addressing statelessness and right of abode as a root cause.

**Key Message: Donor support has been generous to date but significant humanitarian need remains.**

* The Revised Rakhine Response Plan currently has a gap in funding of US$28 million (out of a total requirement of $109.3 million. Humanitarian requirements across Kachin State amount to $51 million.
* The international community should expand support to all affected communities in need across Rakhine State including northern Rakhine, by increasing development funding for Rakhine
* As humanitarian access is enhanced across Kachin, northern Shan and Mon States, humanitarian and recovery need is likely to become more visible.
* Considerable hidden humanitarian need means there is a potential for the humanitarian situation in some remote locations throughout Myanmar to become forgotten crises such as in Kachin and Kayin. It is important to continue to draw attention to all areas of humanitarian need across Myanmar.
* Investing in Myanmar's future also means working to address the underlying causes that worsen the humanitarian situation such as inequality between groups, chronic poverty and poor basic and essential services, lack of freedom of movement and humanitarian access, application of the rule of law, issues of impunity, and protection of human rights. In this regard, donor support for advocacy continues to be critical. These root causes require effective political solutions.

Priority 2: Ensuring Unimpeded Humanitarian Access

**Key Message: Members of the Humanitarian Country Team need but do not currently have full and unimpeded humanitarian access to all affected communities and thus are unable to deliver life-saving relief to the most vulnerable individuals. Restrictions must be lifted and include the waiving of security clearances, transparent and timely issuing of long-term travel visas, and the speedy facilitation of all essential humanitarian relief imports by customs.**

* The safety and security of all humanitarian workers must be guaranteed.
* Any detained humanitarian/aid workers must be released immediately.
* In accordance with the rule of law, the Myanmar Government must take action against anyone intimidating, harassing or harming humanitarian workers, as well as those cooperating with them.
* Those who cooperate with the international humanitarian community must be protected by the State from reprisals, including arbitrary detention and harassment. In this regard, and as part of its protection role, the international community will bring such cases to the attention of the government authorities.
* Community leaders, UN officials, INGO and civil society have a role to play in ensuring humanitarian workers are safe, secure, protected and free to move at all times.
* The Government and other groups mentioned above should intensify efforts to manage misperceptions about aid provision (particularly clarification on the delivery of aid to the most needy and vulnerable) which are negatively impacting the delivery of aid.
* Relevant authorities and humanitarian workers need to ensure transparency around assistance provided to all communities (e.g. through information boards and the media).
* Essential humanitarian goods and imports must be quickly cleared by customs and other relevant authorities, and bureaucratic obstacles must be removed
* Long-term travel visas must be issued in a timely transparent manner and travel authorizations abolished altogether.
* National and international staff from UN and INGOs should be granted unfettered access to all locations where humanitarian need occurs, including through longer term missions and humanitarian convoys.
* UN staff monitoring human rights situations must be granted access to all areas by all relevant parties, and action must be taken against individuals acting privately in the obstruction of such access.
* Wherever needed, mine clearance must take place to ensure humanitarian actors have safe access to all affected communities. Mine-risk education programmes should be facilitated by government in all areas of risk.

Priority 3: Ensuring Freedom of Movement for All

**Key Message: Every person across Myanmar needs to enjoy the fundamental right to freedom of movement and have access to basic essential services.**

* Restrictions of access and freedom of movement severely affect the right to health, education and the right to an adequate standard of living by impeding access to livelihoods, and leading to more displacement and dependency.
* Restrictions on freedom of movement are increasing dependency on food and other aid and leading to multiple displacements, disruption of livelihoods and affecting well-being and dignity of displaced populations.
* Lack of access to markets and livelihood opportunities are also hindering the recovery process
* People affected by humanitarian crises must be offered adequate protection to ensure they have freedom of movement and ability to access basic services without discrimination.
* Restrictions on freedom of movement increase tensions among communities, decreasing chances of peaceful co-existence.
* Freedom of movement for many communities in conflict affected areas, particularly in Kachin and along the border will remain a distant prospect even if they are free to move on paper, until demining and mine risk education is done.

Priority 4: Finding Durable Solutions

**Key Message:** **Durable solutions must be identified for all persons affected by humanitarian need and vulnerability - regardless of circumstance - across Myanmar.**

* Across Myanmar, hundreds of thousands of people are living in temporary shelter with no or limited access to adequate healthcare, formal education, livelihoods or economic opportunities. The Government must find durable solutions for displaced people, end segregation of communities, and identify long-term recovery strategies for the overall development of conflict-affected areas.
* Durable solutions must also include the resolution of the legal status of persons without citizenship and/or undetermined nationality throughout Myanmar.
* Any durable solution for internally displaced persons must be based on a voluntary and informed decision, and occur in safety and dignity. Voluntariness in decision-making implies that a decision to return, settle elsewhere or integrate locally is self-determined from a number of viable options. The Government and humanitarian actors must make every effort to ensure that IDPs have the information they need to make an informed and voluntary decision, and that there is no forced movement or forced return..
* In providing a durable solution, national and international actors must give primary consideration to the needs, rights and legitimate interests of the displaced persons themselves, taking into account age, gender, and diversity.
* It must be recognised that strategic recovery planning and operationalization is necessary for durable solutions to be achieved.
* The conditions conducive to safe return of displaced population, as well as for local integration or resettlement elsewhere (relocation), are generally defined by three elements of “safety”: physical, material and legal safety. The Government and the humanitarian actors should work together to identify the benchmarks needed to meet these three elements of safety through mapping and assessing conditions on the ground.
* Support of durable solutions for IDPs is impacted by the peace-building, reconciliation and co-existence efforts and is dependent on comprehensive and effective recovery and development strategies and programs. To ensure an adequate standard of living, transitional programming must be put in place so that IDPs and communities have access to livelihoods development and basic services that provide durable solutions.
* There must be adequate return options for the displaced with restoration of land and property and access to documentation. Wherever needed, mine clearance must take place before people return home.
* Relevant authorities must protect, respect and promote the human rights of people across all of Myanmar. They must refrain from discrimination as well as using unnecessary force and punitive measures against affected communities including IDPs.
* Adequate humanitarian assistance to displaced persons pending a durable solution should continue. There should not be a deliberate reduction of assistance despite ongoing needs for the purpose of enticing return or relocation of IDPs.
* Assistance should be extended to those who choose to return spontaneously in support of their choice and not as a pull factor. All efforts to assist host communities and people who remained in the conflict areas while at the same time offering assistance to the displaced seeking a durable solution.
* If and when IDPs determine that they wish to return or indicate other preferred durable solutions, the national and international actors need to carry out a number of activities to verify that the areas are safe and have the capacity to re/integrate the IDPs, which requires unlimited access to affected areas. Once verified, a number of both individual and community-based assistance activities should be implemented to ensure the solutions for displacement are durable.
* In accordance with the Pinehro Principles, crisis affected people should not be forcibly evicted or moved, and redress should be forthcoming where any property is destroyed or seized, including possible compensation.

Priority 5: Prioritizing Peace Building and Reconciliation

**Key Message: Peace, stability and reconciliation are crucial to Myanmar’s future. Now is the time for concerted peace-building efforts towards inter/intra-communal harmony, positive change and reform.**

* The Myanmar Government has primary responsibility for maintaining peaceful and stable relations among and between all people across Myanmar.
* Importantly, communities must be empowered to come up with ways to promote peace and well-being within and among themselves.
* Outbreaks of conflict and intercommunal violence across Myanmar are of deep concern. Associated criminal acts resulting in death, destruction and displacement destroy the lives of children, families, and communities.
* All perpetrators of human rights violations, including violence must be held accountable and brought to justice. Propagation of hate messages and inflammatory propaganda by either State media or private media and individuals should not be tolerated. Instigating violence by either State media or private media and individuals runs contrary to the rule of law. Those instigating and engaging in violence should be held responsible. Violators should not be permitted to act with impunity.
* It is the Government’s responsibility to ensure that the authorities and State media communicate responsibly, and that people inciting unrest should be held to account under the law.
* Extortion, bribes, and other illegal acts prohibiting access to basic services must be stopped immediately.
* Legitimate protection concerns constituting some of the most important fundamental causes of instability and displacement, including around forced migration, statelessness, citizenship, and birth registration, must be addressed.
* The intentional targeting of children or places where they ought to be including health facilities, schools and kindergartens, and playgrounds, are to be swiftly dealt with in accordance with due process and the rule of law.
* The recruitment and use of children by the armed forces and armed groups is never acceptable and those doing so must be dealt with in accordance with due process and the rule of law.
* Peacebuilding and reconciliation activities should be prioritized by all those delivering aid including government authorities, the UN, INGOs and CBOs based on robust, credible and conflict-sensitive assessments. Engaging adolescents is increasingly important.
* Bridge-builders across and within all communities - including moderate community leaders, peacebuilding CBOs and government officials – should be supported with the aim of uniting the people of Myanmar.
* Myanmar’s religious and ethnic diversity presents rich cultural, social and economic opportunities for all. Finding and promoting “Strength in Diversity” will better ensure a more prosperous and fulfilling future for Myanmar.
* Larger issues of mistrust including those related to a lack of enforcement of the rule of law continue to fuel tensions within and between communities, and between communities and relevant authorities.
* Confidence and trust building measures between all communities and between communities and relevant authorities are urgently needed in order to stem escalating tensions and mistrust.
* Platforms for dialogue and creation of safe spaces should be prioritized as a means to strengthen the social contract between citizen and the state, strengthen relationship between citizens and act as a platform for conflict prevention.
* In addition, mistrust can be addressed by applying the rule of law without discrimination and clearly communicating government and other intentions equally across all communities. Perpetrators of human rights violations must be held accountable.
* Transparency of information and dialogue around any plans for the relocation of displaced people is needed at all times. Humanitarian access to communities ahead of, during and after voluntary relocation is of paramount importance.
* Governments own communications strategy can go a long way in communicating plans, managing expectations and mitigating conflicts

**Key Message: All humanitarian and development actors should invest in the assessment, analysis and expertise to ensure that their programmes are conflict sensitive.**

* Organizations should design and adapt their activities and programmes to ensure that they actively contribute to building peace, and focusing on the community power structures that they engage with, and influence.
* A much greater focus needs to be on meaningful community engagement and participation in the processes of planning, implementation and monitoring to humanitarian and development assistance. Engagement of women and youth in the decision making process, analysis of dividers and connectors in the community and impact of resource transfer is key to applying the Do No Harm principles..
* Programmes should be designed with key conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding objectives and goals in mind, reflecting the greatest anticipated positive change that could result.
* The humanitarian community must ensure all humanitarian workers understand and deliver in accordance with international norms and standards on humanitarian affairs.
* Increasing investment is needed in communication of organizations, both internally and externally, and support to staff in understanding their role in programming, including through leadership in encouraging dialogue internally.

Priority 6: Upholding Human Rights

**Key Message: Left unresolved, communal mistrust across Myanmar is likely to deepen fear and impede Myanmar’s positive integration into the international community. This mistrust be addressed through building dialogue between and across communities and addressing impunity. The Government must contribute by ensuring that hate speech is prosecuted, while legitimate free expression is not. The Government must counter any tendency in State or independent media and public officials to target, stigmatize or stereotype members of population groups on the basis of race, religion, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin.**

* It must bring perpetrators of violence to justice in full compliance with international human rights law and national law.
* It must also ensure that human rights defenders are free from reprisals.
* It must ensure the rights to life, physical and mental safety and integrity, including to be free from arbitrary detention; torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, the right to live in dignity and with an adequate standard of living, health, and education.
* The Government must address the situation of persons without citizenship or with undetermined nationality and in particular resolve the longstanding citizenship issue for the Rohingya Muslim community. Revision of the 1982 Citizenship Law is required to bring it in line with Myanmar’s international legal obligations and international standards for the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to realize the right to a nationality found in both global and regional human rights instruments. Pending such revision, the non-discriminatory and inclusive application of the 1982 Citizenship Law to all minority groups who are not listed among the 135 recognized “national ethnic groups”, but who could nevertheless qualify as “citizens”, “associate citizens” or “naturalized citizens” under the current law should be pursued, as it could result in a proportion of stateless persons acquiring Myanmar citizenship.
* Consequences of statelessness in Rakhine State continue to have a direct and negative impact on fundamental human rights, and the social and economic development of Myanmar which have been exacerbated by forced displacement. The effects of this situation are spilling over and being felt not only in bordering countries, but also other countries throughout the region.
* The Government must provide training to the security forces on the use of force and firearms in accordance with international human rights standards and principles prior to their deployment. Such training must go beyond basic instruction in riot control procedures but must be aimed at ensuring the protection of the right to life, the right to physical and mental integrity, the right to liberty, and the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association.
* Non state actors must also ensure that human rights standards and principles are respected and protected, and be aware that the State will hold them to account for violations.
* The Government should instruct its security personnel to stop arbitrary arrests or detention of any group on account of their ethnic, religious, or other status.
* The Government must investigate alleged human rights violations and abuses and hold accountable those responsible, regardless of rank or position, in accordance with international human rights law.
* The Judiciary must ensure that it acts independently of Government and takes appropriate action holding anyone to account who commits human rights violations.
* The Government (including security forces, e.g. police and the military; as well as civilian administration), and the judiciary must be supported in establishing and enforcing the rule of law, institutionalizing accountability and preventing and addressing long-standing impunity of security forces and civilian authorities, conducting training and abolishing all discriminatory policies and legislation, and communicate to all authorities that they must undertake their work in accordance with human rights standards.
* The Government must protect human rights defenders from threats to their physical and mental integrity, and arbitrary arrest or detention.
* The international community should work with the Government of Myanmar to end the trafficking of women and children, and the smuggling of weapons, drugs and people to better ensure tensions contributing to humanitarian crisis are resolved.

Priority 7: Delivering Relief and Development Simultaneously

**Key Message: Myanmar is in need of both humanitarian and development assistance if stability and a sustainable peace are to be forthcoming. Donor support needs to be responsible, coordinated and transparent.**

* Myanmar has some of the lowest social and development indicators globally ranking 149 of 187 countries ranked by the UN Development Index.
* The intricately linked relationship between development and humanitarian need must be acknowledged. Improvement of development indicators in Myanmar will reduce vulnerability and the likelihood of humanitarian emergencies. Likewise, preparedness, response and early recovery will have positive developmental effects for both affected areas and Myanmar as a whole.
* While in the short-term there is a critical need for localized humanitarian and early recovery assistance, long-term strategies, including durable solutions, for overall development are imperative. For this, additional budget allocations and human resources need to be made available.
* In particular in places where violence originated, where levels of economic development are critically low, assistance must cover humanitarian as well development needs. Focus should not only be on IDPs camps but also on the development of villages aiding returns.
* Humanitarian and development agencies stand ready to support the Myanmar Government in its efforts to address the complex underlying and root-causes of inter-communal conflict across Myanmar including poverty, lack of access to basic services and jobs, inequality and marginalization.

Priority 8: Building Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness Capacity

**Key Message: Myanmar is vulnerable to a wide range of natural disasters. It must be recognized that the impacts of natural disasters and complex emergencies often intersect and there is a need for more resources and government action on scaling up preparedness for disasters and to improve community resilience to natural disasters. This means stronger legislation, more financial resources and making disaster preparedness and mitigation a priority.**

* The Government's approval of the Disaster Management Law is a welcome step forward and provides the framework for enhanced preparedness and response to disasters but capacity development and institution building work needs to be undertaken if Myanmar is to respond effectively to cyclones, earthquakes and other natural hazards.
* Climate change is likely to increase the risk of natural hazards across Myanmar.
* The Government must fully resource and implement the disaster management law and regulations working closely with the International Disaster Response law project of the IFRC.
* As the core duty bearer in responding to disasters, the government should take the lead on raising awareness on the new Disaster Management Law and should be implemented, monitored and evaluated inclusively, involving community level actors.
* Using the MAPDRR 2012 (Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction), the Government must improve its disaster preparedness planning processes to include all potentially affected communities in preparing for future disasters.
* A comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategy must be planned and implemented at national, regional and local levels to reduce vulnerability and improve resilience in the event of a natural hazard.
* International humanitarian organisations are prepared to assist the Government on taking the lead on building its capacity to develop disaster plans that encompass all communities.
* Lessons should be drawn from other contexts within the region where disaster preparedness measures are well established and tested by frequent disasters.
* Increased attention is needed to vulnerable groups and their specific roles and needs in disaster preparedness and management.
* The Government needs to strengthen natural hazard alerts for all communities in their own languages; to elaborate contingency plans that identify key buildings and safe havens; and to preposition stocks.
* Often there is a double vulnerability of conflict affected communities to ‘natural’ disaster, and specific attention is needed to populations at high risk.
* All communities must be consulted and develop response plans to assess community vulnerabilities and potential for natural hazards in order to prevent, mitigate and respond to potential natural disasters.
* Each community should be consulted about Government disaster response measures, and build trust so that communities respond quickly when disaster threatens.
* It is important to understand community preferences on evacuation sites. This will contribute to lessening fear-based resistance to any future evacuation.

**7. KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND TARGET AUDIENCES**

**Affected Communities**

*Key community influencers* – International humanitarian organisations will work closely with and through key community influencers including community and religious leaders, elders, teachers, child clubs, youth groups, women groups and others including for the purposes of peace building activities.

*Public Outreach and Information Campaigns* – UNIC, OCHA and other UN agencies and NGOs with requisite technical expertise will be the primary channel through which key HCT messages are sent to affected communities throughout Myanmar. Government authorities will be encouraged at every opportunity to reinforce these messages and to promote them through their own communication channels. This will include public outreach activities and information campaigns devised by UN, NGO and CBO messaging experts to support local capacities and knowledge. Such information campaigns could include information about:

* Humanitarian assistance, including protection, available to the affected population
* Peace processes, peace agreements and their implications (for example, security conditions, elections and whether or not judicial institutions are functioning);
* Peace building and reconciliation opportunities and activities;
* Back-to-school and other C4D awareness raising and campaigning;
* Return, reintegration and resettlement;
* Areas of return or resettlement, including constraints mines, land issues, discrimination and inequality, poverty) and services available;
* Economic and other opportunities in areas of transition, return, (re)integration and resettlement; and.
* Mine risk education and prohibition on the use and recruitment of children by the armed forces and armed groups.

There has been some progress in Rakhine State on communications with affected communities following an independent study commissioned by the HCT on *Addressing and Understanding Stakeholder Perceptions in Rakhine State* in January 2013. OCHA deployed a dedicated staff member to spearhead the recommendations at the Sittwe level[[2]](#footnote-3) with an agreed implementation plan. While in the long term there might be a need for a dedicated Communications with Affected Communities Working Group at the Yangon level, for now this body of work will be overseen by the HACG on behalf of the HCT. There may be lessons learnt overtime that can be applied to other areas of Myanmar.

**Myanmar Authorities**

*Local authorities* – Humanitarian agencies will work closely with local authorities at the village, township, regional and state level to raise their awareness on their human rights and humanitarian obligations with a view to better ensuring the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

*Myanmar Line Ministries* - Where relevant Myanmar authorities including village, township, regional and state authorities fail to address humanitarian concerns, matters will be raised by humanitarian agencies directly with line ministries all the way up to the relevant Minister if/as needed.

*The Government of Myanmar* – In accordance with international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law obligations and in respect of humanitarian principles, international humanitarian organisations will, through the HCT and the Humanitarian Coordinator advocate as a collective[[3]](#footnote-4) to FERD (Foreign Economic Relations Department), Cabinet and/or the Office of the President where high level advocacy is needed.

**Parliamentarians**

*Myanmar Parliamentarians* - To the extent permitted by individual mandates, humanitarian agencies will actively reach out to Myanmar parliamentarians encouraging them to address humanitarian need, the protection of human rights, enhance development activities, and facilitate peace and reconciliation across Myanmar.

*Foreign Parliamentarians* - Agencies will also encourage and facilitate visits by foreign parliamentarians to Myanmar. Humanitarian agencies will build linkages with and feed into the standard processes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union including through New York Headquarters (UN) and other “capital” offices.

**Civil Society**

*Community-Based Organisations, Community Leaders and National NGOs Leaders* – Wherever possible, the international community will work in partnership and/or through locally-based and/or national organisations including for joint advocacy purposes. Opportunities will be sought to engage, support and build capacity of both local and national NGOs. Community leaders and celebrities will also be actively engaged for advocacy purposes.

*International NGOs* - OCHA will continue to work closely with INGOs and CBOs across Myanmar to advocate jointly on key humanitarian issues. UN agencies working in partnership arrangements with INGOs and CBOs will increase joint advocacy activities. Human rights NGOs - including AMNESTY International and Human Rights Watch - will be kept regularly informed of humanitarian issues as they arise.

*NGO Umbrella Organisations (Platforms)* - OCHA will increasingly reach out to the global NGO platforms, including the International Council of Voluntary Associations (ICVA), the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), VOICE and InterAction in the interests of better promoting Myanmar humanitarian concerns among international civil society, including by informing these bodies in advance of IASC deliberations.

*ICRC/IFRC and their National Societies* - OCHA will continue to coordinate with ICRC/IFRC in accordance with the specific mandates to provide protection (including assistance) to persons affected by armed conflicts, internal disturbances and tensions and to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, including specifically with the International Disaster Response Law Project.

**The United Nations System**

*UN Agencies* - UN agencies will actively seek to engage in joint advocacy activities, especially but not limited to those agencies with protection mandates including UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, WFP and OCHA given that the elaboration of common positions on human rights, humanitarian and development issues can be particularly effective. Joint efforts also ensure coherent messaging among humanitarian organisations. Joint activities will be proposed where interests and concerns overlap and where the capacity of given UN agencies to advocate exists. OCHA and other UN agencies, will continue to work closely with OHCHR in Bangkok and Geneva, including for the purposes of supporting the work of the UN Human Rights Council, and other UN human rights bodies including the special procedures, such as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar; the treaty bodies, the CRC, CEDAW and CRPD Committees; and for UPR reporting purposes.

*UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator’s Office –* With support of OCHA and through the HCT, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator’s Office will work closely with all coordination mechanisms, including all relevant geographic offices, Cluster/Sector leads, and notably the Protection Working Group. The Office will also continue to work closely with the HACG and wherever possible ensure synergies between the HACG’s work and that of the UN Communications Group for the purposes of information sharing, technical support and ensuring a comprehensive and unified approach to UN advocacy at all times. With the support of OCHA, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator will continue to play a lead role in keeping the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) abreast of relevant Myanmar developments.

*UN Headquarters* - In collaboration with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator’s office, OCHA will continue to work closely with Headquarters in New York and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to convey advocacy and communications points on humanitarian issues across Myanmar. This is especially important given the ERC’s function enables her to effectively use mechanisms such as addressing the UNSC and contributing to UN Secretary-General’s reports to ECOSOC and the General Assembly to draw the attention of the international community to Myanmar. OCHA will also regularly inform the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, NRC's Global IDP Project, the IASC Working Group on internal displacement, and the Senior Network on Internal Displacement on displacement issues across Myanmar.

**Inter-Governmental and Regional Bodies**

*Member States and Secretariat of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Myanmar will chair the organisation in 2014) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)* – As appropriate, humanitarian agencies will continue to enhance their relations with regional bodies including ASEAN and the OIC in the interests of raising awareness and developing joint initiatives to promote international human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law and adherence to humanitarian principles across Myanmar. The OIC is actively seeking involvement with the situation in Rakhine State. Humanitarian agencies will continue to undertake visits to the headquarters of these bodies in addition to ensuring key humanitarian messages are sent through the Humanitarian Coordinator and the SRSG during relevant regional meetings.

**Donors and other Foreign Governments**

*Donors* - In order to uphold the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, humanitarian agencies will ramp-up efforts to raise the awareness of representatives from the AusAID, Brunei, China, CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, EU, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Norwegian MFA, SIDA, Switzerland, Turkey and USAID, through relevant ambassadors and in-country embassy and consulate personnel on humanitarian need across Myanmar. This will be undertaken both bilaterally and through existing donor coordination mechanisms including by organizing field visits to locations of concern. ‘The Friends of Myanmar’ and other relevant donor and foreign government conferences will also be used as a mechanism to raise key concerns.

*Foreign governments* – Humanitarian agencies will strategically target certain governments for certain purposes noting the following: key partners on disaster preparedness include Indonesia, Australia and Japan; countries supporting access-related efforts are the US, EU, Switzerland and the UK; Norway is leading efforts related to interventions in ceasefire areas. Norway also leads the Peace Donor Support Group (PDSG) which provides a platform for dialogue between the donor community and the GoM. The PDSG also comprises Australia, the UK, EU, UN and the World Bank. Norway also leads on the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI). It supports projects in ceasefire areas. The EU, UK, US, Norway, Australia, Japan and Switzerland have eased or lifted most sanctions; Turkey has advocated strongly for a committee to monitor developments in Rakhine State; Norway and Qatar were recently awarded telecoms bids; China has taken a lead mediating role between the KIA and the GoM in an effort to boost its brokering position and reduce tensions on its border with Myanmar; and regional countries like India, Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, China, Australian, Timor Leste, Japan and Indonesia have strong vested interests in Myanmar’s political and economic success and in some cases, existing involvement in economic projects.

**The Media**

*International, regional and local media* – International humanitarian organisations with public information capacity will increase their engagement with media outlets internationally, regionally and locally in accordance with individual agency mandates. Engagement will take place both in the interests of increased reporting on crisis affected people in Myanmar and also in the interests of encouraging the media to actively promote peacebuilding agendas in the interests of preventing the incitement of violence. This will include actively facilitating regular field visits by the media to affected communities. Reuters, IRIN, AP, and AFP wire services will be prioritized as will BBC, Sky TV, CNN, Global Post, The New York Times, Washington Post, The Economist, Time Magazine, ABC Australia, SBS Australia, Bloomberg, DVB – Norway, DWTV, France 24, European Press Agency, Voice of America, Radio Australia, and the BBC World Service and its affiliates. The use of regional satellite and other networks including Singapore TV, Channel News Asia, The Straits Times, NHK, Xinhua, Guangdong Daily, CCTV, The Nation, Bangkok Post, Mizzima, Jakarta Post, Al Jazeera, and Radio Free Asia will also be prioritized. Locally, Sky Net, MRTV, MRTV4, MITV, Myanmar Times, Irrawaddy, Weekly Eleven, Seven Day News, The Voice, Myanmar Post, New Light of Myanmar, The Mirror, Union Daily, Standard Times, City FM, Mandalay FM, Shwe FM, FM Bagan, Padamya FM, Nay Pyi Taw Radio and Myanmar Radio will be utilized.

**The Private Sector**

The international community in Myanmar recognises the important role the private sector plays in humanitarian crises including in relation to their responsibility to prevent such crises and as a rapid responder and provider of emergency relief through business, corporate social responsibility, and philanthropic activities. The private sector is typically a quick generator of livelihoods development opportunities, and brings entrepreneurial and innovative IT, communications, logistics, supply and management expertise and resources to crisis prevention and response. Public-private partnerships are important for community preparedness and enhanced resilience. Importantly, the business community across Myanmar has significant experience in inter-communal interaction for trade purposes and the humanitarian community recognises that much can be learnt in terms of conflict sensitivity and peace-building from private sector experience. The international community will thereby reach out to relevant chambers of commerce, business groups and business leaders as part of this strategy.

**8. TOOLS AND TACTICS**

The success of this strategy rests on its implementation in practice. The following section details the tools and tactics international humanitarian organisations will utilise when actioning strategy aims and objectives. Many of these tools are already in place and many of the tactics are already being undertaken by some humanitarian agencies. However, to date, advocacy and communication on humanitarian issues across Myanmar has largely been tactical without a sound strategic basis. The tools and tactics listed here will form the basis of an associated Action Plan that will detail how international humanitarian organisations across Myanmar intend to implement this strategy. The Action Plan will include - on a key issue by key issue basis - participating agencies; stakeholders and target audiences; associated tools and tactics; and timelines.

A number of advocacy tools are already produced by OCHA on behalf of the HCT with input from clusters/sectors. In developing these further, OCHA will consult with the relevant cluster/sector and ensure they are appropriately cleared and shared. All public documents are distributed by OCHA using Mailchimp and posted on the OCHA, MIMU and Reliefweb websites. All humanitarian agencies and the UNIC will continue to be encouraged to further share the tools and add them to their social media and web platforms. The majority of these tools are translated into Myanmar language.

**HC Statements**

Any specific humanitarian event requiring a response will be addressed through an HC Statement. These statements will be drafted by OCHA and the draft cleared by the UNIC and the HC. The statement will be written in the first person and will usually be no more than three paragraphs. If sector/cluster specific issues are highlighted, OCHA will consult with the relevant cluster/sector or humanitarian organisation. These statements will be issued on HC/RC letterhead by OCHA. While statements will not be cleared by HACG members, all statements will be drafted in conformity with the key messaging contained in this strategy. Where any HACG member takes issue with a particular statement *post-facto*, this will be discussed by the HACG and lessons learnt will be applied to the release of future statements.

**Press Releases**

The UN RC/HC or the HCT will issue regular joint press releases to highlight humanitarian activities, advocate for action, or announce common events such as an appeal launch or lessons-learned. OCHA is responsible for drafting these press releases - which are released on OCHA letterhead - including by seeking quotes from relevant cluster/sector leads. OCHA will seek to have as many quotes as possible from partners to highlight humanitarian need and will ensure this is equitable and representative of HCT membership. All such draft media releases will be shared with the HACG focal points for review with a strict no objection deadline of one hour only. Nil responses will be interpreted as consensus. HACG focal points will be expected to clear draft media releases through their heads of agency and/or relevant cluster/sector leads depending on individual agency processes. OCHA will not chase focal points or be held responsible where a focal point fails to seek requisite clearances.

In the interests of coordination and collaboration, individual humanitarian agency media releases will also be shared wherever practicable with the HACG before being issued for their information (not clearance). As a minimum, all humanitarian agencies will actively ensure their media release messaging is coherent with the HCT endorsed key messages contained in this strategy.

**Humanitarian Key Messages**

Thematic or emergency specific key messages will be developed by OCHA as required with the assistance of the HACG for endorsement by the HCT including for the HC in his/her role as chief humanitarian advocate. Key messages will be kept up-to-date and will be tailored and crafted to cater to individual asks. Key Messages will be distributed publically by OCHA but any associated Q&A will remain internal. Key messages will be used by all humanitarian agencies - to every extent possible - so international humanitarian organisations are speaking with one voice. Occasionally, when global level advocacy is required the Emergency Relief Coordinator will issue ERC Key Messages. In such instances, the HC, the HCT, the HACG and OCHA will make every effort to ensure New York Headquarters prepared messages conform with the key messages contained in this strategy.

**Media Lines**

When the international humanitarian community needs to respond urgently to negative media reports, internal guidance such as Media Lines will be developed by OCHA in close collaboration with the relevant cluster/sector. The guidance will be shared with the HACG for comment and once finalized, will be shared with the HCT, regional and HQ counterparts as the official line.

**Sector/Cluster Specific Key Messages**

The various clusters/sectors are responsible for drafting their own sector specific key messages and guidance. These will be shared with the HCT and the HACG as finalized. The HACG may on occasion seek to provide clusters/sectors with technical advice on such messaging.

**The Humanitarian Bulletin**

Each month OCHA will continue to issue a Humanitarian Bulletin which uses data and narrative analysis to substantiate advocacy messages. The Bulletin serves as the key information source on major humanitarian developments and situation trends across Myanmar. Clusters/Sectors will prepare and clear through relevant HACG focal points each month. Bulletins will either contain information on themes identified that month by OCHA and/or particular issues clusters/sectors seek to highlight including for advocacy purposes. Input will be requested on the last week of each month. Clusters/reporting focal points will have opportunity to review the report before it is published.

**Humanitarian Snapshots**

OCHA also will continue to produce full-page maps focusing on one to three key messages, combining geo-referenced information, graphics and textual summaries of any specific emergency. Such snapshots aim to provide timely, visual insights. Snapshots are updated monthly throughout the year by OCHA. Wherever sector specific information is highlighted, OCHA will consult with the relevant sector/cluster. Clusters should also create sector specific snapshots.

**Humanitarian web stories**

OCHA will continue to produce web stories regularly for its global and regional websites. These web stories will highlight humanitarian priorities and regularly include quotes or information on sectoral responses. Stories are then amplified through Facebook and Twitter.

**Factsheets**

OCHA will continue to produce these for humanitarian operations and on thematic issues such as humanitarian access. They contain baseline statistics and quick facts on the crisis. Clusters/sectors will also develop sector specific fact sheets as appropriate.

**Media Briefing Kit**

OCHA has developed a media briefing kit which contains the latest products, a guidance note for media and a list of focal points that can speak on the record. Input from clusters/sectors will continue to be actively sought.

**Foreign Government Briefings**

OCHA will coordinate regular foreign government briefings for relevant aid, political and trade personnel. In addition, humanitarian organisations will also conduct regular briefings either independently, jointly or in coalition with other organisations on an issue-by-issue basis

Along with OCHA, individual humanitarian agencies will also use some of these tools including by sharing with key stakeholders as appropriate. Under the auspices of this strategy, individual humanitarian agencies will also work individually, jointly and in coalition around issues of mutual agency concern to implement the following additional advocacy tools and tactics:

1. direct advocating and negotiation
2. meetings, networking and information sharing
3. official letters and other correspondence
4. development and sharing of information kits
5. agency Q&As
6. talking points, background briefs and sit/reps
7. feature stories and human interest stories
8. news advisories, press briefings and press conferences
9. field visits, inter-agency field missions and needs assessments
10. high level advocacy missions by the ERC or UN envoys
11. research and the provision of expert opinion
12. capacity building workshops, trainings, seminars and conferences
13. C4D, public outreach and information campaigning
14. B-roll, digital photography and videography
15. Social media including Facebook, twitter and Google plus.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Lack of reliable data**

A dearth of data exists across most humanitarian sectors and geographic areas in Myanmar. This is a result of prior prevention by the former government of data collection, the sharing of information, and the right to freedom of association, thought and expression. While considerable progress has been made since the new government came to power in 2011, significant obstacles to effective data collection and information management remain. This includes a lack of human and financial capacity and a persistent lack of access to affected areas despite recent peace agreements and ceasefires. The humanitarian community will work together to establish robust monitoring and reporting systems aimed at gathering qualitatively sound data. In the absence of reliable, quantifiable data, qualitative and anecdotal evidence remains available. Effective advocacy is therefore possible despite data limitations. In all instances, humanitarian agencies will make every effort to ensure their advocacy includes quantifiable data wherever it is available. In the absence of such data, qualitative and anecdotal data will be relied upon after it is verified and deemed entirely credible. If data is not verifiable, it will not be used. The use of data which is not credible by any agency will negatively impact the credibility of the entire humanitarian community and will thus be avoided at all times. Organizations should also share their data with the MIMU or OCHA Information Management Unit to help build a common situational awareness.

**Inter-Agency Buy-in**

This strategy was developed in consultation with a large variety of key stakeholders, most notably with members of the HACG, members of clusters/sectors and geographic offices throughout Myanmar. The strategy also reflects and builds upon inter-agency agreed advocacy as detailed in the *Rakhine Response Plan* and the *Kachin Response Plan*. A draft version of this strategy was broadly disseminated through the HACG and cluster/sector system with copies sent to all individual humanitarian agencies listed with OCHA on 5 August 2013. Two (2) weeks were given for input and feedback. Comments received sharpened advocacy and communication messaging, stakeholders, audiences, tools and tactics. Feedback also facilitated awareness raising on “What is Humanitarian Advocacy?” and served to clarify all aspects of the strategy in accordance with the current humanitarian situation across Myanmar. The risk of a lack of buy-in by international humanitarian organisations more broadly was thus largely mitigated. It will be important, however, that the HACG continues to play a leadership role on behalf of the HCT in socializing the strategy across international humanitarian organisations overtime. It will also be important that individual agencies share the strategy with newcomers as part of standard orientation processes.

**ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Crisis-affected people:** All those affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises at a specific location. (HAP)

**Humanitarian Access:** Humanitarian access concerns humanitarian actors’ ability to reach populations affected by crisis, as well as an affected population’s ability to access humanitarian assistance and services. Access is therefore a fundamental pre-requisite to effective humanitarian action. Full and unimpeded access is essential to establish operations, move goods and personnel where they are needed, implement distributions, provide health services and carry out other activities, and for affected populations to fully benefit from the assistance and services made available.(OCHA)

**Humanitarian Country Team Core Group:** in Myanmar the Core Group is composed of 15 members. It includes 7 UN representatives, 7 INGO representatives and one representative of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It is a decision making body.

**Humanitarian Country Team Forum:** The Forum is composed of all organisations that undertake humanitarian action in-country and are committed to participate in coordination arrangements. In Myanmar, it includes representatives of the UNCT and operational international non-governmental organisations. Representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement retain their position as “standing invitees”. A number of local NGOs are also represented in the Forum.

**Humanitarian community:** in Myanmar is used to denote those actors who engage in humanitarian operations and can include international humanitarian organisations, donors, INGOs, local NGOs, etc.

**Impartiality:** An approach to the provision of humanitarian assistance and services that is non-discriminatory, proportionate to needs and free of subjective distinction. Impartiality is a guiding principle of organisations claiming to be humanitarian (ALNAP).

**Impunity:** The impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to account - whether in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings - since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, prosecuted and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties, and to making reparations to their victims. (OCHA)

**Peacebuilding:** Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.(PBO)

**Protection:** A concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. Protection involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation. (ICRC/IASC)

**Reconciliation:** An element of conflict resolution and peacebuilding involving the promotion of confidence building and co-existence. The process of achieving reconciliation generally involves five interwoven and related strands: (i) developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society; (ii) acknowledging and dealing with the past; (iii) building positive relationships; (iv) significant cultural and attitudinal change; and (v) substantial social, economic and political change. It can be a challenging and long-term process for communities deeply divided along political or ethnic lines. While reconciliation must grow between and within communities, it can benefit from international support, especially when people and/or political leaders are unable or unwilling to initiate it. (UNHCR)

**Rakhine**: The term ‘Rakhine’ will be used to denote all persons living across Rakhine State rather than exclusively Buddhist members thereof.

**Relief development continuum** - relief development continuum is a well established area of humanitarian affairs in accordance with UNGA 46/182. In Myanmar, the humanitarian community is keen to ensure relief and development activities are provided in parallel including because addressing the root causes of conflict and communal violence are frequently associated with unequal development indicators across the country and the inequitable delivery of development assistance.

**Rohingya:** the use of the word Rohingya is a source of controversy and its historical roots are being heavily contested within Myanmar. For the purpose of advocacy, the use of the term should not be read as a political statement, but to describe a specific group living in Myanmar, most of whom are not enjoying full citizenship.

**Stateless Person:** A person who is not considered as a national (citizen) by any State under the operation of its law (1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons)

**ANNEX 2: RAKHINE KEY MESSAGES**

**July 2013**

1. **More than one year on from significant outbreaks of inter-communal violence, over 176,000[[4]](#footnote-5) people remain desperately in need of humanitarian assistance across Rakhine State, including over 105,000 children.** While more than 25 humanitarian agencies are present across Rakhine State, and about $50 million in humanitarian assistance has been delivered so far the situation remains dire. Agencies estimate an additional $28 million is needed just to meet current humanitarian needs.
* Many in need of humanitarian assistance both in and outside of camps are under-served and their needs are going unmet.
1. **In accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, and international law, humanitarian workers deliver aid exclusively based on need and vulnerability at all times.** Humanitarian workers are fully committed to assisting vulnerable people in need wherever they are found regardless of social groupings such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender or class.
* Humanitarian assistance across Rakhine State aims to meet basic needs and address the special vulnerabilities of affected communities whether such communities are rural, urban or camp-based.
* Taking into account the very specific context of Rakhine State and existing tensions between communities, a conflict sensitive approach is applied at all levels of intervention.
* Humanitarian and development agencies are working with all levels of government in Myanmar to ensure humanitarian assistance, durable solutions, and development assistance is delivered equitably across all of Rakhine State, to all communities in need of assistance.
* Humanitarian and development agencies working across Rakhine State are conscious of their responsibilities to ‘do no harm’ including by applying non-discriminatory, peace-building practices at all times.
1. **To be able to deliver emergency, life-saving relief, full and unimpeded humanitarian access is required by all humanitarian workers delivering aid across Rakhine State.** Government responsibilities to ensure humanitarian access at all times also includes the transparent and timely issuing of travel visas and security clearances, and the speedy facilitation of all essential imports by customs and other relevant Government authorities.
* If humanitarian assistance including protection, is to be forthcoming, unfettered humanitarian access is imperative. The Government has primary responsibility for humanitarian access including by ensuring anyone intimidating or impeding the access of humanitarian workers is quickly dealt with in accordance with due process.
* Community leaders, UN officials, INGO and CBO workers and affected communities themselves have a role to play in ensuring humanitarian workers are both safe, secure and protected, and free to move at all times.
* Restrictions on freedom of movement for both humanitarian workers and affected communities severely compromise basic rights to health, education and livelihoods development.
1. International humanitarian organisations continues to call for the **immediate release of the four national staff** working for international NGOs in Rakhine State who have been detained since June/July 2012.
2. **All communities are entitled to enjoy freedom of movement and unfettered access to basic services.** Restrictions on freedom of movement for both humanitarian workers and communities severely compromise protection monitoring and basic rights to health, education and livelihoods development.
3. **Durable solutions must be found for 140,000 IDPs and 36,000 vulnerable and conflict-affected people living in host communities and isolated villages across Rakhine State.** All durable solutions must be based on voluntary, informed choice with forcible return avoided at all times.
* Many IDPs have been housed in temporary shelters in camp situations for over a year living on the most basic of handouts with no access to formal education, protection or livelihoods development.
* Denying certain social groupings access to basic services such as health, education, and livelihoods is counterproductive. It fosters grievances, extremism, and increases polarization between communities.
* While there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to addressing displacement in Rakhine State, durable solutions could include further support to host communities, assisting IDPs voluntary return home when adequate infrastructure is in place, and/or the voluntary resettlement of IDPs.
* Adequate infrastructure to ensure safe and secure returns in line with international human rights standards must be put in place by the government
* There are some 800,000 stateless people in Rakhine State. The Myanmar Government has primary responsibility for granting them citizenship and for registering all Myanmar children at birth.
1. **Peace and reconciliation is crucial to Myanmar’s future, including across Rakhine State. Now is the time for concerted peace building efforts towards inter-communal harmony, positive change and reform.** Ongoing communal violence in Rakhine State is of deep concern. Associated criminal acts resulting in death, abuse, destruction and displacement destroy the lives of children, families, and communities.
* All perpetrators of human right violations must be brought to justice. Propagation of hate messages and inflammatory propaganda should never be tolerated, and is punishable at existing Myanmar law.
* Extortion, bribes, and other illegal acts prohibiting access to basic services must be stopped immediately.
* Legitimate protection concerns fueling instability and violence including around forced migration, statelessness, citizenship, and birth registration, must be addressed by the government.
* The Myanmar Government has primary responsibility for maintaining peaceful, stable, and equitable relations among and between all peoples across Rakhine State. Peace-building and reconciliatory activities should be prioritized by all those delivering aid including government authorities, the UN, INGOs and CBOs. Engaging adolescents is increasingly important.
1. **Rakhine State is in need of both humanitarian and development assistance if stability and a sustainable peace are to be forthcoming.** Humanitarian and development agencies stand ready to support the Government in its efforts to address the complex underlying and root causes of inter-communal conflict in Rakhine State namely poverty, lack of access to basic services and jobs, inequality and marginalization.
* In addition to inter-communal conflict, Rakhine State has some of the lowest social and development indicators worldwide, and is the second least developed state in Myanmar.
* While in the short-term there is a critical need for humanitarian and early recovery assistance, durable solutions and other long-term strategies for the overall development of all of Rakhine State is imperative. For this, additional budget allocations and human resources need to be made available immediately.
* Recent [9 July 2013] Myanmar Government recognition of the need for a comprehensive humanitarian and development plan for Rakhine State is welcomed.

**Sector Key Messages**

**Early Recovery**

1. The Government should increase access and support to livelihood opportunities, including freedom of movement and access to markets, paddy fields and fisheries.
2. The Government needs to continue to promote messages of social cohesion and peace. It should be noted that separation of communities does not equate to social harmony.
3. Donors need to advocate organizations to engage in early recovery activities in Rakhine State by increasing the amount of funding for the sector.
4. All clusters and sectors should mainstream early recovery in their cluster plans and strategies, with the aim of ensuring an effective transition to longer-term development using a human rights based approach..
5. All actors need to adhere to the ‘Do No Harm’ and gender sensitive approaches as a basic minimum for sound humanitarian and development practice.

**Education**

1. The Myanmar Government, as primary duty bearer, must assume responsibility for and lead the provision of inclusive and equitable education in all areas, however remote, starting with teacher recruitment, training and remuneration in IDP and other excluded communities in line with Rakhine Inquiry Commission recommendations.
2. The Myanmar Government and all parties involved in education must work together to pursue longer-term durable solutions for the provision of quality education to all children based on non-segregation, reconciliation and peace building.
3. Donors need to make more funding available for emergency and recovery education programmes in Rakhine State, especially those targeting adolescents, noting the close link between insecurity and instability and youth disaffection and lack of opportunity.
4. More education agencies should respond to the emergency education needs in Rakhine State, including those already delivering development programmes in the affected areas.
5. Increased funding for enhanced education opportunities for youth and adolescents is urgently required
6. The Government should be encouraged and supported to lead education coordination across Rakhine State, and all parties involved in supporting education, including donors, should actively commit to a more harmonized approach one which collectively ensures conflict sensitivity in design and implementation.

**Food**

1. Ensuring that food needs are met in isolated villages is becoming a concern that all stakeholders, national and international, should tackle. As the situation becomes more protracted, people living in isolated communities are also suffering from a decline in nutritional standards. These affected populations should not be neglected and will need to receive necessary support if their current situation does not improve.
2. Poor food security is largely linked to restrictions of movement. These continued restrictions on IDPs and surrounding communities are preventing them from resuming livelihood activities in Sittwe Town or from accessing markets.
3. This has a direct negative impact on their food security status, which will continue to deteriorate unless this matter is solved.

**Health**

1. Humanitarian health actors need to collaborate closely with hospitals, in particular for secondary health care facilities.
2. Routine immunization services for all people in the State need to be urgently resumed, with a particular emphasis on children and women of child-bearing age.
3. Government should guarantee referral patients are accepted into all township hospitals and that health staff have safe access to Muslim villages.
4. Government needs to guarantee referrals to Sittwe General Hospital are extended beyond life-saving referrals.
5. Government and humanitarian actors need to develop a joint plan for a mass measles supplementation campaign.
6. Humanitarian and development actors need to strengthen existing surveillance systems. The Government is called upon to ensure the implementation of policies pertaining to reproductive health in line with international standards with a clear communication strategy.
7. Health facilities and health workers need to be protected including ensuring the safe passage of ambulance services. The Government needs to put more resources into this and more effort into explaining to communities that healthcare provision is a neutral act.
8. The scale of mental health needs, within both communities, exists as a result of the tension between the communities. The Government needs to facilitate mental health activities both at community level and within health facilities.
9. Additional health professionals are needed in Rakhine.

**Nutrition**

1. Services need to expand beyond IDP camps across host communities, isolated villages, and other non-displaced vulnerable communities.
2. There is limited access to livelihoods development and the destruction of crops and land increases the risk of a food gap by September to October 2013, likely leading to the further deterioration of the nutritional status of affected communities towards the end of 2013.
3. Considering the frequent occurrence of diarrhoea and acute respiratory tract infections among IDP children, there is a strong need to resume the biannual nutrition campaign activities in IDP camps including vitamin A supplementation for under-five children and lactating women and de-worming for children aged 2-9 years.
4. Routine immunization and catch-up campaigns urgently need to be resumed as disease outbreaks will likely result in a dramatic increase in risk of acute malnutrition.
5. A mechanism for enhanced collaboration with Sittwe Hospital and possibly other hospitals is urgently needed to ensure improved access that meets global performance standards in the treatment of severe acute malnutrition with complications.
6. There is an urgent need to expand nutrition services to isolated villages and host communities.
7. Government, the Nutrition Sector and related sectors need to increase affected populations’ access to livelihoods and crop production. A failure to do so will increase the risk of a food gap by October leading to further deterioration of communities’ nutritional status towards the end of the year.
8. Biannual nutrition campaign activities, which include vitamin A supplementation for under-five children and lactating women as well as de-worming for 2-9 year olds need to be resumed as soon as possible.
9. Routine immunization activities need to be resumed as soon as possible. Additionally, catch-up campaigns need to be resumed as disease outbreaks could result in a dramatic increase in acute malnutrition.
10. The Government, the Health Cluster and Nutrition Sector members need to develop and implement a mechanism for enhanced collaboration with Sittwe Hospital and other hospitals to improve access to treatment of severe acute malnutrition.

**Protection**

1. The Government and communities need to address the underlying causes of the current tension and displacement. The protection of basic rights of all people, including women and children, persons over 60 years, and individuals with disabilities, by the Government should be prioritized.
2. The Government is called upon to ensure its full respect for the rule of law. Any allegations of violations should be promptly and effectively investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.
3. The Government and affected communities need to restore trust between and among communities. The Government’s impartial leadership for dialogue and confidence-building is essential.
4. The Government must take steps to end the arbitrary arrests and detention targeting the Muslim population that has prevailed in central and northern Rakhine State throughout 2013. This has depleted the leadership in the displaced communities, left families in high levels of distress, experiencing trauma and struggling to cope as well as further deteriorated the possibilities of building trust with the population.
5. Freedom of movement needs to be restored by the Government to ensure people’s access to viable livelihoods and social services.
6. The Government must end all discriminative practices and policies which single out the Muslim population in particular the Rohingya Muslims.
7. Equal access to health care, education and other basic services by all segments of the population in Rakhine needs to be ensured by the Government as a matter of priority.
8. The Government and the humanitarian community need to ensure that the protection needs of women, children and those at risk are prioritized and met, in order to prevent further abuse to any form of gender-based violence.
9. Township Child Rights Committees should be re-activated with support for increased capacity, covering IDP camps, host communities and isolated villages.
10. The Government also needs to immediately resume and strengthen birth registration.
11. The Government is responsible for appropriate and consistent documentation of the population. This ensures their right to be recognized as a person before the law and to access basic services. While the ’verification exercise’ aims to update the existing family lists, it requires it requires the inclusion of specific protection safeguards and careful dialogue with the concerned community.
12. The Government is called upon to step up its engagement to address the issue of the lack of citizenship for over 800,000 persons residing in Rakhine State in accordance with international standards. In particular, this includes the revision of the 1982 Citizenship Law bringing it in line with Myanmar’s international legal obligations and international standards. In the meantime, citizenship claims of the population in Rakhine State should be addressed with an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach while ensuring that those persons without citizenship are treated in accordance with the international law.
13. All actors need to employ consistent messaging that the current camp environment is of a temporary nature, that relocation to new shelters is voluntary and that IDPs have the right to return to their places of origin.
14. Supported by the humanitarian community, the Government must take immediate steps in the process of preparing for durable solutions which will enable the IDPs to make a voluntary and informed decision and ensure that it occurs in safety and dignity. Voluntariness in decision-making implies that a decision to return, settle elsewhere or integrate locally is self-determined from a number of viable options. A durable solution is achieved when former IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their rights without discrimination.

**Shelter**

1. The Government needs to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation between the different communities to enable the safe return of IDPs to their place of origin.
2. It is expected that 133,000 of the 140,000 IDPs will live in temporary shelters by the end of August. Almost half of these shelter were provided by the Government in July.

**CCCM**

1. The Government, humanitarian agencies, and IDP communities must engage more in CCCM.
2. CCCM needs to receive at least an additional 500,000 US-Dollars over the next six months. Without substantial funding within the next few weeks, the camps will deteriorate quickly and turn into dysfunctional settlements that will not contribute to restoration of relations and co-existence between IDPs and surrounding communities, nor support efforts to achieve the necessary and ultimate objective of a durable solution.
3. Funding would also sustain considerable progress achieved in shelter and ensure that millions of funds already spent will not be wasted.
4. Camps are not a sustainable solution. The Government and humanitarian partners need to step up collaboration to develop durable solutions that focus on return, co-existence and livelihoods so that first concrete results can be expected by the end of the rainy season.

**WASH**

1. Collection of data from WASH partner shows that around 7 per cent of IDPs in planned camps have insufficient access to water, 28% are using treated water, 53% are using water from improved sources and around 40% are accessing water from ponds[[5]](#footnote-6).
2. Access to appropriate latrines also continues to be challenging; only 23% of the camps have latrines according to Sphere standards (1:20), 47% have a ratio of less than 1 per 50 population, while 23% have more than 1:50, and 5% still do not have latrines[[6]](#footnote-7).
3. Many women have expressed fears of using latrines at night due to their location or due to a lack of door locks fitted on these facilities.
	1. Appropriate land must be provided for drainage construction, treatment of waste from latrines as well as and dumping sites for solid waste.
	2. People need to be relocated to appropriate locations where WASH actors can construct appropriate water and sanitation facilities.
	3. The Government needs to maintain the water supply to IDPs through an appropriate urban water supply system.
	4. The Government and all WASH agencies should work closely to better ensure the prevention of acute watery diarrhoea.
4. Less than 50 per cent of people living outside of the Sittwe area practice safe hygiene practices despite hygiene kits and education sessions being provided on a regular basis.[[7]](#footnote-8) These activities need to be increased to avoid disease outbreaks and diarrhoea.
5. The estimated funding gap for the WASH Cluster until the end of 2013 is $1,789,830. As the rainy season progresses, this funding gap threatens to undermine the good work that is being done. It is vital that the international community urgently increases resources for WASH activities in Rakhine state.

**ANNEX 3: KACHIN & NORTHERN SHAN STATES KEY MESSAGES (Sept 2013)**

1. **Full and sustained humanitarian access to all affected communities in Kachin and Northern Shan States is essential.**
* The humanitarian community continues to deliver assistance in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and operational independence.
* Local organisations have been responding to the needs of the internally displaced persons since the beginning of the conflict.
* International humanitarian assistance continues to be required in order to complement and enhance local efforts.
* Humanitarian access to affected communities is still limited in Kachin. International humanitarian law requires safe and unfettered humanitarian access to all areas of Kachin State at all times for all staff, including international staff.
1. **Assistance in areas beyond Government control has been limited and important gaps remain.**
* Humanitarian assistance is delivered regularly to people displaced across most Government areas of Kachin State.
* Immediate unmet needs in areas beyond Government control exist in the areas of shelter, non-food items, water sanitation and hygiene, health, education, livelihoods and protection. Quality needs assessments by sector to identify additional needs in non-government controlled areas are urgently needed.
* Particular attention is needed to extremely vulnerable groups in areas beyond Government control, including children, persons over 60 years, women-headed households and survivors of gender-based violence.
1. **People displaced continue to face critical protection concerns.**
* Some of the most serious protection concerns include human trafficking, absence of psychosocial support, gender-based violence, lack of access to health care, drug abuse and forced recruitment. Children are particularly vulnerable to these protection concerns, and face serious needs in particular in education.
* Child protection issues are of increasing concern with children exposed to violence in need of urgent support. Reports of children who lack adequate family care and who are separated and unaccompanied are on the increase. Children staying in host communities with friends and families are being forced to travel long distances to school. Livelihoods pressures are driving many children to work. Schools are reporting high dropout rates. Children are increasingly vulnerable to human trafficking. Children are reportedly being recruited and used by both armed groups and the armed forces.
* All parties must take every possible step to reduce protection and security threats to civilians, and facilitate the work of protection partners.
1. **Prolonged displacement has put a strain on both the displaced communities and host communities.**
* Many people have been displaced for up to two years in difficult conditions, also exhausting resources of host communities.
* All displaced people must receive assistance, including those staying with host families.
* Due consideration should also be given to the needs of host families, particularly livelihoods support, improved access to resources and access to services such as healthcare and education.
* Consideration should also be given to the needs of people who remain in their villages but are facing restrictions on movement.
1. **The humanitarian community welcomes the recent seven-point agreement as an important opportunity for peace and reconciliation across Kachin State.**
* Peace and reconciliation efforts going forward will need to put an emphasis on conditions conducive for durable solutions for more than 100,000 internally displaced people.
* Leadership from the Myanmar Government will be needed to ensure recovery, rehabilitation and development assistance and increase access to health, education, livelihoods and social protection across Kachin State. The humanitarian community is ready to continue to assist the Government in these efforts.
1. **Any return, resettlement (relocation) or local integration of displaced people must be voluntary and based on an individual informed decision.**
* Durable solutions (return, resettlement (relocation) and local integration) must be based on consultation with internally displaced persons who must be kept fully informed to facilitate their decision-making.
* People displaced should never be forced to return, resettle or stay in place of displacement if they do not wish to do so.
* The threat of landmines, the current lack of livelihood opportunities, as well as the lack of access to all basic services across places of origin are only some of the issues that must be urgently addressed.
* Humanitarian assistance will need to continue, while people await durable solutions.
1. **The generosity of donors is crucial to ensure adequate resources are available to assist all people in need.**
* The Kachin Response Plan is underfunded at US$13.2 million (25.9 per cent of total requirements).The Plan needs US$50.9 million to provide humanitarian assistance to 120,000 people across Kachin and northern Shan states.
* Local organisations have been playing a leading role in the in response activities and all stakeholders should recognise and support their efforts, including by providing institutional support and capacity development. In March 2013, seven local organisations developed a Joint Strategy which outlines funding needs for the period 2013 to 2015 and requires donor support.
* Additional funding is urgently required to meet outstanding humanitarian need, including shelter and camp coordination and camp management. Early recovery and community-based protection activities are a priority, especially since many people have been displaced for up to two years without access to livelihoods.
* Additional funding is urgently required to meet outstanding humanitarian needs, including shelter, camp coordination and camp management, WASH, Health, Nutrition & Education needs. Early recovery and community-based protection activities are a priority, especially since many people have been displaced for up to two years without access to livelihoods”

**ANNEX 4: KEY MESSAGES ON NATURAL HAZARDS (Sept, 2013)**

1. **The annual monsoon season is underway and threatens the already fragile humanitarian situation for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people across Myanmar.**
* Unrelenting heavy rains put vulnerable people at increased risk of preventable diseases such as acute diarrhea, dengue fever and malaria.
* The tens of thousands of people living in open, low lying areas and rice fields are at particular risk.
* Donor support is crucial to ensure the resources are available to assist people affected by natural disaster across Myanmar.
1. **The Myanmar Government's overall preparedness for Tropical Storm Mahasen was positive.**
* Relevant authorities recognized the particular needs of displaced people, and developed a temporary action plan to address these needs.
* Relevant authorities must however, improve standing plans so they include all potentially affected communities when preparing for future disasters.
* International humanitarian organisations are ready and willing to assist relevant authorities in strengthening standing plans that serve the needs of all communities.
1. **International humanitarian organisations looks forward to continuing our work with the Myanmar Government on further disaster response and preparedness efforts.**
* It will be important that relevant authorities activate the joint Rakhine State Emergency Coordination Centre for future preparedness. The Emergency Coordination Centre is an important effort aimed at bringing together officials, experts and humanitarian workers to improve disaster preparedness and response.
1. **Now is the time to capitalize on disaster preparedness experience gained through Cyclone Mahasen.**
* Relevant authorities should strengthen natural hazards' early warning dissemination mechanisms across all communities in their own languages and elaborate contingency plans that identify key infrastructure, and safe havens; and preposition stocks.
1. **All communities must be made aware of response plans in advance of any possible natural disaster.**
* Communities should be consulted on disaster preparedness measures and be well informed so they are able to respond quickly when disaster threatens.
* It is imperative that community preferences on evacuation sites are understood and agreed in advance so that fear-based resistance does not compromise any future evacuations.

**Annex 5: Myanmar Advocacy and Communication Focal Points**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cluster/Sector**  | **Organization** | **Name** | **Position** | **Email** | **Mobile** |
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1. For more information on the role of the HC in leading advocacy efforts refer to the 'IASC Concept Paper on Empowered Leadership' p3, and ‘What empowered leadership looks like in practice’ p2. http://humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-template-default&bd=87 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This does not prevent Heads of Organisations meeting with senior Government officials, but ideally should be done in consultation, and preferably together with, the HC. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. 140, 000 IDPs and an estimated additional 36, 000 people across host families and isolated villages. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. WASH 3W Matrix Data updated June 25’13. Based on WASH cluster standard adapted from Sphere Standards. 1 latrine for 20 people; 1 water collection point for 250 people. See more in WASH Cluster Minimum Packages [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. WASH 3W Matrix Data updated June 25’13 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The calculation is based on field observations and average coverage by WASH actors in camps [↑](#footnote-ref-8)