

## FINAL: Summary Note on Cash Working Group (CWG) Meeting

<b>Date/ Time &amp; Venue</b>	14 January 2021, 10.00 – 12.00 (via Webex)	
<b>Chair / Co-chair</b>	<b>Mercy Corps</b> (John Nelson), <b>WFP</b> (Thin Thin Aye) and <b>American Red Cross</b> (Manish)	
<b>Participants</b>	ACF, ACTED, American Red Cross, AVSI, CARE, CSI, DCA, ECHO, FCA, FCDO-UK, Helvetas, HPA, ICRC, IFRC, IRC, IRW, KMSS, Malteser, Mercy Corps, NRC, OCHA, PATH, Save the Children, SI, Tear Fund, Trocaire, UN Women, UNHCR, UNHCR-DSWG, UNHCR-DSWG, UNICEF, UNICEF-SPWG, UNICEF-WASH, UNOPS, WFP, WFP-FSS, WFP-Kachin, WFP-Sittwe, WHH, World Vision	
<b>Agenda items and summary of discussion</b>	<b>Action Points</b>	
<p><b>1. Updates on durable solutions and integration of Cash into the response</b></p> <p>UNHCR, on behalf of the Durable Solution Working Group (DSWG) in Kachin, presented a brief overview of the situation in Kachin State. Out of over 97,000 displaced people, about 8,400 have moved for solutions since 2014. Currently, some 11,600 people from 85 sites in 12 townships have plans for different types of solutions (return, local integration, and resettlement). There are a variety of initiatives in Kachin State for solutions, including the Government's National Camp Closure Strategy, KIO's return and resettlement plan, etc. UNHCR also highlighted the key types of needs, such as household-based needs, services, and infrastructures.</p> <p>The current coordination structure and different platforms for durable solutions efforts in Kachin State, including the role of DSWG, local institutions, and the Government, were presented. UNHCR also clarified the current approach to joint assessments supported by the DSWG, highlighting the importance of broad participation in these exercises and the work of the DSWG in general. UNHCR also highlighted factors to consider for cash assistance/engagement in relation to durable solutions.</p> <p>KMSS updated on its current work in support of durable solutions, which includes humanitarian support in 20 camps, of which 8 are in NGCAs. Cash support is currently being provided in one camp in NGCA using the Hondi system, although this modality includes a relatively high service charge.</p> <p>In 2021, KMSS will sustain food support in 8 camps in NGCAs and will be providing resiliency by returning support in host communities as well as for IDPs. KMSS also has a plan to provide cash for community rehabilitation through village committees using mobile money, and cash transfers for 3,000 people, with transfer amounts based on an assessment of relative levels of vulnerability. WFP provided some additional information on engagement with communities to determine relative levels of vulnerability as part of the beneficiary selection process.</p> <p>KMSS highlighted several risks and challenges, including challenges in working in NGCAs, low levels of mobile literacy, gaps in financial services and shortages in funding among mobile money agents, exchange losses, and ensuring participation from the beneficiaries. KMSS explained that it is currently planning baseline assessments to inform decisions on whether to provide cash support at household or community levels. KMSS noted that its decision to shift some support from in-kind to cash is intended to enable recipients to meet needs more flexibly.</p>		
<p><b>2. Learning from Social Protection in 2020, with focus on Myanmar experiences</b></p> <p>UNICEF, on behalf of the UN Social Protection Working Group (SPWG), presented learning and reflections from government-led social protection efforts in 2020. COVID-19 contributed to a grave health and economic crisis, with poor, disabled, and elderly populations severely</p>		

<p>impacted. The government’s response, including through its COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), involved scaled-up social protection, mainly through cash transfers. This was in line with global practice, with almost all countries scaling up social protection measures, including cash transfers. In Myanmar, this built on the existing analysis of options for improved shock-responsive social protection support, including through the UN Social Protection Working Group, allowing for smoother piggybacking on existing schemes, design tweaks, and vertical and horizontal expansion in response to COVID-19. In terms of learning, 2020 provided an opportunity to test new approaches to social protection and saw the unprecedented acceptance of cash transfers and universal programmes, as well as a rapid mobilization of assistance through government channels. It is now critical to better understand what worked and what didn’t. It has also been clear that cash alone is insufficient, and these measures need to be accompanied with support for enhanced social services and efforts around financial inclusion programs.</p>	
<p><b>3. Rakhine Market Price Report</b></p> <p>Mercy Corps outlined its recent Rakhine market price report and the snapshot of farmers’ perspectives which were released on 5 and 6 January 2021 respectively. The market price report focuses on variations between townships and price trends. Essential food prices have remained fairly consistent across townships in November. However, vegetable prices varied considerably by township and some rising price trends for rice were observed, linked to availability of rice crops. On paddy and winter crops, fewer farmers reported challenges due to COVID-19 in November, and it is hoped that reduced levels of conflict across Rakhine will also support improved yields. Labor wages and availability remained challenged.</p>	
<p><b>4. CWG Updates</b></p> <p><b>Update on Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) exercise for Myanmar:</b> A concept note has been shared outlining the approach and planned key steps. Analysis on secondary data has been carried out, with a focus on household expenditure data, and this is currently being documented. The group has also tried to build questions into PDMs and other ongoing activities, given challenges in primary data collection. The group is also collecting more detailed information from sectors/clusters and following the updated WFP guidance on MEB setting. The MEB task team will be reconvened soon. CWG members are welcome to participate in the task team.</p> <p><b>CWG 4Ws:</b> The template has been revised/enhanced and shared with members for inputs. A key priority is to give visibility to the work partners are doing on CVA and demonstrate the growing scale of this modality in Myanmar. Participants were encouraged to feed back as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Cash for work (CfW) task team:</b> A task team meeting may be re-convened in the coming weeks, and interested participants are encouraged to contact OCHA.</p> <p><b>CWG performance monitoring &amp; 2021 priorities:</b> The CWG leadership will develop a survey and share with member to collect feedback on the CWG functionality and support updates to the CWG work plan for 2021.</p> <p><b>CWG member list update:</b> The existing member list will be shared with members for validation and to be updated as needed.</p>	
<p><b>5. AOB</b></p> <p><b>Members’ Program Updates:</b> MRCS is currently distributing cash grants to more than 600,000 households in response to COVID-19 starting from late 2020. Post-distribution monitoring is also ongoing, and the results will be shared in the next CWG meeting. The distribution was done mostly through AYA Bank. ACF managed to get travel authorization for cash distribution in four townships in Rakhine. The request for February has been submitted and</p>	

still waiting to get approval. SI is implementing a cash for hygiene programme in eight camps in Kachin State. At the same time, SI continues its agriculture support activities through cash and/or cash plus in-kind in those camps. In Rakhine, SI provided cash to 25 beneficiaries in Ah Nauk Ye camp to start IGA (Income Generating Activities). The detailed report will be shared with the group when available.

#### **Useful links**

- [Myanmar: Cash Working Group \(CWG\)](#)
- [Myanmar CWG final Terms of Reference \(June 2020\)](#)
- [Myanmar CWG 4Ws \(as of 10 November 2020\)](#)

**Next CWG meeting: 14:00 – 16:00, 11 February 2021**