



Agenda

1. Uneven Burdens: Women in Myanmar's Crisis Economy (UNDP)
2. Updates on Cluster/Sector/Agency initiatives
3. Activity Updates from MIMU
4. AOB and other discussions

Attendance

Chair: Ole Hansen (MIMU)

Participants: PALM, Chin Baptist Convention, MIMU, CESVI, UNOPS, UNFPA, CDE, UNDP, SCI, CPI, OCHA, PLAN, JOICFP, Mercy Corps, Burnet Institute Myanmar, NAG, ICRC (24 participants from 17 organisations)

1. Uneven Burdens: Women in Myanmar's Crisis Economy (UNDP)

This presentation is based on key findings from the latest UNDP / UN Women report titled "Uneven Burdens: Women in Myanmar's Crisis Economy", on how Myanmar's compounding crises are reshaping the economic realities of women. Myanmar Gender Survey 2025 served as the backbone of the report. It is a nationally representative, telephone-based survey of 5,405 individuals aged 15 and above, conducted between January and April 2025 across all states and regions, with weights based on the 2014 census applied to align the sample with national demographics and adjust for non-response.

While Myanmar's overlapping crises affect all communities, the findings show the impact is not gender-neutral: women are taking on more responsibilities while having fewer economic resources and less protection. Key gaps include women's labour force participation of 69% versus 84% for men; 78% of women outside the labour force citing caregiving as their main activity (versus 26% of men); a median monthly income of 275,000 MMK versus around 350,000 MMK for men; and slightly worse food insecurity among women.

Social Norms and Unpaid Care Work

A major driver lies in social norms: from a young age, girls are taught that their primary responsibility is household work and caregiving, while stable jobs and leadership roles are seen as more suitable for men. More than 25% of respondents, both men and women, believe men deserve higher pay for the same work, and nearly half of surveyed men (46%) believe important household decisions should mainly be made by men. These norms restrict women's choices and become even more consequential during crisis.

Unpaid care work is essential for household survival but rarely recognised as economic labour. Only 64% of women are employed compared with 80% of men, and among youth aged 15-24, 26% of women are NEET (not in employment, education or training) versus 12% of men. Women spend 4.3 hours per day on unpaid household and care work against 2.4 hours for men and this workload does not decrease when women enter paid employment. Many women effectively work "two shifts", a double burden that limits career growth and weakens long-term financial security.

Effect of Conflict

Conflict does not create gender inequality but makes it worse. In no-conflict areas, women's employment-to-population rates are comparable to or slightly higher than men's (75.4% versus 72.5%), but this pattern reverses sharply in conflict-affected areas, with women's rates much lower than men's in high-conflict areas.

Excluded from Economic Security

Even economically active women face serious disadvantages. Employed women are concentrated in own-account and helper roles in the insecure, informal labour market, while men are more concentrated in employee and employer categories. Informality affects approximately 84% of all workers (85% of women, 84% of men), with women concentrated in vulnerable own-account and trade sectors lacking legal protections and social safety nets. Women also dominate the garment workforce (80%), which was heavily affected after 2021 by the withdrawal of Western buyers, inflation and electricity disruptions.

On income and assets: 42% of women report no individual income (versus 23% of men); employed women earn only around 79% of men's income; and against a Minimum Expenditure Basket of around 665,000 MMK per month, a household needs around 2.4 incomes to meet basic needs. Nearly 79% of working women cannot save monthly, leaving little buffer against shocks such as illness, job loss or displacement. Women also have less access to productive assets; agricultural land titles (49% versus 64%) and business ownership (8% versus 16%). With land and businesses registered mainly in men's names, women face major barriers in accessing credit and lack decision-making power over key resources.

Food Insecurity and Coping

Women usually manage food and family welfare and are often the first to sacrifice their own needs, eating less, later, or skipping meals so other family members can eat. 50% of men meet basic food security standards versus 47% of women; married and older women face the highest risks. When food insecurity becomes severe, households adopt increasingly harmful coping mechanisms: women are more likely to report reducing health and education expenditures, men to report increasing casual labour, and in the most severe cases families sell assets, take on debt, migrate, pull children out of school or send them into labour. Among severely food-insecure households, 11% of women report using multiple coping strategies simultaneously versus 4% of men.

Key Messages and Strategic Recommendations

Six strategic recommendations were discussed, including:

- investing in women's economic empowerment
- expanding education and learning opportunities
- promoting women's access to productive resources and assets including joint ownership
- reducing care burdens through care-sensitive social protection and investment in childcare, eldercare and community services
- strengthening household resilience by integrating gender analysis into food security and livelihood programmes, with targeted cash assistance for women-headed households
- addressing gender norms and participation, engaging men and strengthening women's leadership in decision-making.

The report is available on the [UNDP website](#), with executive summaries in both Myanmar and English. Participants were encouraged to contact the team bilaterally for further questions or data.

Discussion, Q&A

- **Survey methodology:** The survey was conducted via telephone interviews by a survey firm. The main limitation is difficulty reaching respondents where phone/internet connections are unavailable or conflict is present; this was mitigated through survey weights and transparently noted in the report. Security concerns and connectivity restrictions resulted in notably lower sample sizes in Kachin and Chin.
- **Validation of respondents' age group:** The survey firm maintains a rich respondent database with ages and demographic categories already validated through previous surveys, and the questionnaire included specific questions to confirm respondents' demographic profiles.
- **Comparability with other food insecurity references:** The survey adapted the FAO/WFP Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) 8-question module and the Livelihood Coping Strategies Index (LCSI). Results cannot be compared one-to-one with FAO or IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) figures due to methodology: around 16% of the population without telephone access is excluded, and IDP camps (e.g. in Rakhine) and hard-to-reach areas (e.g. northern Kachin) could not be reached, introducing an

upward bias i.e. reality is likely worse than reported. IPC estimates moderate and severe food insecurity at 30-33%, versus around 20% in the gender survey.

- **Coping strategies covered:** The standard FAO/WFP livelihood coping strategy questions were adapted (e.g. borrowing money due to food shortage), with around 11 coping strategies covered in the report. While food security scores between men and women are not statistically significantly different, women are considerably worse off in adopting negative coping strategies. This is flagged as a particularly alarming finding.
- **Gender perspective on male mortality:** A comment encouraged a broader gender perspective, noting men in Myanmar die on average 6.5 years earlier than women (globally around 13% shorter lifespans). In response, it was noted that a forthcoming study on older persons links to this issue: as men die earlier, the majority of the 60+ cohort are women, and with the conscription law drawing young men away, caregiving burdens fall even more heavily on girls and women, including widowed older women.

2. Updates on Cluster/Sector/Agency initiatives

No updates were provided.

3. Activity Updates from MIMU

MIMU is supporting and co-chairing a new Flood and Climate Risk Technical Task Team under the ERP Working Group, supporting the coordination of members' analytical and information management activities on flood and broader climate risks. The activity tracking exercise is on track with substantial member inputs, and drafting Terms of Reference is in progress.

The latest round of Assessment and Publication Tracking has been completed. Related products, including a dashboard, are coming soon.

Updates on trainings:

- Data Visualisation and Communication training (2-4 June)
- Excel Distance Learning (July 2026)
- Information Management Workshop (7-10 July 2026)
- Advanced Excel training (5-7 August 2026, in-person)
- KoBo Toolbox training (24-28 August 2026, in-person)

4. AOB and other discussions

The next IM Network English-language meeting is expected in Sep, and next Myanmar-language meeting to take place in Aug.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ENG												
MMR												