

# Chin Humanitarian Update



This update covers the period from 1 to 31 March 2011 and is issued on 8 April 2011.

## I. Highlights

- Food insecurity in Chin State may worsen when the monsoon rains start. The rains reduce people's access to other off-farm income-generating activities.
- Higher cost of basic commodities, such as food items and fuel, may worsen food insecurity.
- An increasing lack of job opportunities in Chin State, particularly during the dry season (March-May), may lead to a high rate of economic migration.
- Seasonal water shortage is anticipated during the dry season (March-May) in both urban and rural areas in Chin.

## II. Situation Overview

Food security remains a challenge, particularly for the communities in Kanpetlet Township, which was severely affected by rat infestation and crop failure in 2010. Emergency stocks of rice, previously received from the humanitarian partners, are reportedly running low.

Farmers have started planting corn and millet, with the harvest expected in September. It is anticipated that the food insecurity may worsen when the monsoon starts in May, as during the monsoon months, the rains make it more difficult for people to access the forest, which currently provides off-farm activities such as selling forest products, cutting pinewoods as a supplementary source of family's income, together with the selling of livestock. Across Chin State, the prices of commodities, particularly basic food items and fuel, have risen by 6% to 15% in March 2011, compared to those of last month, according to the recent market survey of WFP. The higher cost of living may be one of the compounding factors, leading to a deterioration of food security in the region.

An increasing lack of job opportunities in Chin State, particularly during the dry season (March-May), could lead to a high rate of economic migration, resulting in increasing concerns over human trafficking and HIV/AIDS. Partner agency observed high migration rates in the villages near the Myanmar-India border in Tiddim Township.

The increase in urban population, and the depletion of water sources as well as aging water supply systems in rural Chin are affecting water availability. This problem could be further exacerbated during the dry season (March – May) in both urban and rural areas.

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) secretariat approved two proposals by WFP and UNDP in Chin State, for a total of USD 335,000, to deliver food distribution and agricultural infrastructure renovation activities. These two projects will be concluded in December 2011.

## III. Sectoral update

**Food** – For the first six months of 2011, WFP, through cooperating partners, will implement Food-for-Work and Food-for-Training in Madupi, Htantlang, Hakha, Tiddim and Tonzang Townships, targeting some 13,300 beneficiaries who will receive some 1,370 MT of rice in March. FFW and FFT commenced in 25 villages.

The Chin State and Development Council has granted permission to CARE Myanmar to provide rice assistance to 36 villages affected by the 2010 rat infestation in Mindat Township.

Solidarites International, in cooperation with WFP, will begin food (200 MT) distribution in 58 villages in Kanpetlet. This round of food distribution will cover a period of two months.

**Health** – UNICEF organised the first malaria control training for 20 Community Volunteer Health Workers (VHWs) in Tonzang to increase the local capacity in controlling the disease. UNICEF also provided Long Lasting Treated Nets (LLTNs) to the households at risk; and Co-Artem to Basic Health Staff. In addition, UNICEF will provide essential rapid malaria diagnosis test and prompt treatment of Co-Artem drugs to Village Health Workers, through the Township Medical Officer in Tonzang.

Merlin conducted a malaria prevention and treatment programme in Hakha and Htantlang. On the Chin National Day (20 February), the organisation launched a behavior change campaign on malaria in Hakha, which included distribution of pamphlets providing basic information about the disease and a quiz contest. Merlin also provided awareness training on malaria, LLTN and Co-artem in these two townships.

UNICEF provided 229 Child Survival Kits for sub-health centres and hospitals in all five northern Townships of Chin. The agency also assisted in the training on the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS for 53 Basic Health Workers (BHWs).

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) conducted an awareness-raising session on HIV/AIDS in two villages in Hakha Township.

**Nutrition** –Nutrition Surveillance, regularly conducted by UNICEF, in Hakha and Htantlang Townships, will be extended to Mindat and Kanpetlet in April.

**WASH**– To address the issue of access to safe drinking water and hygiene, UNDP is supporting the improvement of water supply systems (gravity flow, hand dug wells, rain water collection tanks) in 79 villages in five northern townships of Chin State, through an AusAid grant worth USD 310,000. The technical survey and the formation of an implementing committee have been completed. Construction work has also commenced and is expected to be completed by May 2011.

UNICEF's assistance to improve water supply systems in four villages in Tiddim is in progress. In collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF has also identified additional 10 villages in Mindat Township for its WASH projects in 2011.

**Agriculture and livelihood** – Following the CERF Secretariat's approval of UNDP's proposal on agricultural infrastructure renovation, the agency is calling for proposals from local partners (NGOs) to conduct an assessment on agriculture infrastructure following the last year flash floods and rat infestation in Southern Chin areas; and a monitoring and evaluation of the restoration of agriculture infrastructure affected by torrential rain and containment of crop pest. The call is open until 8 April 2011.

In March, UNDP has completed the community proposals for livelihoods activities for the first quarter of 2011 in five northern townships of Chin State. Targeting 1,100 poor farmers, these activities include support to increase major agriculture crop yields; livestock breeding; vocational training on off-farm activities; setting up food banks; constructing and restoring of agriculture infrastructures such as canal line and sprinkler irrigation system. The activities will start in April.

With the LIFT fund, the NGO, GRET, has started the implementation a three-year livelihood project in the five northern townships of Chin State. Approximately 9,000 farmer and non-farmer households will benefit from the project. The activities include technical training on

agriculture; land development and irrigation and livestock breeding. The project will be completed in October 2013. Livelihoods and Food Security Workshop was organized by GRET in Hakha in March. It was attended by 11 participants from UN agencies and NGOs present in the northern townships of Chin State. Deforestation, permanent terrace farming, animal free-grazing, marketable crops, Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) and food processing methods were identified as strategies to improve livelihood and food security of Chin communities. Such workshop will be held on a bi-monthly basis to facilitate sharing of experiences among different agencies.

World Vision has expanded its project on Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) farming to cover additional 600 acres in 2011—from 300 acres in 2010—to reduce the wide practice of slash-and-burn farming in Tiddim Township.

In Kanpetlet Township, Solidarites International will start a six-month agriculture project targeting 1,600 households with seeds distribution and 300 households with food-for-work activities. In addition, 400 households will receive rat traps to improve rodent control efforts.

**Protection** –In March, World Vision Myanmar organized a two-day training on anti-human trafficking in nine villages in Tiddim Township.

#### IV. Coordination

GRET, Country Agency for Rural Development (CAD), and Ar Yone Oo held bilateral meetings for finalizing targeted villages for their livelihood interventions in the northern parts of Chin State in order to have effective geographical coverage of activities.

Inter-agency coordination meetings continue to be regularly held in Chin State.

MIMU is finalizing a map on road access to towns and villages. Once ready, it will be posted on the MIMU Chin webpage.

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