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MEDIA RELEASE: LIFT and DSW announce USD9 million in COVID-19 cash support to mothers, pregnant women and social pension beneficiaries

Myanmar Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Department of Social Welfare (DSW), and Livelihoods and Food Security Fund LIFT have announced funding of USD9 million (approx. MMK12.6 billion) in social protection payments during the COVID-19 pandemic. The support will be delivered to mothers of children under the age of two, pregnant women, and older people over the age of 85 who are beneficiaries of DSW’s two social protection programmes; the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer Programme and the Social Pension Programme. Each beneficiary will receive a one-off MMK30,000 cash payment and the disbursements will start later this week. The funding is provided by LIFT’s donors United Kingdom, the European Union, Switzerland, Australia, the United States of America, Canada and Ireland.

In line with the Government of Myanmar’s COVID-19 Coordinated Economic Relief Plan and in support of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement’s commitment to social protection, this cash support will help ease the direct impact on 400,000 people and indirect impact on nearly 2 million people across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Social Welfare’s Director General, Dr San San Aye, said: “Myanmar’s vision for social protection is an inclusive, equitable and sustainable system that facilitates access to essential social services, protects people from risks and shocks, addresses economic and social vulnerabilities and food insecurity, promotes economic opportunities and alleviates social exclusion, as per the Government of Myanmar’s National Social Protection Strategic Plan of 2014. In times of crisis such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, we will build on and strengthen our outreach to Myanmar’s most vulnerable people. The cash transfers to mothers and older people are a symbol of this, and will be followed by further efforts as outlined in Goal 4 of the Government’s COVID-19 Coordinated Economic Relief Plan, in our effort to ease the impact on households.

LIFT Fund Director Katy Webley said: “The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge to Myanmar and its people, today and for the foreseeable future, as families struggle with food and health costs amid uncertain income. As can be seen around the world, cash assistance put in the hands of ordinary people is a fast, effective, empowering way of helping families to get through this crisis – and it helps build a fairer system for the future.”



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The beneficiaries are the recipients of the Government’s existing maternal and child cash transfer (MCCT) and the social pension programmes, with this as a top-up to support their families’ needs. In connection with the cash payments, beneficiaries will be informed how they can prepare and slow down the spread of the virus in their families and communities.

Support to mothers

Budget: USD4.93m

Number of beneficiaries: 241,425 in total

The programme will provide an additional one-time payment of MMK30,000 for the families of pregnant women and mothers of children under the age of two years (in addition to the existing monthly payment of MMK15,000) in Chin, Kayah, Kayin Rakhine State, Naga Self-Administered Area. The support is delivered via the existing Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme initiated by LIFT. MCCT has been implemented in Rakhine, Kayin, Kayah and the Naga Self-Administrated Area since the 2017-2018 fiscal year from the national budget. The Chin MCCT Programme is being implemented through the national budget this fiscal year.

Implementing partners: Department of Social Welfare in collaboration with Civil Health and Development Network (in Kayah) and Karen Department of Health and Welfare (in Kayin).

Support to older people

Budget: USD4.07m

Number of beneficiaries: 200,301 in total

The programme will provide an additional one-time payment of MMK30,000 to people aged 85 and over (in addition to the existing average monthly payment of MMK10,000). The support is delivered via the social pension programme, implemented by the Department of Social Welfare since the 2017-2018 fiscal year as a nationwide Government programme, in line with Social Protection Strategy.

Implementing partners: Department of Social Welfare, with technical assistance from HelpAge International.

The programme will:

- Prevent the spread of COVID-19 among vulnerable populations (pregnant women and mothers and their children under two), their families and their communities residing in the most vulnerable and conflict affected states of Myanmar (Rakhine, Chin, Kayah, Kayin and Naga);
- Prevent the spread of COVID-19 among vulnerable older people (85+), their families and their communities nationwide;



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- Provide a safety net for the most vulnerable and their families, reaching them through the existing social protection services, in order to mitigate the worsening effects the COVID-19 crisis is expected to have on income and nutrition security;
- Strengthen the institutional capacities of the Department of Social Welfare to respond to emergencies through the provision of social protection services for the most vulnerable population.

LIFT announced its overall COVID-19 assistance package worth USD15.8 million in April. This is estimated to benefit 5.9 million people in Myanmar. For more information, see [here](#).

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