OBJECTIVES

The Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) aims to ensure that humanitarian needs are addressed in a timely and collaborative manner, fostering cooperation and coordination within and between clusters, sectors and humanitarian organizations. As such, the MHF promotes joint needs assessments; the use of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) as the basis for strategic planning; close coordination with sectors, clusters, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), other funds and regional coordination bodies; and accountability through a solid monitoring, reporting and risk management framework. Allocations are made based on a rigorous process of prioritization built on a comprehensive analysis of needs and informed by sector and inter-sector needs severity data, prioritizing the most vulnerable people, such as newly displaced, other internally displaced people, host communities and other vulnerable people, i.e. women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, intersex and queer/questioning (LGBTIQ) persons; and persons in need of urgent life-saving medical attention including persons living with HIV, working through regular response systems as well as rapid response mechanisms. Allocations will also consider operating constraints due to the impact of access restrictions for MHF partners, ensuring that adequate resources are provided to guarantee access to the affected populations including those in hard-to-reach areas.

Through this strategy, the MHF aims at achieving four main objectives, grouped in two priority categories:

- **Priority 1:**
  - Address acute unmet emergency and humanitarian needs; and
  - Respond to new emergencies or sudden-onset disasters.

- **Priority 2** (only if there are no other sources of funding available)
  - Fill highest priority gaps in protracted crisis situations; and
  - Prevent a worsening of the situation and increased vulnerability, including seasonal monsoon preparedness actions.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The MHF Advisory Board agrees that funding allocations will be in line with the following principles:

- Provide assistance based on the severity of assessed needs and an agreed allocation strategy, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;
- Reinforce existing capacity of partners operating in the affected areas, considering their mandates and activities and based on comparative advantages;
- Target sectors, activities and geographical areas prioritized in allocation strategy papers;
- Ensure the application of minimum humanitarian standards depending on the local context, particularly in displacement sites, including by avoiding harm through mitigating environmental risk;
- Mainstream the centrality of protection in all humanitarian action to avoid and/or minimize any potential protection risk;
- Ensure a conflict-sensitive approach to all humanitarian action, including by applying the principle of “do no harm” at all times;
- Encourage the use of cash-based programming, when possible and appropriate;

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1 This includes specific guidelines for the prevention and reporting of suspected cases of fraud, corruption, conflict of interest and loss, diversion and theft of assets, cash, property, or other. An additional signed declaration of no-engagement with companies listed in the Annex II.B. of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) report on Myanmar on “The economic interests of the Myanmar military” has been requested to eligible partners since January 2020.
• Promote the principle “as local as possible, as international as necessary”, prioritizing direct funding to partners, particularly local and national NGOs;
• Encourage consortia of different organizations for better integrated responses, when possible;
• Prioritize multi-sector and integrated interventions for the same target population and geographical areas to increase impact, while recognize that, in some circumstances\(^2\), where there is a particular emergency, more focused interventions are warranted;
• When appropriate, prioritize specific allocations based on common vulnerabilities or thematic(s) for an increased impact;
• Ensure accountability to affected people and their meaningful participation in planning and decision-making.
• Consider the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus to ensure proper collaboration, i.e. information sharing, analysis, etc. with relevant development programmes and funds operating in the same geographical areas; while keeping humanitarian action based on a principled approached.

**ENHANCING AGE, GENDER AND DIVERSITY APPROACHES**

The MHF is committed to mainstreaming protection in all the phases of the project management cycle, by incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid\(^3\). In addition, the MHF will contribute to the application of the HCT Protection Strategy (2019-2020) and other relevant guidance.

Promoting approaches sensitive to age, gender and diversity through funding actions is a requirement for partners applying for MHF funding. The MHF is compliant with the new Gender with Age Marker, the use of which is required for partners applying for funds since January 2019. Age, gender and disability disaggregated data will be collected and analysed during the implementation period, for monitoring, reporting and programming purposes. The MHF will advocate at global level to revise the project proposal and narrative reporting templates to reflect distinct age categories for older persons, avoiding that significant differences between the age cohorts are neglected and result in failure to address specific rights and needs. Disability inclusion will be mainstreamed in all the activities and projects supported by the MHF and closely monitored. Further, the MHF will require partners to have clear policies and operational mechanisms on safeguarding including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and feedback/complaints handling mechanism. The MHF will be willing to extend appropriate support as needed.

**PROMOTING LOCALIZATION**

OCHA will continue its ongoing efforts to promote a localization approach in the humanitarian response in Myanmar, with a focus on national partners. This may include the following:

• Participation of local and national partners in decision-making processes will be reinforced, including the preparation of allocation strategies, the pre-selection of submitted proposals and the technical reviews of selected projects;
• Accessible language and definitions of key international humanitarian concepts by using relevant Myanmar context and case studies to improve the understanding of national partners about the MHF funding mechanisms and processes;
• Adapted strategies to get a better and higher engagement of local and national partners into the MHF funding and processes, particularly at sub-national level with local organization and community-based organizations (CBOs), in linkage with existing initiatives of increasing engagement with local partners through capacity mapping and development.

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\(^2\) For example, flooding or other natural hazards. In such circumstances, targeted interventions in a particular sector are likely to have quicker and greater impact than interventions that operate across many sectors. For example, in communities affected by floods, where the principle concern is around rebuilding livelihoods, intensified support to strengthening farming and production capacity may respond better to the immediate needs of the community, allowing them to build resilience and access social services.

\(^3\) Further information at the [Global Protection Cluster](https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org) website.
• Discussion on practical ways to pre-position funds ready-to-go to support immediate response from local CBOs, in case of sudden-onset natural disaster or other emergencies. It would require an operational partner with enough capacity to receive the funds and clear criteria for delivering the funds case-by-case to the CBOs requesting support;
• Awareness-raising sessions on the MHF with potential partners, particularly national partners in areas affected by protracted crisis and high-risk disaster-prone areas;
• Bilateral meetings and sessions in Myanmar language at national and sub-national level, as needed;
• Workshops on the MHF online Grant Management System (GMS) and project design with existing and new eligible partners (upon any new allocation);
• Refresher workshops on the project management cycle with funded partners and sub-partners in English and Myanmar language in Yangon and other locations, as needed (any time after approval of grants within a specific allocation), which may include specific modules on staff safety and security, mainly for those operating in conflict-affected areas;
• After-action review in English and Myanmar language to discuss lessons learned, best practices and suggestions for improvement of MHF management; and
• Day-to-day contacts in English and Myanmar language to discuss lessons learned, best practices and suggestions for improvement of MHF management; and

EMBRACING THE NEW WAY OF WORKING

OCHA will ensure that MHF funding contribute to the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, by funding humanitarian activities that reduce risk and vulnerability and the progressive achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is directly linked to the Strategy of the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan. This requires close cooperation between humanitarian and development partners, while at the same time ensuring respect for their respective operating principles. The specific role/activity of the MHF in this regard will be to enhance the information sharing, the coordination and the synergy among humanitarian funding (other funds in country) and development interventions, to raise the global impact and the effectiveness of the interventions. It may include discussion on strategies to phase out the humanitarian support and possibly handing over to other actors where possible. This will go in particular for sectors with large ongoing development programmes in the same geographical areas.

The MHF will keep the focus on life-saving humanitarian activities, only extending it to immediate recovery activities when needed in complementarity to the initial response provided at the community level by local CSOs, Government entities and the private sector. Mainstreaming of increased resilience towards future disasters will be part of the response. To this end, MHF funded interventions will also consider approaches to minimize unintended negative environmental impacts of humanitarian activities. Partners applying for MHF funding will be encouraged to systematically assess, mitigate and monitor the environmental impacts of their programmes and report on progress.

ENSURING EFFICIENCY

OCHA will continue to strengthen coordination of the MHF allocations with other global and in-country funds and donors, building on the experience of integrated allocation strategies (MHF, CERF4, other funds). The aim is to increase the efficiency of resource allocation in line with the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit to strengthen the impact of the humanitarian funding. The MHF will work on better report the MHF contribution to other Grand Bargain’s goals.

OCHA will continue to work to reduce paperwork and simplify processes to improve efficiency and flexibility of the MHF, with a reinforced engagement with clusters and sectors at strategic and technical level. It includes the revision of the prioritization process in preparation of the MHF allocation strategies as required, considering a real-time analysis of the severity of the needs as per sub-national level consultations through the existing coordination mechanisms and bilateral contacts with existing operating partners. The revision of the

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4 Central Emergency Response Fund.
prioritization will ensure that the MHF funding focuses on the actual severity of needs and reaches the people most in need, e.g. the newly displaced people. Consultation and coordination with the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, other funds (HARP-F\(^5\), LIFT\(^6\), Access to Health Fund\(^7\), peace funds) and bilateral donors will be actively sought. The methodology related to the strategic review and pre-selection of projects will be also revised.

The MHF will strengthen flexible funding regarding new/sudden-onset emergencies through MHF reserve allocations, particularly in the event of natural disasters. In this case, the prioritization process may include consultations with the Government. The MHF also use 8+3 harmonized reporting as per the World Humanitarian Summit’s commitments\(^8\) and the Grand Bargain’s goals\(^9\). The MHF will also contribute to report its contributions against the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain.

OCHA will also strengthen monitoring activities, exploring innovative solutions for hard-to-reach areas, non-Government controlled areas or no-accessible due to travel restriction or security concerns.

The MHF Advisory Board agrees on continue the experience of integrated allocation strategies, particularly through the pooled funds managed by OCHA (CERF, at global level, and MHF, at country level). In this regard, OCHA will facilitate a unique prioritization process considering the most appropriate source of funding per type of activity and organization. Joint coordination, reporting, monitoring and after-action review exercises will be organized as well.

**ALLOCATIONS TIMELINE**

The MHF Advisory Board agrees on the following tentative allocations timeline, subject to the timely receipt of donor contributions:

- May 2020: First Standard Allocation of 50 per cent of the expected contributions, including specific funding envelope for seasonal monsoon preparedness actions.
- October 2020: Second Standard Allocation of 30 per cent of the expected contributions
- Any time during the year: Reserve Allocations for 20 per cent of the expected contributions.

**DONOR CONTRIBUTION TARGET**

At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) humanitarian partners adopted the commitment to increase the overall portion of humanitarian appeal funding channelled through United Nations country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) to 15 per cent.\(^10\) As funding levels are not known until the end of the year, it is thus difficult to identify a contribution target at the beginning of the year. To overcome the challenge of setting an over-ambitious contribution target, the MHF Advisory Board agreed on calculating 15 per cent of the previous year HRP funding level.

In case the case of the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF), the contribution target for 2020 has been established at **US$26.8 million**, which is 15 per cent of the actual funding received in 2019 against the HRP (US$178.9 million). The contribution target could be reviewed for adjustment on a quarterly basis should funding levels significantly differ from historical trends at the same time the previous year.

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5 Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Program Facility.

6 The Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) is a multi-donor fund established in 2009 to improve the lives and prospects of smallholder farmers and landless people in rural Myanmar.

7 The 3MDG Fund ended at the end of 2018. The UK, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA have decided to continue pooling funds in support to the Myanmar health response in 2019-2023 through Access to Health, a UNOPS-managed successor to the 3MDG Fund.

8 The World Humanitarian Summit generated over 3,000 commitments to action, and over 2,500 alignments with the core commitments to deliver the Agenda for Humanity. In addition, more than 20 initiatives were either launched or strengthened, aimed at improving the lives of people affected by humanitarian crises.

9 The Grand Bargain commits donors and aid organizations to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, among other commitments.

10 Following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the UN Secretary-General called for increasing the proportion of humanitarian appeal funding channeled through CBPFs to 15 per cent by 2018.