

UNDP Assistant Administrator Haoliang Xu and OCHA Director of Operations John Ging conclude visit to Rakhine State

[Yangon, 11 September] UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific Haoliang Xu and OCHA Director of Operations John Ging have concluded a two-day visit to Rakhine State, to review the humanitarian and development needs affecting people in Rakhine, and to assess efforts to increase cohesion and peaceful coexistence between communities.

They commended the Government and the support of the UN and International NGO partners for the work they are doing and concluded that increased humanitarian assistance and development efforts are urgently needed to benefit all vulnerable people in Rakhine.

“Stability and sustainable peace can be achieved in Rakhine State when the needs of all communities are met,” said Mr Xu, Director of UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Asia Pacific. “We need both to address immediate needs of all vulnerable people and to increase the capacity of the state to provide quality basic services including healthcare, education, water, livelihoods and infrastructure”.

He also observed that “more work is needed to improve relations between different ethnic groups in Rakhine and to find durable solutions for displaced people”.

“It is clear that progress has been made since my last visit one year ago and that is truly impressive given the challenges and setbacks you have faced. However, we must all redouble our efforts to do more,” said Mr. Ging. “The humanitarian situation is still unacceptably dire for far too many people, but thanks to the outstanding efforts of aid organisations the humanitarian situation is now stabilizing”.

The mission also saw the positive and practical results of intercommunal dialogue, in the construction of new roads and bridges to improve economic activity between communities. “These projects give us a real basis for hope but we must not underestimate the challenges ahead, one of the most critical being a just and equitable resolution to the citizenship issue,” said Mr Ging.

Mr Xu and Mr Ging started their visit to Rakhine State on Monday. Rakhine is Myanmar’s second poorest region, with a population of more than three million. Restrictions on the freedom of movement of hundreds of thousands of people in Rakhine State severely compromise their basic rights to food, health, education and livelihoods, leaving them dependent on humanitarian assistance.

They visited camps in Sittwe and Pauk Taw where the UN and the international system are providing humanitarian assistance, as well as villages in Minbya and Sittwe where UNDP is working with communities to strengthen social cohesion and improve basic services.

Yesterday, together with the Chief Minister His Excellency U Maung Maung Ohn, they inaugurated construction work of a bridge that will connect four villages to the Rakhine capital, supported by UNDP and State Government.

Mr Xu and Mr Ging will hold high level meetings in Nay Pyi Taw today, including with the Vice President His Excellency U Sai Mauk Kham.

This joint mission of senior development and humanitarian officials reflects the importance in which Myanmar and its future are held by the United Nations.

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