

## **Key Findings: Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017**

A joint report by the Central Statistical Organization, the UNDP and the World Bank, reveals significant changes in living conditions in Myanmar over time.

**The main changes in electrification are happening in Myanmar's villages, with almost all the growth in solar and public grid access coming from rural areas.**

- In 2017, just over a quarter of all households used a solar system to light their houses, compared to none in 2009/10.
- The number of households that used electricity for lighting rose from 3.4 million in 2015 to 4.5 million in 2017.
- There is substantial potential to increase electrification through intensifying connections in areas already connected to the public grid.

**Consumer goods have shown substantial growth since 2015, with the rise of small home appliances partly linked to rising electrification. Out of all consumer goods, mobile phones have seen the most rapid growth, with smartphones being the dominant technology used.**

- Ownership of phones is lowest in rural areas and in Chin and Rakhine, where network expansion does not appear to have reached all populations at the time of the survey.
- The gap between rural and urban areas in phone ownership expanded in the period immediately following the telecommunications reforms in 2014, but had contracted by 2017.
- A gender gap is seen in mobile phone and internet usage, with women less likely to report internet and mobile phone usage. Mobile ownership in female-headed households is 78 percent, compared to 82 percent in male-headed households.
- Computers are not yet widely used, but there is evidence that they are starting to be more widely used by some population pockets, almost exclusively among those with high school education and above. One in three households (3.3 percent) report owning a computer at the union level. Computer ownership is three times higher than the national average in Yangon (10.9 percent), and slightly higher than the national average in Nay Pyi Taw (3.8 percent).

**While access to improved water increased since 2015, it has mostly been driven by the private sector, rather than through increased and more sustainable use of piped and groundwater sources.**

- Households in multiple states and regions have to transport water from source to consumption point, increasing the risk of contamination.
- The percentage of households reporting open defecation has halved since 2014, from 14 percent of households to six percent.

**Steady progress has been made in education over the last decade, but substantial variation remains.**

- Net total middle school enrolment rates in rural areas increased by about 20 percentage points from 2010 to 2017, while the net total high school enrolment rate nearly doubled in rural areas during the same period.

- However, while net total primary school enrolment rates are near universal in some states and regions, one in ten children of primary school age are not at school in Shan, Mon and Rakhine.
- Literacy has risen across generations and gender gaps in literacy have closed at the national level, predominantly driven by women. Half of the states and regions have literacy rates of 90 percent or higher, while the other half hovers around 80 percent or lower.

**Labor participation has increased over time, and has increased the most for women.**

- In 2017, 55 percent of women aged 15 and above were reported to participate in the labor force, compared to 49 percent in 2005.
- A greater share of Myanmar's labor force is working in industry and service-related activities, and there has also been an increase in the share of households earning income from non-agricultural work.

**The report also discovers that progress still needs to be made in some parts of the country where the outcomes are lagging.**

- The majority of Myanmar households are still not connected to the public grid. While the growth in public grid connectivity has been substantial, challenges still lie ahead in expanding connections in rural areas, where 63 percent of households are situated in villages that are not yet connected.
- There is considerable variability by State and Region in both the use and seasonality of improved water sources with Ayeyarwaddy and Rakhine being the worst-performing region and state in terms of access.

**About the report**

- The Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017 was conducted from December 2016 to December 2017 in all of the districts and in 296 of the 330 townships in Myanmar. It is representative of the Union Territory, its states and regions, urban and rural areas.
- The Survey provides a first snapshot of key indicators of living standards in Myanmar, of how lives in the country compare geographically and evolve over time. It will be followed by further reports with greater detail on poverty and expenditure.