



**USAID**  
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BURMA

# Food Security

2013



*Farmers harvest a rice paddy in Shan, Pao-O. Two-thirds of Burma's arable land is used for rice production, and average yields could be doubled with the right inputs and tools. Credit: LIFT/AZM.*

## OVERVIEW

The United States recognizes the ongoing reform efforts to build a modern, peaceful, and democratic country and welcomes the opportunity to deepen engagement with the people of Burma and their government.

Investments in food security and nutrition provide an opportunity to improve lives and expand economic growth in Burma, particularly in the remote upland areas. Burma is one of the largest and poorest countries in Southeast Asia with 26 percent of the population living below the national poverty line. More than one-third of child deaths are due to undernutrition and 35 percent of children under age five are stunted, or short for their age. An estimated 17 percent of households in Burma are food-insecure.

USAID aims to partner with the Government of Burma, in collaboration with other development partners, civil society, the private sector, and other key stakeholders, to sustainably reduce hunger and poverty through targeted investments in agriculture and nutrition.

## PROGRAMS

### TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO FOOD SECURITY

In coordination with the efforts of other development partners, USAID will design a comprehensive and integrated food security program aimed at addressing the underlying causes of hunger and poverty in Burma. This program will be aligned with the principles of Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, and will build upon lessons learned from the initiative's work in Asia. This program will:

- **Invest in research** to stimulate development of improved seeds, more efficient farming practices, and other technologies for Burma's farmers.
- **Improve nutritional outcomes**, especially during the first thousand days from pregnancy through a child's second birthday.
- **Expand farmers' access to agricultural inputs, finance and markets.**
- **Build capacity of the public and private sectors**, including agricultural extension and advisory services.
- **Improve agricultural education.**
- **Support sustainable natural resource management.**
- **Promote a positive policy enabling environment** to encourage investments, in partnership with public and private sector
- **Promote gender equality and women's empowerment** in all activities so that men and women contribute to and benefit from



## FACT SHEET CONTINUED

Burma's economic growth and food security, taking into account that nearly half of all farmers are women and that involuntary agricultural labor and exploitation exist.

- **Encourage the development of fair and equitable land tenure policies.**

### **COLLABORATING WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

The United States joined eight other donors in the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), a multi-donor trust fund managed by the United Nations. LIFT works toward achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 – the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. This cooperative effort aims to sustainably increase food availability and incomes for 2 million beneficiaries through agricultural production, better access to inputs and markets, livelihoods support, sustainable natural resource management, capacity building, and robust monitoring and evaluation. USAID will leverage the work of international research institutes to improve agricultural productivity and reduce hunger and poverty in Burma. Finally, USAID will help increase the capacity of Burmese universities and research institutions to conduct research in agriculture, nutrition and food policy through linkages with U.S. universities and the private sector.

### **BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES**

Capacity building is vital to sustainably reducing hunger and poverty. USAID will work to strengthen partnerships, build the capacity of public and private institutions, and expand the knowledge base of food security-related issues to better equip the country over the long term. As a first step, USAID is partnering with the Myanmar Development Resource Institute, a local organization, to bring a team of internationally recognized food security experts to Burma to assess the challenges and opportunities for reducing hunger and poverty. This Agriculture and Food Security Diagnostic team will consult with local experts, visit farming communities, and meet stakeholders to identify key constraints to food security and develop recommendations to address these challenges.

### **SUPPORTING REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY EFFORTS**

Launched in 2009, the Lower Mekong Initiative strengthens cooperation between Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States on health, connectivity, education, and environment issues. In July 2012, Burma formally joined the initiative and was named a co-chair, with the United States, to lead the initiative's agriculture and food security efforts. In this role, the U.S. will support Burma's leadership in ensuring the comprehensive integration of gender, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and environmental, health, and nutrition issues in food security activities in the region.

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#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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