

Statement by Janet Jackson, UNFPA  
Representative in Myanmar  
at the Launch of the 2014 Myanmar Census  
Provisional Results  
Yangon, 30 August 2014

Your Excellency Minister U Khin Yi,  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Migalabar.

Today is a day we have waited a long time for.  
After years of speculation and uncertainty, we  
finally know with confidence how many  
people Myanmar has and where they live.  
UNFPA is privileged and proud to be  
supporting the Government in this historic

accomplishment. Congratulations, Your Excellency.

The countries whose financial support has made this possible can also be proud. Thank you, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Switzerland.

Conducting the first census in 30 years was an immense undertaking and a very physical one.

Every town and village had to be mapped; more than 115,000 enumerators and supervisors had to be hired, trained and paid; and a system to compile the data had to be

built. The Minister travelled to towns up and down and across the country to explain the process to state employees and community leaders. I also participated in many of these meetings.

In April, census takers knocked on doors of nearly 11 million households, in the first national exercise to connect directly with virtually everyone in the country. The data people provided illuminates many dimensions of how they live, paving the way for development that can improve the lives of those in greatest need.

Myanmar's ongoing political reforms have raised hopes and expectations for economic

growth and a peace dividend. But for prosperity to benefit everyone, development planning must be more inclusive and equitable. For this, we have to know where people are, how they earn a living, and how healthy and educated they are. The census data will show us for the first time where new roads, schools and health services are needed most.

This resource will really start yielding benefits next year, once the data are fully analysed. But the provisional results announced today already reveal a lot. They show, for instance, that cities are expanding quickly and becoming denser, largely without planning, leaving millions without adequate

infrastructure and services. With the right policies, enabled by good information, Myanmar can change this.

The census successfully counted almost 98 per cent of the population, following international quality standards. Was it a perfect exercise? No. In Rakhine, Kachin and Kayin States there were places where the population was not counted and had to be estimated. Regrettably, some communities in Rakhine State were not able to identify their ethnicity as they wished.

In the months ahead, UNFPA will continue to support Myanmar in analysing the census results and understanding how to use them

effectively. The enumeration was a great participatory exercise. To build on this accomplishment, we are encouraging our Government partners to involve communities throughout the country in using the census to promote equity as well as prosperity.

Thank you.