



The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census

THEMATIC REPORT ON LABOUR FORCE

Census Report Volume 4-G



**Department of Population
Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population**

With technical assistance from UNFPA



JUNE 2017



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Foreword

The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census (2014 Census) was conducted with midnight of 29 March 2014 as the reference point. This is the first Census in 30 years; the last was conducted in 1983. Planning and execution of this Census was spearheaded by the former Ministry of Immigration and Population, now the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, on behalf of the Government, in accordance with the Population and Housing Census Law, 2013. The main objective of the 2014 Census is to provide the Government and other stakeholders with essential information on the population, in regard to demographic, social and economic characteristics, housing conditions and household amenities. By generating such information at all administrative levels, it is also intended to provide a sound basis for evidence-based decision-making, and to evaluate the impact of social and economic policies and programmes in the country.

The results of the 2014 Census have been published so far in a number of volumes. The first was the *Provisional Results* (Census Volume 1), released in August 2014. The Census Main Results were launched in May 2015. These included *The Union Report* (Census Report Volume 2), *Highlights of the Main Results* (Census Report Volume 2-A), and the reports for each of the 15 States and Regions (Census Report Volume 3[A-O]). The reports on *Occupation and Industry* (Census Report Volume 2-B), and *Religion* (Census Report Volume 2-C) were launched in March 2016 and July 2016, respectively.

The current set of the 2014 Census publications comprises 13 thematic reports and a Census Atlas. They address issues on Fertility and Nuptiality; Mortality; Maternal Mortality; Migration and Urbanization; Population Projections; Population Dynamics; the Elderly; Children and Youth; Education; Labour Force; Disability; Gender Dimensions; and Housing Conditions and Household Amenities. Their preparation involved collaborative efforts with both local and international experts as well as various Government Ministries, Departments and research institutions. The thematic reports published to date include: Fertility and Nuptiality; Mortality; Maternal Mortality; Migration and Urbanization; Population Dynamics; and Population Projections.

Data capture for the Census was undertaken using scanning technology. The processes were highly integrated, with tight controls to guarantee accuracy of results. To achieve internal consistency and minimize errors, rigorous data editing, cleaning and validation were carried out to facilitate further analysis of the results. The information presented in these reports is therefore based on more cleaned data sets, and the reader should be aware that there may be some small differences from the results published in the earlier set of volumes.

In recent years, Myanmar has gone through some unique historical developments. The political and policy changes that have taken place will have a profound effect on the country's economic and social development. Changes in the labour market will play a crucial role in the country's ability to attain a higher standard of living for its population. This report presents the findings on the characteristics of the labour force, through the information collected from a range of questions in the 2014 Census.

The labour force in Myanmar has a young age structure with many more men than women working: 13.4 million males compared with 8.6 million females. The total participation rate

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for males is also higher than for females (82 per cent compared with 47 per cent), while for those in the active age groups (15-64 years), the participation rate for men is 86 per cent compared with 51 per cent for women. Participation in men's most active years (at ages 25-49) is above 90 per cent. In contrast, more than twice as many women than men are inactive: 12.2 million women compared with 5.3 million men.

In Myanmar, the level of child work is very high; more than half a million children in the 10-14 age-group were reported in the Census as already working, and more than 77 thousand were looking for work. Work clearly has a negative effect on children's chances to pursue an education. All the children who were reported as working in the Census had very low levels of school attendance. At age 10, about 82 per cent of children working no longer attended school or had never even attended, and by age 12, this proportion had risen to 91 per cent.

The Census has shown that Myanmar still depends on a basically agrarian economy. More than 40 per cent of all employed persons were working in skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery occupations. The Census clearly showed that the industrial sector in which a person worked was related to the wealth status of the household in which they lived. The primary (agricultural) sector in which the most people are employed is also the poorest. Less than 4 per cent of persons working in the primary sector belong to more wealthy households.

As in many countries, the level of unemployment in Myanmar is highest among young people. In the age group 20-24, the Census recorded over 10 per cent of persons in urban areas and about 8 per cent in rural areas as being out of work. Large differences in the levels of unemployment were reported between the country's States/Regions. Unemployment is highest in Rakhine, with 1 in 10 persons out of work, and lowest in Shan, with an unemployment rate of only 1 in 50 persons out of work.

There is no doubt that the labour market situation in Myanmar will drastically change in the coming years, with the developing social, economic and political landscape. It is hoped that the information and recommendations contained in this report will help policymakers and planners give direction to the further development of the country, which will lead to an improvement in the living conditions of the people of Myanmar.

On behalf of the Government of Myanmar, I wish to thank the teams at the Department of Population, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the authors for their contribution towards the preparation of this thematic report. I would also like to thank our development partners, namely: Australia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom for their support to undertake the Census, as well as the technical support provided by the United States of America.



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