Cyclone Nargis
Myanmar
OCHA Situation Report No. 4
7 May 2008

This situation report is based on information received from the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, Myanmar, UN agencies, regional humanitarian partners and media sources.

I. SITUATION IN MYANMAR

1. Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2 and 3 May 2008, sweeping through the Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) delta region and the country’s largest city, Yangon. The authorities have declared five states and divisions (Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Bago, Mon and Kayin) to be disaster zones.

2. It is quickly becoming clear that the cyclone has caused unprecedented devastation in the affected areas. State media is still holding the death toll at over 22,000, with more than 41,000 missing. It is expected that these figures will rise; it is now evident that the majority of the deaths have occurred in the low-lying delta region, where Category 4 winds and a 3½ meter storm surge destroyed 90-95% of the buildings and houses in 7 townships, according to the Government. 10,000 deaths have been reported in the town of Bogalay alone, and most of its 190,000 residents are reported to be homeless. Large areas remain underwater.

3. The situation is becoming increasingly precarious, with relief capacity inside the country already severely stretched, both in terms of supplies and human resources. Over one million people are now expected to be in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Severe flooding and damaged infrastructure and communications continue to pose major logistical problems both for assessment and for the provision of relief.

4. The UN Country Team considers critical needs to be plastic sheeting, water purification tablets, cooking sets, mosquito nets, emergency health kits and food. Reports of water and fuel shortages are already appearing in mainstream media. The food security situation in the country, which was already severe, looks set to become far more acute.

II. NATIONAL RESPONSE

5. Military and police units are carrying out rescue and cleanup operations, and distributing aid. Power and water have now been returned to some areas. There have been reports of the first helicopter aid deliveries to the Delta region.

III. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

6. The UN continues to consult closely with the Government about the need for international support, which is available across all key priority areas. It continues to be stressed that the issuance of visas for humanitarian actors and the easing of customs rules for the delivery of aid as soon as possible will greatly enhance the international community’s ability to meet the needs identified by the Government. The first days following a disaster are critical moment for Myanmar’s vulnerable populations.
7. The Government has now authorized the UN to airlift relief items to Myanmar from the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Brindisi.  A small team of OCHA staff will accompany the flight from Brindisi.

Coordinated In-Country Response

8. The cluster approach has been activated by the Humanitarian Country Team to support the efforts of the Government. Proper implementation of this framework will ensure that there is a common approach in place from the beginning which will allow for inclusive needs assessments and the strategic prioritization of available resources. The Country Team has finalized a first draft of the Flash Appeal despite significant logistical difficulties. It is envisaged that a CERF grant will be made against the Appeal document.

9. Regional meetings in Bangkok today allowed cluster lead agencies to exchange information and updates about progress in key sectors.

Food
10. WFP has 3,800 metric tons of food commodities in the country, 980 of which are in Yangon. Distribution got underway yesterday, with 30 metric tonnes of rice delivered to clinics on the outskirts of Yangon. A further delivery of 80 metric tons was planned for today, split between Hlaingtharya (Yangon) and Labutta (Ayeyarwady).  WFP has also been able to airlift additional food supplies into the country today, with flights on standby on Friday and Saturday.

Logistics
11. A four-person support cell for the logistics cluster has arrived in Bangkok and is developing an inter-agency logistics support plan. WFP, as cluster lead, is preparing to move a range of inter-agency logistical support, including generators, mobile offices, storage tents and boats into the country. They hope to start doing so today. Part of the Flash Appeal will seek to provide for inter-agency logistical support.

WASH
12. UNICEF has been carrying out needs assessments in this sector with 16 NGOs. Locally-procured water purification tablets that have been distributed, but it is not clear further supplies will be available in-country, due to damage to factories. UNICEF currently puts immediate needs for the three clusters it leads at USD 10-15 million.

Shelter
13. Given the significant number of damaged and destroyed homes and the approaching rainy season, shelter will be a critical need. On Monday UNHCR procured local plastic sheeting and other shelter material worth USD 50,000. Material stockpiled in Bangkok is being moved into the country to bolster the initial response. IOM is also providing support on shelter, especially in terms of logistics. They hope to be able to move materials to the delta within the next week.

Health
14. WHO in-country staff are working with Myanmar Health Ministry officials to carry out health assessments and to distribute health kits. WHO is providing support from Bangkok and from its regional office in Delhi. Health supplies have already been sent from Brindisi with the assistance of the Italian Government.

Communications
15. Communication remains a critical issue: Phone networks (land line and mobile) have been partly recovered, but are still very limited. Only UN agencies currently have internet access. WFP is hoping to be able to move in some communications equipment in the coming days.

Education
16. UNICEF and Save the Children are currently leading on education. Immediate priorities have been assessing damage to schools and starting to plan for education to resume on 1 June.

INGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies
17. IFRC launched a preliminary Emergency Appeal seeking CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million) to support the MRCS in providing assistance to 30,000 families for 6 months. The funds are intended to cover shelter, clothing, utensils and tools and other immediate relief needs. A DREF grant has already enabled to MRCS to carry out immediate needs assessments of some affected...
areas and distribute some relief items. The National Society has emerged as a key player in assessment and relief efforts so far, though resources and capacity are being stretched. The Federation also already has pre-positioned stocks in place in Dubai and Kuala Lumpur.

18. Various INGOs are already present in Myanmar and have been carrying out assessments as well as providing relief. Save the Children has been able to target 30,000 beneficiaries by diverting resources from pre-existing projects. They are now sending relief goods to Pathein, in the Delta, with food, shelter and water purification materials. They have been organising logistics capacity (trucks, boats etc.) to distribute supplies in the worst-hit parts of the delta. They are also co-chairing the education cluster. Care International has teams in Yangon and Mon State, and has been working with WFP on the distribution of food. World Vision International has launched a USD 3 million appeal to get aid into the country, to assist 250,000 people. A flight carrying relief materials from Dubai has already landed, and further supplies are on standby in Germany.

Coordination at the regional level

19. Four UNDAC members are to travel to Yangon tomorrow evening.

20. IASC regional partners in Bangkok continue to meet regularly to exchange information on the situation, and to discuss support for in-country activities, including possible staff deployments. This afternoon, OCHA ROAP hosted a briefing by regional IASC partners for the local donor and diplomatic community. The briefing allowed agencies to pass on key information and messages, as well as an opportunity for donors to underscore their concerns.

Update on bilateral assistance

21. For updated information on financial contributions, please refer to the OCHA Financial Tracking System website: [http://reliefweb.int/fts/](http://reliefweb.int/fts/). Donors are encouraged to verify contributions and inform OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS) of corrections/additions/values to this table. The direct email address is: fts@reliefweb.int.

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