



Nargis Action Group Myanmar (part of Myanmar Egress)

APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF MYANMAR

12 May 2008



Boy in Mya Ba Go village, Bogale Township in the Delta

Cyclone Nargis

On 2 May 2008, Cyclone Nargis swept through the Southern regions of Myanmar, devastating one of the poorest regions in Asia, wrecking destruction on millions of lives and homes.

Approximately 11 million people in Yangon and the Southern Delta region have been affected by the disaster, with countless of lives lost and numerous people rendered homeless overnight¹.

In the most severely affected townships of the Ayeyarwady Division, UNDP assessment teams have called for urgent aid relief. Of immediate urgency is the supply of food and clean water. Standard water chlorination and purification methods are not effective as current water supplies have become brackish, tainted by salt water and other pollutants. Without adequate clean water supplies, the potential of the on set of dreaded health epidemics such as cholera and dengue fever is high, putting many more lives at risk. Food supplies are also dwindling quickly, compounding the already precarious health situation of many people.

Temporary shelter is also urgently required. It is estimated that approximately 80 % of houses have collapsed in the severely affected regions, with the remaining structures also having suffered damage. There is a need to quickly rebuild homes and shelters for the affected. Financial resources are needed to aid the affected families urgently but the Myanmar government currently employs restrictions on the relief works of NGO's and international aid agencies.

The Nargis Action Group (part of Myanmar Egress) is one of the few groups that have obtained permission from the Myanmar government to participate in the immediate relief activities of the cyclone Nargis. They have been authorized to provide assistance in the four townships of Laputta, Bogeley, Phya pon and Ngapudaw.

We seek your help and assistance in providing immediate and long-term relief aid to the affected people and regions.

Nargis Action Group Myanmar

Background

The Nargis Action Group Myanmar is part of Myanmar Egress, a Yangon-based capacity development center engaged in philanthropic activities in Myanmar. It maintains close links with the business community in the country and strives to facilitate “public-private partnerships” and facilitate the linkage between public needs and private resources. Due to its close cooperation with the local business community and the development sector, Myanmar Egress and its partners have the capacity to mobilize large number of volunteers and resources within Myanmar. Hence while the organization is based in Yangon, its wide networks allow them to work in any other regions of the country at any time. Myanmar Egress’ has permission by the Myanmar government to perform the rescue work.

¹ http://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/freeproducts/Myanmar/CycloneNargis/UNOSAT_Myanmar_CycloneNargis_MODISFloods5May2008_Lowres_v1.pdf

Capacity

Myanmar Egress's ties with the local business community and the development sector enables it to provide assistance to the affected areas quickly, by reaching out to and tapping on their partners' logistics and infrastructural resources as well as existing networks.

The Nargis Action Group Myanmar can call upon the help and support of 98 young volunteers and staff members from various business organizations involved. The volunteers are Myanmar Egress alumni and are active in various professional sectors.

Planned Relief Activities and Schedule

Myanmar Egress will first identify the villages that most urgently require aid and then work with village level leaders and local authorities to provide and distribute food assistance, shelter materials, water purification tablets and other necessary items. The volunteer teams involved have been trained by ActionAid, and prepared to provide the best possible assistance.

Planned Phase 1

Step 1: The first step will be to identify 100 target villages that will receive aid through the Nargis Action Group Myanmar. This will be done through consultation with other organizations that provide relief efforts currently in the same areas.

Step 2: After the target villages have been identified, Nargis Action Group Myanmar will work with the selected villages to determine through open discussion which families have been affected the most by the disaster. The criteria for evaluation will be as follow:

- i. income/poverty level
- ii. loss of primary wage earner
- iii. households/families headed by female(s)

Step 3: Once the affected villages and targeted families have been identified, a cyclone management team will be formed for each village.

Step 4: Nargis Action Group Myanmar will distribute 1 kg of beans, 1 bottle of edible oil, 1 package of salt and a bag of either 50kg or 10kg rice to 1500 vulnerable and affected households.

Step 5: Nargis Action Group Myanmar will next help to build transitional shelters. Locally available materials such as bamboo, bamboo mats, beetle nut timber and materials for thatch will be provided. We estimate that 1000 households in 100 villages (20 households per village) will have access to these improved/transitional shelters.

Step 6: At the same time, in villages where water already is contaminated and people are not able to reside there any longer, Myanmar Egress will providing locally available boats to transport the villagers to sheltered camps.

These activities have already started and are planned to continue during the next two months. The Nargis Action Group Myanmar is currently working on a long-term action support plan. Support for the affected communities will be necessary in the months to come.

Nargis Action Group Myanmar: Latest Development and Progress



Training for volunteer helpers at Myanmar Egress

Despite the seriousness of the disaster, many international and local organizations have still not been able to obtain permits from the Myanmar government to provide assistance to the affected regions. Means of communication such as phone or e-mail are still mostly unavailable.



By contrast, through the immense support of many people, Myanmar Egresss and the Nargis Action Group Myanmar were able to get official permission within days of the crisis and have since already sent batches of food and supplies to the severely affected areas.

- 7 May: Nargis Action Group Myanmar made first successful delivery of clean drinking water and rice to Laydaungkan in Yangon Division
- 10 May: Clean water and food delivered to Pyapon in the Delta
- 11 May: Clean water and food delivered to Myaungmya
- Experienced volunteer workers arrived from Kachin State to train Nargis Action Group volunteers in crisis management and giving of vaccinations

How can you help?

The needs among the affected communities are great: food, water, medicines and shelter need to be provided urgently. Myanmar Egress has so far been successful in mobilizing funds from private people and the business community in Myanmar to help the victims of the cyclone. Myanmar Egress plans to continue its relief activities in the future and is relying upon the support of donations to continue its work. We welcome any financial cash contributions and donations in kind (food, drinking water, medicine, temporary shelter materials etc) to support the affected communities in the Delta region. Unfortunately we are not able to accept any volunteer workers from outside Myanmar. We guarantee transparency and provide regular updates about donations received and resources spent.



How to Make a Contribution?

Current sanction policies on Myanmar make it impossible to transfer any money directly to Myanmar Bank accounts. To facilitate donations, two founding members of Myanmar Egress will open bank accounts in Bangkok, Thailand and Singapore over the course of the next two days.

Should you wish to make a contribution prior to the opening of these bank accounts, please address all donations to the following account which currently belongs to a founding member of the Nargis Action Group, stating clearly the purpose of the contribution ('For Nargis Action Group') and informing us via email the donation/cheque details and donation amount:

Name of Beneficiary: MM MID LAND PTE.LTD.
Address: 10 ANSON ROAD
31-10 INTERNATIONAL PLAZA
SINGAPORE 079903
Bank: OVERSEA-CHINESE BANKING CORPORATION LIMITED
GROUP TRANSACTION BANKING
65 CHULIA STREET
09 - 00 OCBC CENTRE
POST CODE 049513, PHONE - 1800 538 1111
CURRENT ACCOUNT - USD
ACCOUNT NO. 503005407301
SWIFT CODE OCBCCBC

We sincerely thank you for your attention and assistance to our cause. Should you wish to contact us, please do so at:

Contact Nargis Action Group Myanmar

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The Myanmar Egress is a non profit Organization founded by Myanmar scholars and social workers who have been actively involved in various civil society and political activities in Burma in the last fifteen years.

Myanmar Egress was set up in 2006 by a group of like-minded Myanmar nationalists committed to nation building through positive change in a progressive yet constructive collaboration and working relationship with the government and all interest groups, both local and foreign.

<http://www.myanmaregress.org>