

**Prime Minister General Thein Sein attends
ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference
Myanmar warmly welcomes any assistance and aid presented
with genuine goodwill from any country or organization, provided that there are no
strings attached nor politicization involved**

YANGON, 25 May - The following is the full text of address delivered today by Prime Minister General Thein Sein at the ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference.

Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Excellency Mr George Yeo, Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee

Distinguished Ministers

Excellency Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN

Delegates from donor countries

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

May I, first of all, say that the Government and the people of Myanmar extend our warmest welcome to all of you. May I also on behalf of the people of Myanmar, would like to express our deep appreciation to all of you for your presence and your readiness to provide aid and assistance to cyclone victims at this critical time.

I would also like to reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN member countries, Ministers and delegates from donor countries, Secretary-General of ASEAN and United Nations Agencies, representatives of INGOs and international community, for their presence today at the ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference.

The Cyclone Nargis that hit Myanmar on the 2nd and 3rd May, was of unprecedented intensity in our history. The radius of the storm was about 200 miles wide and the wind speed at the eye of the storm ranged from 120 to 150 miles per hour. The strong wind was accompanied by surging tidal waves that ranged from 7 to 12 feet in height.

Consequently, 7 townships in Ayeyawady Division and 40 townships in Yangon Division were severely affected. The strong winds and the accompanying high tidal waves have caused heavy losses of human lives, farming cattle, livestock as well as extensive damages to properties. Some of the villages were completely wiped out due to the storm and the tidal waves.

According to the data collected to date, 77,738 people were confirmed dead, 55,917 were still missing and 19,359 were injured and there were huge loss in properties and material damaged. I won't be going in details of the damages caused by the Cyclone Nargis as

Minister U Soe Tha of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development will be giving a briefing on this later.

On 3rd May, the same day when the storm made its landfall, an emergency cabinet meeting was held presided by me and we rushed to the storm hit areas to carry out immediate rescue operations. On 4th May, at the supervision of the cabinet ministers many homeless victims totaling 1,064,623 were rescued and evacuated to temporary shelters at 12 front-line camps, 15 transit camps and 5 base camps. Emergency relief items such as food and drinking water are also delivered by using helicopters and boats, to some villages.

Up to now the emergency search and rescue measures have completed to some extent and we are currently carrying out relief and rehabilitation measures by providing food, clothing and shelters to the victims. Our efforts were greatly benefited from the large amount of humanitarian assistance that has poured in from local and international wellwishers. To date, we have received 3273.20 tons of humanitarian supplies delivered by 221 cargo flights from international wellwishers from various countries and organizations. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my deep appreciation to donor countries and organizations for their goodwill and assistance in various ways. The material supplies that have been delivered by international donors were immediately distributed by using motorized boats, ships and helicopters to the victims of the cyclone.

While we are able to provide the storm victims with basic requirements such as food and clothing, the monsoon season is approaching and our present concern is to provide adequate temporary shelters for the victims, to enable them to resume their daily economic activities. We are now providing victims with shelters built using locally available bamboo and timber and using tarpaulin and plastics sheets as roofing materials. We are using the tents, tarpaulins and plastic sheets donated from home and abroad to provide the necessary shelters.

For emergency relief and rehabilitation, the Government has allocated initial expenses of 5 billion Kyats to start with and so far the government has spent to the amount of 70 billion Kyats. Once again, I would like to reiterate our profound thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his leadership in taking prompt action enabling the United Nations and its agencies to expeditiously and effectively assist in our relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Our appreciations also go to other donor Governments, International NGOs, NGOs and individual wellwishers for their financial and material contributions.

As we are able to carry out to a certain extent the first phase, which is the rescue, relief and providing temporary settlement, as a second step we are now at the same time implementing measures to assist the survivors to enable them to resume their livelihoods in agriculture, fisheries and salt productions; rebuilding of houses, schools and dispensaries. For the survival for the cyclone victims we will need to provide them with

cattle, hand and power tillers, paddy seedlings, fishing boats and gears and to rebuild salt production facilities.

The storm affected areas are not only important for providing food supply to Myanmar, but also contribute to international food supply. Due to the impact of cyclone, some farmlands and paddy fields have been damaged and can affect rice production. There will be sufficient supply of rice for Myanmar but will weaken the ability to contribute to world food supply. In order to remedy the situation, we will need to boost the rice production in other areas. For that purpose, we may need a large amount of fertilizer. Additionally, we may also need more fuel and hand and power tillers in rice cultivation to replace the cattle lost in the storm.

For the recovery of another major occupation in the storm-hit areas, the fishing industry, we also need fishing boats and vessels, fishing gear and fuel oil. Likewise, in the salt production, we will need to rebuild salt facilities, buildings and provide water pumps and to regroup skilled-workers. These measures are necessary in ensuring both domestic and international food supply.

In the rehabilitating phase, we need to rebuild houses, schools, dispensaries, religious and public buildings which were destroyed by the cyclone. We do have adequate supply of building materials such as wood, bamboo, cement, brick, sand, etc. and skilled construction workers and business entrepreneurs within the country. Currently, over 6586 construction workers are already undertaking repair and construction works in the storm affected areas. In this regard, our priority requirements will be corrugated iron sheets for roofing materials and nails. It will greatly benefit the victims of the cyclone if such materials could be provided.

In line with the policy of the Government that achievements can be made with the close collaboration of the Government, people and members of the armed forces, under the leadership of the Government, the general public, businessmen, members of Tatmadaw (Armed Forces), police, members of Red Cross and Fire Brigade including the international non-governmental organizations are now joining their hands and striving their best in carrying out rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts to bring back normalcy in the storm affected areas in the shortest possible time.

In carrying out these tasks, we would warmly welcome any assistance and aid which are provided with genuine goodwill from any country or organization, provided that there are not strings attached nor politicization involved. Donation of relief supplies for the cyclone victims in Myanmar will be accepted through land route, by sea or by air. For the relief supplies coming by sea, I wish to inform that these supplies can be sent by civilian ships to the port of Yangon. For the storage of relief supplies we will allow storage at the warehouses at the Yangon Airport and the port of Yangon which are designated as a transportation hubs. From there the government will facilitate transportation of these supplies to the affected areas. We will also facilitate those who wish to visit the cyclone stricken areas. For those groups who are interested in rehabilitation and reconstruction,

my government is ready to accept them in accordance with our priority and the extent of work that need to be done. They will also be permitted township-wise separately.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to our neighbours China, India, Bangladesh and ASEAN members such as Thailand Laos and Singapore that have dispatched medical teams to provide medical care to the victims in order to prevent epidemics that we usually encounter in the aftermath of natural disaster. We will accept additional medical teams from other countries in an orderly and systematic manner.

In closing, I would like to invite experts and wellwishers to extend their help in our preventive measures such as raising the levels of embankments, building temporary shelters in high grounds and paving causeways through swampy areas linking villages etc in order to minimize casualties and damages in the event of such severe cyclone in the future. With your assistance I feel confident that we will be able to successfully overcome the challenge should we encounter similar cyclones.
I thank you all.

Myanmar hosts ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference

YANGON, 25 May- Prime Minister General Thein Sein addressed ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference held at the Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here at 11 am today.

It was attended by UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon, Under Secretary-General of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr John Holmes, ASEAN Standing Committee Chairman and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore Mr George Yeo, ASEAN Secretary-General Mr Surin Pitsuwan, ministers and deputy ministers of the government of the Union of Myanmar, Deputy Prime Ministers, ministers, deputy ministers, ambassadors, special envoys and high-ranking officials of Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Laos, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Britain, Ukraine, Nigeria, Brazil, Spain, Hungary, the US and Vietnam totaling 51 nations and officials of the UN Headquarters, ASEAN Secretariat, 24 international organizations such as EU, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNODC, WFP, ILO, UNDP, UNOPS, UNIC, IOM, IFRC, ICRC, WORLD BANK, ADB, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNHQ, OCHA, WMO, and MBC and Myanmar Business Coalition on AIDS.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein chaired the conference and UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon and Under Secretary-General of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr John Holmes, ASEAN Standing Committee Chairman and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore Mr George Yeo acted as members of panel of chairmen.

The Prime Minister and the attendees paid a one-minute silent tribute to mourn those who died in the storm.

Next, the Prime Minister made an opening speech. (The speech of the Prime Minister is reported separately). UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon made a speech. He said: I am very much encouraged by the Prime Minister's remarks. They are fully in line with the agreement we reached with Myanmar's leadership in recent days. I believe they herald a new spirit of cooperation and partnership between Myanmar and the international community.

The government has agreed to allow all international aid workers into the areas devastated by Cyclone Nargis, without bureaucratic hindrance and regardless of nationality so long as the mission is purely humanitarian. There should not be any serious obstacle to organizing effective aid and assistance operations. We also agreed, among other things, to establish several forward logistics hubs in the affected areas, so that aid may be speedily distributed to those most in need.

The government appears to be moving to implement these accords. Some international aid workers and NGOs have already gone into the regions of the Ayeyawady delta without problem. All this will go far to meet the expectations of the international community, which sincerely wants to help the government of Myanmar overcome this national calamity.

I am heartened to be joined today by so many distinguished leaders and experienced relief experts from around the world. Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar's "rice bowl" and the heart of its fishing industry. More than 130,000 are dead or missing.

A few days ago, I visited the area and saw for myself the human toll of this disaster- homes and villages and roads washed away, fields flooded, so many livelihoods destroyed. But I also saw homes- and lives- being rebuilt.

The people of the country have shown extraordinary courage and resilience in trying to save their fellowmen and to rekindle hope shattered as a result of this cruel blow. From all I have seen, the government, with the help of the international community, has put in place a functioning relief program.

Experts and experienced international relief workers, in addition to the medical teams from neighbouring countries, must have unhindered access to the areas hardest hit by the disaster. Extra transport assets, including helicopters and boats, are urgently required. Whatever is needed to build an effective aid and logistics pipeline must be quickly put in place and be well-coordinated, both with Myanmar authorities and international aid agencies.

I am encouraged by my discussions with Myanmar's leadership in recent days. They have agreed on the need to act urgently.

I expect the relief effort will run for several months, probably six months at least, as we feed and care for those who have lost everything. In parallel, our efforts must also turn to rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction. Farmers and fishermen must be helped to resume their livelihoods.

Destroyed infrastructure must be rebuilt. That is why I warmly welcome the government's agreement to join in a proposed tripartite coordination mechanism led by ASEAN.

I have said repeatedly that our immediate challenge is humanitarian. Our focus should be saving lives and helping Myanmar rebuild. There is good reason to hope that aid to the worst affected areas of Myanmar will increase significantly in the coming days. We have many generous bilateral and multilateral contributions, in cash and in kind, as well as pledges.

We may need US\$201 million to assist roughly 1.5 million survivors of Cyclone Nargis with emergency relief for the next three months. To date, we have contributions amounting to some 30 percent of that amount, with a further 20 percent pledged.

I urge you to be more generous today. The needs remain acute - from clean water and sanitation to shelter, medical supplies and food. I am especially concerned about the lack of safe drinking water.

Remember, also, that only a few weeks remain until the rice planting season begins. Millions of people depend on this next harvest, at a time when food prices are soaring around the world.

Next, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore Mr George Yeo made a speech. He said that the today's meeting is to focus on providing storm victims with food, shelter and medical attention. In that regard, more helicopters, road vehicles and boats are in urgent need. In the months ahead, they will need seeds, farm machines, houses, schools and many other things in order to rebuild their lives.

Therefore, we agreed that an ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism should be set up for this purpose. This mechanism would work closely with the UN and with international and regional agencies. The ASEAN foreign ministers tasked Secretary-General Mr Surin Pitsuwan to lead an ASEAN Task Force that would work with the UN and Myanmar's central coordinating body. I was heartened by Senior General Than Shwe's agreement to let in aid workers from all countries, and thank the UN Secretary-General for working tirelessly to get us all together. At the meeting, we all should pay attention to how to provide storm victims with necessary assistance and must avoid politicizing the aid that we give.

Next, the damages and loss to Myanmar caused by the storm and rehabilitation tasks being carried out were shown with the audio-visual aids. Next, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha reported on the government's measures

on relief and rehabilitation work in the aftermath of the storm, start of the storm Nargis, storm-hit areas, the government's efforts, launching of relief, care and rehabilitation programmes, disease prevention and treatment, assistance from home and abroad, delivery of supplies to the storm-hit areas, death toll and missing and injured people, destruction and requirements for rehabilitation. Under Secretary-General of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr John Holmes reported on international assistance in cooperation with the UN and ASEAN.

ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan reported on coordination system led by ASEAN.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein hosted dinner in honour of the UN Secretary-General, Under Secretary-General of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, ASEAN Secretary-General, deputy prime ministers and the ministers of the nations of the world.

The conference resumed at 2.25 pm. Chairman of ASEAN Standing Committee Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore Mr George Yeo presided over the conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan and Under Secretary-General of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr John Holmes as members of Panel of Chairmen.

The ministers and the deputy ministers, ambassadors, Charge d's Affairs of Indonesia, the People's Republic of China, Malaysia, Denmark, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sweden, Laos, Thailand, India, Britain, Brunei Darussalam, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, Norway, the Philippines, Australia, the USA, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, France, Turkey, Slovenia, Ireland, Switzerland, Finland, Israel, Brazil, Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, EU, Canada, Czech Republic, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Nepal and the Russian Federation, delegates of WFP, IOM, World Bank, ADB, ICRC and Save the Children pledged financial and other assistance.

Next, Prime Minister and the UN Secretary-General arrived at the hotel and attended the conference at 5.15 pm.

The conference ended at 5.30 pm with concluding remarks by Chairman of ASEAN Standing Committee Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore Mr George Yeo.

After the conference, the Prime Minister cordially greeted the participants.

Next, Under Secretary-General of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr John Holmes, Chairman of ASEAN Standing Committee Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore Mr George Yeo, ASEAN Secretary-General Mr. Surin Pitsuwan and Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win met journalists from local and foreign countries and they replied to the queries raised by journalists at the press conference.

Prime Minister receives Chinese FM

NAY PYI TAW, 25 May - Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Thein Sein received Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Yang Jiechi of the People's Republic of China and party at the Ahlon Hall of Sedona Hotel on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road, here, this afternoon.

Present also were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint and departmental heads and Chinese Ambassador Mr Guan Mu.

Prime Minister receives Indian Minister of State of Ministry of Commerce and Power

NAY PYI TAW, 25 May -Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Thein Sein received Minister of State of the Ministry of Commerce and Power Mr Tairam Ramesh of the Republic of India at the Ahlon Hall of Sedona Hotel on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road, here, this afternoon.

The meeting was also attended by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, departmental heads and Indian Ambassador Mr Bhaskar Kumar Mitra.

Prime Minister receives Deputy PM of SRV

NAY PYI TAW, 25 May -Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Thein Sein received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Pham Gia Khiem of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and party at the Ahlon Hall of Sedona Hotel on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road, here, this morning.

Also present on the occasion were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, Director-General Col Thant Shin of Government Office, Director-General U Kyaw Kyaw of Protocol Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vietnamese Ambassador Mr Tran Van Tung.

Prime Minister receives ASEAN Standing Committee Chairman and party

NAY PYI TAW, 25 May -Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Thein Sein received Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore Mr George Yeo and party at the Ahlon Hall of Sedona Hotel on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road, here, this morning.

Present also at the call were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, Director-General Col Thant Shin of Government Office,

Director-General U Kyaw Kyaw of Protocol Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Singaporean Ambassador Mr Robert Chua Hian Kong.

Saudi King donates relief supplies to storm victims

YANGON, 25 May - A ceremony to hand over relief supplies for storm victims donated by the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz al Saud of Saudi Arabia was held at the lounge of Yangon International Airport at 3 pm today.

Present on the occasion were Director-General of Fire Services Department U Myint Tun and departmental officials, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Myanmar Mr Turki Bin Naji Al Ali and officials.

The Saudi Arabian Ambassador explained the purpose of the donations and handed over the list of relief supplies to the director-general who expressed thanks.

The donations include various kinds of foods, gram, blankets, plastic bags and medicines weighing 73.04 tons.

More relief supplies from Saudi Arabia will continue to arrive here, it is learnt.

Damage, repair of buildings under Ministry of Information inspected

YANGON, 25 May-Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan inspected damage of departments under the ministry and progress in reconstruction tasks.

This morning, the minister inspected damage of roofs at the press factory and warehouses under Printing and Publishing Enterprise in Aung San, Insein Township.

On 22 May, the minister viewed damage and reconstruction of buildings at Myanma Radio and Television on Pyay Road.

On 23 May, he looked into repairing of buildings at Feature Film of Myanma Motion Picture Enterprise in Bahan Township and attended to the needs.

At the New Light of Myanmar daily in Botahtaung Township, the minister inspected repair of the buildings and publishing of the newspaper daily and storage of newsprint rolls at the warehouses.

At Myanma Alin daily in Tamway Township, the minister oversaw damage of buildings and repair works, publishing of the newspaper daily, repairing of Photolitho Press and its warehouses of Printing and Publishing Enterprise.

Later, he inspected damage of warehouses of PPE and NPE on Dhammazed Road in Bahan Township and gave necessary instructions.

Royal Thai Armed Forces presents relief item to victims

YANGON, 25 May-A ceremony to donate 61 tons of relief aids contributed by Royal Thai Armed Forces to storm victims was held at Michaunggon Monastery in Myawady on 23 May.

At the donation ceremony, the commander of of 3rd Army Area of Royal Thai Armed Forces made a speech.

Brig-Gen Aung Naing of the local station accepted the relief items and spoke words of thanks. The relief aids were 19 tons of rice, 18 tons of purified water, 7 tons of clothes, 8 tons of noodle and 9 tons of canned fish, sugar, soft-drinks and fried snail.

Earthquake Report

NAY PYI TAW, 25 May -A moderate earthquake of intensity (5.8) Richter Scale with its epicenter outside Myanmar (the People's Republic of China) about (1200) miles northeast of Kaba-Aye Seismological Observatory was recorded at (14) hrs (58) min (34) sec M.S.T today.

More relief supplies from abroad arrive at Yangon International Airport

YANGON, 25 May - DC-8 flight carrying 40 tons of plastic roll provided by Dubai based UNHCR Office of UAE, A-310 flight carrying seven tons of solar system lights, tents, emergency health equipment, mosquito nets, water purifier and its related materials by Germany, IL-76 flight carrying 38 tons of blankets, kitchen utensils and tarpaulin by Malaysia-based IFRC, AN-12 flight carrying 12.29 tons of tents, water purifiers and its related equipment and nitric acid by Thailand-based WFP, AN-12 flight carrying 14.9 tons of 1,662 packages of foodstuff by Sri Lanka, five C-130 flights carrying 65 tons of plastics sheets, water bottles, bottles of purified drinking water, foodstuff, tarpaulin and health equipment by the US, MD-11 flight carrying 73 tons of food and medicines by Saudi Arabia and AN-12 flight carrying 2.64 tons of energy dried noodles by Thailand arrived at Yangon International Airport today.

Likewise, two AN-12 flights carrying 24 tons of kitchen utensil, medicines and health equipment and tarpaulin provided by Thai-based UNHCR arrived at the same airport yesterday evening.

Officials systema-tically accepted the relief supplies and promptly sent them to the storm-hit regions without delay.

MWAF donates rice bags to storm victims

YANGON, 25 May - Head of International Relations Department of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation Daw Myint Myint Soe, wife of the minister for Foreign Affairs, and

Daw Lei Lei Kyi , wife of deputy minister for Foreign Affairs, and members donated 20 bags of rice worth K 500, 000 to storm victims of ward-17 in Dagon Myothit (South) this morning.