

UNICEF Humanitarian Action 2010

MYANMAR

SITUATION UPDATE

Two years after Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar; there has generally been steady progress in the lives of children and women in the affected townships. The most recent post-cyclone review¹ concluded that maternal and child health interventions implemented in the most affected areas have positively impacted child mortality rates, severe malnutrition appears in localized pockets only, and more boys and girls are attending school. However, despite improvements in key indicators, limited progress in the recovery of livelihoods and chronically poor basic infrastructure seriously undermine communities' abilities to rebuild their lives, force their children to live at risk, and complicate assistance programme activities on several fronts.

Almost a month-long delay in monsoon rain and unprecedented high temperatures required UNICEF to launch yet another emergency action during this dry season to provide drinking water to 55 villages in the Delta, as opposed to 24 villages last year. Heavy rains and mudslide in Northern Rakhine State (NRS) in the third week of June has affected over 28,000 households in an area of one of the worst socioeconomic indicators. Based on preliminary findings, most urgent needs are in the provision of drinking water and assisting children in the 54 affected schools.

KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

UNICEF is initially assisting about 2,000 worst affected among the 29,000 households in NRS using its prepositioned stockpile of family kits and tarpaulins. Based on initial findings UNICEF has provided emergency health kits, water purification tablets, bleaching powder and Oral Rehydration Salts to prevent water-borne diseases and other disease outbreak. School tents and 2,000 roofing sheets have also been sent to some of the totally collapsed schools, along with essential learning materials for 4,000 children. Since 2009 the recovery programme in the delta supported by UNICEF -within the framework of the Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan- was mainstreamed into the current country programme.

Health and Nutrition: As of April 2010, UNICEF supported 16,070 children under one with routine DPT3 vaccination against the target of 18,100, reaching 89 per cent coverage. An estimated 280,000 (against a target of 298,000) children 6-59 months received vitamin A supplementation in nine townships, achieving 94 per cent coverage. 40,650 pregnant and lactating women have accessed health and nutrition care out of the planned target of 100,000. UNICEF helped re-equip 108 health facilities and reconstructed 19, along with the provision of 62 fibre boats to strengthen basic health workers' access to hard-to-reach areas. Essential drug packages were supported to all rural health facilities in Nargis-affected areas, and insecticide-treated bed nets were provided to over 51,700 households. Nutrition surveillance continued in two worst affected townships, screening 42,210 of six to 59 month old children as of end of April 2010. Between January and April 2010, 600 cases of severe acute malnutrition were treated through community-based therapeutic programmes for the two townships.

WASH: To meet urgent drinking water needs, UNICEF distributed 7.5 million litres of water through water vendors and tankers benefiting around 60,000 people in 130 villages, as a part of an inter-agency effort. UNICEF helped strengthen household water storage capacity with around 30,000 families receiving 71,000 buckets, and 53,000 families receiving 81,000 bottles of water purification solution. An additional 2,200 ceramic water filters were provided to 493 schools and 57 rural health centres, with 170 additional schools and 24 rural health centres being equipped with water storage tanks. The construction of sanitary latrines was supported in 8,300 households in 110 villages.

Education: UNICEF continued support the five most severely affected townships to promote the Child Friendly School (CFS) initiative, benefitting more than 190,500 children in 1,500 schools. Textbooks and essential learning packages have been distributed to 190,500 children to support enrolment for the 2010-2011 school year. A total of 6,200 teachers were trained on child-centred teaching methods and 7,580 Parent Teacher Association members participated in community mobilization workshops. The construction of 49 child friendly schools was completed by the end of June – including 19 already completed by the end of 2009 – and fully equipped with furniture and teacher materials benefitting 9,000 primary school children (of which 51 per cent girls), and 290 teachers. Three thousand under-five children benefitted from Early Childhood Development services and 2,330 out-of-school children benefitted from non-formal life skills programmes in the targeted townships.

¹ Tripartite Core Group, Post-Nargis Periodic Review III, ASEAN/United Nations/Government of the Union of Myanmar, Yangon 2010.

Child Protection: To date 148 community support groups (CSGs) have been supported, benefitting approximately 4,000 registered vulnerable children, who will receive education, health, income generation or other referral support. Through CSGs, community members recognize, prevent and respond to cases of child abuse and exploitation in the community and, with support from UNICEF implementing partners, more complicated cases are referred to appropriate service providers.

KEY CHALLENGES

Lack of infrastructure, logistical cost of reaching the most hard-to-reach areas, and bad weather conditions resulted in higher than estimated cost and delay of construction of health facilities. Despite progress in constructing schools by all partners in the cyclone affected areas, temporary structures had to be supported again in 2010 as reconstruction needs far exceed available investments. Despite efforts to meet the need for better hygienic behaviour at households and schools through provision of water and sanitation facilities, low rainfall in the area revealed gaps in sustainable water supply at household, schools and health facilities.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

UNICEF continued its sector leadership through Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Theme Group, Nutrition Technical Network, Education Thematic Working Group co-led with Save the Children, and co-led the Child Protection Sub-Group with Save the Children respectively. At the recovery field hub level, UNICEF either participated or took rotating chairmanship of Basic Services Working Group that combined health/nutrition, WASH, and education concerns. At the end of July 2010, the coordination structure that has led Nargis response through the Tripartite Core Group comprised of the Government of Myanmar, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the UN, will end its mandate in Myanmar, handing over the overall coordination responsibility to the Ministry of Social Welfare. Lastly, in collaboration with OCHA, UNICEF trained 30 persons from local NGOs in Emergency Assessment Preparedness.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

UNICEF's requirement for recovery from the Nargis cyclone was adjusted to US\$15.9 million from the original planned amount of US\$18 million. In the first semester of the year, UNICEF has received US\$2.4 million, resulting in a US\$13.5 million funding gap. Considering the Post-Nargis Recovery Plan, UNICEF funded many activities for 2010 using additional funds in the amount of US\$7.5 million, including a carry-over from 2009 of humanitarian emergency funds (US\$4.7million), a contribution from the Multi-donor Fund (MDEF) to the education component of the recovery programme and other complementary funds. The final funding gap amounts to US\$6 million.

Funds received against the HAR 2010 (US\$)						
Sector	Original 2010 HAR requirements	Revised HAR requirements	Funds received	Funding gap	Additional funds utilized in 2010	Final funding gap
Health and Nutrition	6,000,000	3,339,048	963,665	2,375,383	875,383	1,500,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	5,000,000	5,067,003	1,450,683	3,616,320	2,616,320	1,000,000
Education	5,500,000	4,999,100	0	4,999,100	2,999,100	2,000,000
Child Protection	1,500,000	2,494,571	0	2,494,571	994,571	1,500,000
Total*	18,000,000	15,899,722	2,414,348	13,485,374	7,485,374	6,000,000

*The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

EMERGENCY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES: JULY – DECEMBER 2010

UNICEF will emphasize disaster preparedness and response in the latter half of the year.

Health and Nutrition

- Building on earlier material support and technical training, with UNICEF support, at least 1,000 basic health staff will be trained in order to strengthen their leadership and management skills required to enhance maternal and child health service delivery.

- Disaster preparedness and response will be emphasized in the latter half of the year. In addition to the 1,000 basic health staff, 1,080 community leaders from 180 villages will be trained in disaster preparedness and response and help them form village-level disaster preparedness committees.
- For NRS, UNICEF will support the health authorities to revitalize routine immunization, repair cold chain system, and conduct nutrition surveillance and treatment of malnutrition.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- The construction or renovation of 90 ponds – detailed assessment by partners resulted in down-sizing the original target of 100 ponds - and the distribution of 8,000 traditional water storage jars will support increased availability of water.
- Hygiene promotion will continue to feature as priority, along with provision of sanitary facilities for 2,800 families and 30 schools.
- For NRS, UNICEF and partners will support the cleaning of about 60 village ponds in Butheedaung and Maungdaw townships. Other interventions include rain water harvesting, construction of water and sanitation facilities in six schools, and latrine construction, benefiting around 6,000 families.

Education

- School-based Disaster Risk Reduction activities will be conducted in 1,500 schools. 500 schools will conduct school self assessment and develop and implement school improvement plans.
- 1,500, as opposed to the planned 2,000, out-of-school adolescents will have access to non-formal life-skills education programmes. The earlier target has been adjusted after obtaining the actual size of villages.
- 5,060 children under five will benefit from 253 Early Childhood Development services. This target was increased from initial HAR target of 2,500 based on estimates. Advocacy interventions and preparatory seminars of Township Education Officials on Education for All goals contributed to a much stronger community mobilization for ECD participation by township authorities.
- For NRS, UNICEF will support the rehabilitation of about 60 affected classrooms with the involvement of Parent-Teacher-Associations and the engagement of local contractors. Detailed assessment is on-going to identify the loss of teaching/learning materials and the degree of damage to schools.

Child Protection

- The 148 existing community support groups will continue to be supported with training and guidance in the next six months, and the referral mechanism between the community and township level will be strengthened.
- Registered vulnerable children will continue to receive education and health support, while in other villages where the CSGs work well independently, UNICEF may be able phase out at the end of 2010.