

MYANMAR – CYCLONE NARGIS

UNICEF IS SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

- Cyclone Nargis caused unprecedented devastation in the affected areas. Buildings (including schools and hospitals) and infrastructure have been severely damaged, and flooding is widespread.
- The authorities have declared five states and divisions (Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Bago, Mon and Kayin) to be disaster zones. The combined total population of the declared disaster areas is around 24 million people.
- Critical emergency needs include plastic sheeting, water purification tablets, cooking sets, mosquito nets, emergency health kits and food.



7 MAY 2008

1. OVERVIEW

Myanmar was hit by cyclone Nargis on May 2, 2008. The cyclone devastated Irrawady, Yagon and Bago and affected Mon and Kayin divisions/states, where the impact was less severe. Unofficially, it is estimated that more than a million are affected and thousands are displaced. The cyclone tore down trees, power cables, houses and caused significant structural damage to building and structures. The Irrawaddy division is the worst hit with eight townships with approximately 75% to 95% of the population affected.

The government of Myanmar has declared a state of emergency. There is no electricity and the supply of domestic and potable water is a major issue. Most houses in the affected areas have been either destroyed or severely damaged. Most displaced populations are living in community structures that are still standing, such as schools, monastic institutions and community shelters.

Initial assessments by UNICEF and partners in Yangon and Irrawaddy division -especially in Laputta, one of the most affected townships- reveal needs for basic necessities such as shelter materials and non-food items (basic familial necessities) including mosquito nets, safe water and sanitation facilities and essential drugs.

In any disaster, it is children who suffer most. Reportedly, a number of children have died; many are separated from their families, injured and traumatized. Vulnerable to hunger, disease and trauma, children and women in the affected areas require urgent life-saving assistance to survive.

UNICEF began responding within a day of the disaster, drawing on pre-positioned emergency medical supplies. Along with its partners, including sister UN agencies and international and national non-governmental organisations, UNICEF is working closely with the Government of the Myanmar to respond swiftly and effectively to the crisis.

To support these efforts, UNICEF is requesting an initial amount of US\$ 8,200,000 to meet the urgent needs of children and women throughout the affected areas.

2. UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ACTIONS TO DATE AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

UNICEF is collaborating with the government, UN Country Team and international NGOs to meet the basic needs of children and their families. The office is functioning in emergency mode – an emergency taskforce has been formed and focal points have been assigned for coordinating interventions in Yangon and Irrawady, Bago and other divisions.

At the national level UNICEF has been meeting senior government officials from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement to obtain key information and discuss relief coordination, logistics and transport. At the local and divisional level, UNICEF is partnering with the local government authorities, and NGOs. UNICEF has secured an agreement with the government that international staff is able to travel to affected areas for assessment and response.

UN agencies have been meeting regularly to discuss the situation and emergency response and are collaborating with the government in the areas of assessments and the provision of basic needs in the sectors of health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and protection. UNICEF is heading the clusters for WASH, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection and initial coordination meetings for all clusters have already taken place. In addition, UNICEF has established an agreement with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) for the distribution of supplies in all of the affected areas.

UNICEF has deployed rapid assessment teams to Yangon and Irrawady division on Sunday 4 May, in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. Assessments are still ongoing and are coordinated with key NGOs such as World Vision and Save the Children.

In addition, UNICEF has dispatched the following relief items:

- 6000 ORS, 1,500 water guards, 10 essential drug kit A (to cover 5,000 people per kit), 20 first aid kits, 270 tarpaulins, 1 bleaching drum and 300 family kits to Laputta, Irrawaddy division.
- 5000 ORS, 5000 water guards, 10 drug kit A, 20 first aid kits, 100 tarpaulins and 1 bleaching drum to Mawlemyine Kyun, Irrawaddy division.
- 3000 water guards, 3000 ORS, 6 drug kit A, 20 first aid kits, 1000 tarpaulins and 2 bleaching drum to Hlaing Thar Yar and Kyauk Tan townships, Yangon.
- 1000 water guards, 1000 ORS, 5 drug kit A, 10 first aid kits to Kun Gyan Gon township in Yangon.
- 1000 water guards and 1,000 ORS for 1,280 children, including 120 HIV/AIDS affected girls and women, residing in Department of Social Welfare training schools in Yangon.

PLANNED ACTIONS

Health and Nutrition

There are many injured and sick people in the affected areas who do not have access to medical care. In addition, there are serious threats of infectious disease outbreaks. Due to the lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitary conditions, diarrhoeal diseases could occur and increase the mortality and morbidity of children and other vulnerable populations. Floods could be a source of mosquito breeding and lead to malaria and dengue fever outbreaks which are endemic in this country.

UNICEF is providing oral rehydration solutions, essential drugs for infectious diseases and mosquito nets but the quantities in hand are far short of the needs. Funds secured through this appeal will be used for the procurement of additional supplies.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Priority concerns in WASH include water quality and shortage in supply as a result of the electricity breakdown as well as destroyed sanitation systems. This has led to a high risk of infections and water-borne diseases such as cholera and dysentery. UNICEF interventions will focus on ensuring safe water supply and building latrines for the affected population.

The provision of latrines for displaced persons in camps, basic water family kits, water purification tablets, water guard solution (sodium hypochloride) and bleaching powder are among the top priorities identified by UNICEF and DDA (Department of Development Affairs) assessments.

UNICEF is coordinating with UN country team members and NGOs as cluster lead agency and also with DDA (mandated for water supply in rural areas in the country) to meet water and sanitation needs for the affected populations.

UNICEF will work to strengthen the capacity of local partners and Government authorities to restore water and sanitation services. In addition, in collaboration with partners and the authorities, UNICEF will assess the damage to water and sanitation infrastructure to determine what longer-term actions may be necessary.

Education

Initial assessment shows that many schools have been damaged and destroyed. UNICEF is focusing on returning children to schools by the 1st of June in an effort to bring a sense of normalcy to their lives and protect them from potential abuse and threats to their well-being as a result of displacement. UNICEF urgently requires funds for school repair/construction, temporary learning spaces and support to preschools. UNICEF will be supporting 2,000 schools benefiting approximately 300,000 children.

Child Protection

Unaccompanied, separated and traumatized children are among UNICEF's chief concerns. UNICEF plans to support the identification, of separated children, family tracing, verification and reunification of children with families, establishment of safe environments for children and women, including child-friendly spaces, sensitization of communities on risks of exploitation and abuse as well as integrate psychosocial support in protection responses.

Relief items

Non-food items such blankets, plastic buckets, mosquito nets, family kits and other relief supplies will be procured to support the affected population.

3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION FROM MAY TO JULY 2008

The UNICEF Myanmar country office has already reprogrammed US\$500,000 from its regular country programme budget. The bulk of these funds have already been utilized for the initial response.

UNICEF is requesting an initial amount of US\$ 8,200,000 for the immediate response. This appeal amount will be adjusted following more detailed assessments and analyses. UNICEF will also participate in the UN joint appeal process.

Table 1: Estimated funding requirements (May-July 2008)**

Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	1,900,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	1,500,000
Education	2,500,000
Child Protection	800,000
Non-food items	1,500,000
Total*	8,200,000

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

**Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in the Myanmar can be obtained from:

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