

## NEWS NOTE

### 60 Days after Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar UNICEF Continues to Strengthen Response for Affected Children and Families

YANGON, 16 June 2008 — Two months after Cyclone Nargis claimed the lives of over 84,000 people in Myanmar with 54,000 yet to be traced, UNICEF continues to strengthen support to children and families in the worst-affected areas with medical and nutritional supplies, water and sanitation, getting schools to re-open and protection of children.

“The Cyclone Nargis has taken a toll on children’s life, safety and well being. UNICEF is addressing affected children’s health, nutrition, education and protection needs to make sure that the children of Myanmar continue to get the help they deserve to overcome the impact of the cyclone, said Ramesh Shrestha, UNICEF Representative in Myanmar. “We can not afford to let the plight of the children go unaddressed and forgotten.”

Supported by a range of donors, UNICEF works closely with the Government, UN Agencies and partners to access difficult-to-reach locations in the delta by helicopters and boats and mobilize necessary relief support. The UN estimate 2.4 million people severely affected with over a million left homeless and without livelihood.

UNICEF’s support in these areas include:

#### **Health and Nutrition**

UNICEF reached affected communities in Yangon and Ayeyarwady divisions with life saving drugs and medical supplies including ORS, antibiotics, infusion, vaccines and Vitamin A enough to treat 600,000 people including children against diarrhea, malaria and dengue – there has not been a major outbreak, however, some cases of each were reported, that are usually seen during this time of the year. UNICEF assisted the government in implementation of measles campaign targeting cyclone affected children up to 15 years of age.

The challenge now facing the Health Sector is the destruction of Health Centres and depletion of health workers in the affected areas due to death at a time while the demands for health services are on sharp increase. UNICEF is addressing the situation in partnership with the Myanmar Medical Association, Myanmar Health Assistants Association and the Myanmar Nurses and Midwives Association, 110 health workers, nurses and midwives have been deployed or are lined up for deployment. Labutta, Bogale and Pyapon

In addition over 41,000 family kits, 186,000 Insecticide Treated Bed nets and 21,000 safe delivery kits were distributed for women giving birth outside health facilities. Over 86,000 masks and gloves were given to rescue workers for use during removal of corpses.

Vitamin-A supplementation campaign are underway to help prevent possible deterioration children’s nutritional status in all camps. In collaboration with the National Nutrition Council (NNC), UNICEF distributed 64,000 cartons of plumpy nut for severe/acute malnourished children under 5. Additionally, F-75 and F-100 Phased 1 milk and Resomal (ready to eat meals) were distributed to treat 1000 severely malnourished children with complications. Also 55,000 cartons of distributed BP5 aim to improve nutrition of 11,000 moderately malnourished under-5 children. UNICEF in collaboration with NNC trained local health personnel in management of severely malnourished children in clinic setting in several locations.

#### **Water and Sanitation and Hygiene**

UNICEF constructed 299 latrines in temporary settlements and 28,000 sets of latrine pans and pipes were distributed to assist communities in building latrines. Water purification materials supplied include water-guard and water purification tablets to families, with instruction leaflets for safe usage and storage. UNICEF has distributed almost 100,000 jerry cans and plastic buckets, 645 drums of bleaching powder, 22,000 bottles of water guard (250ml), 330 cans of water guard (20 litre) and 4,667,608 water purification tablets. The materials provided so far are sufficient to produce 24.5 million litres of safe and clean water. After providing safe drinking water to people in the temporary settlements, UNICEF is now focusing on reaching the affected villages where people are returning.

UNICEF has also begun to repair, rehabilitate and cleaning of water sources such as ponds and dug wells, in the villages and in some urban areas. UNICEF aims to provide 400 tube-wells in appropriate locations as part of the longer term recovery effort. The current target is to reach 25 to 30 per cent of the affected people in the eight affected townships.

### **Education**

In order to bring children back to school with as little disruption as possible, UNICEF provided building materials and till date helped repair 1,324 affected primary schools and set up 113 temporary safe learning centres. This has been done by provision of school tents, cash and tarpaulin to local Parent Teacher Associations. UNICEF provided 129,000 essential learning packages for individual students containing exercise books, pencils, erasers and crayons. 749 school-in-a-box were distributed – each with enough school supplies for teachers in a classroom and 80 pupils. A local language Tips-for-Teachers developed by UNICEF, that contains detail instructions on psychosocial support and recovery of children, will be distributed in the coming weeks.

UNICEF has advocated for building back better, stronger and child-friendly schools and was asked by the Ministry of Education to build seven 'model' schools in seven townships of the Ayeyawardy division. UNICEF has contracted international architect to work with MoE Engineers on improved designs prior to constructions.

### **Child Protection**

The most serious issue in child protection in the aftermath of the cyclone is the problem of separated and unaccompanied children. As of end June 428 separated and unaccompanied children have been identified of which 15 have been reunited with their families. UNICEF is working with the Department of Social Welfare, INGO and NGO partners to establish, manage and support a comprehensive case management system to identify, track and support separated and unaccompanied children.

UNICEF assisted in the establishment of information hub in Labutta which facilitates the storage and sharing of information on separated and unaccompanied children for family tracing among agencies working in affected areas. The hub is also a place where parents can come to report missing children. For those children who can not be reunited with their parents or a family member, UNICEF has been advocating for placement with a family within their existing community, rather than in orphanages. The goal is to put in place a mechanism to protect children from neglect, violence, abuse and exploitation.

UNICEF is assisting Department of Social Welfare in promoting safe and protective environments for children through the establishment of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) in temporary settlements. CFSs are supervised by trained social workers and community members in which children can participate in structured activities in a secure and safe environment. As of the end of June 51 CFS are operating, some have closed with the closing of camps. UNICEF aims to establish, at least, 100 CFSs in Yangon and Ayeyarwady Division. They can serve as makeshift schools while the school system is restored. CFSs are also used as the springboard for outreach child protection work.

### **About UNICEF**

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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