

SITUATION REPORT

Cyclone Myanmar (Giri) – Rakhine Province, Myanmar 25 October 2010

I. HIGHLIGHTS & KEY PRIORITIES:

- A cyclonic storm with wind velocity of 110 mph hit the western coast of Rakhine state of Myanmar in the night of 22 to 23 October. The storm was categorized at category 4.
- Preliminary report suggests that 5 townships namely Kyauk Phyu, Myebon Man Aung, Ann and Pauk Tau were mostly affected, out of which Myebon and Kyaukpyu townships were severely affected. In Kyaupyu, it is the villages that are most affected.
- Communications with the affected areas is severed and electricity is reportedly down in many places.
- Kyaukpyu and Myebon hospitals were damaged of which Myebon severely. In addition in Myebon township, many health facilities have also been damaged according to the Government's Health Authorities. Reconstruction of Myebon hospital by the Ministry of Health will start as soon as possible. MOH health specialists have been deployed to affected areas.
- There have been some deaths reported of which 41 in Myebon and the exact number in other townships is under assessment) There is concern that the islands close to Kyauk Phyu and Myebon have been severely affected but only scarce information has been received so far since access to these islands is very difficult. . Big concern for the Ministry of Health is outbreaks of water-borne diseases.
- Locally based NGOs including Myanmar Red Cross, Action Aid and Action Based on Community Development (ABCD), and a few UN organizations (UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP) have been supporting the efforts of the local administration in providing immediate relief to the affected population. WHO has mobilized its surveillance officers to support the local public health initiatives.
- The National Disaster Preparedness Coordination Committee (NDPCC) together with several ministries has been mobilized by the Government of Myanmar. A fact-finding mission in visited the area on Saturday. .
- As part of an early assessment team, WHO- Myanmar has deputed the RSOs (Regional Surveillance Officers) to accompany the MOH assessment team. They would accompany the national team consisting of the national EHA focal point, director Disease Control and Director Medical Care.
- The post-cyclone community needs would be clearly understood after rapid needs assessment.
- The Government of the Union of Myanmar has welcomed the offer of assistance from

II. Situation Overview

The Rakhine State of Myanmar has been put on high alert following the development of a depression in the Bay of Bengale since 21 October 10. The depression quickly evolved into a cyclonic storm of Category 4 followed by heavy rain, according to Tropical Storm Risk (TSR). The Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) issued a red alert for a high risk of humanitarian impact on 22 October. Rains have reportedly started again on 23 October in the morning.

Preliminary report suggests that 5 townships namely Kyauk Phyu, Myae Pon, Man Aung, Ann and Pauk Taw were affected, out of which Kyauk Phyu Township was severely affected. Kyaukpyu Township is situated on the western coast of Rakhine State and has an estimated population of 209,000 people. Communications with Kyaukpyu have been severed and electricity is reportedly down. Kyaukpyu's hospital is severely damaged according to the Government's Health Authorities

Other areas such as Sittwe, Ramree, Ann, Myebon Townships and a number of smaller islands located close to the path of the cyclonic storm have also experienced the impact of heavy rain and cyclone. Access to the affected areas is usually difficult during this period of the year due to higher tides making it difficult for boats that aren't ready for high seas.

The Government of the Union of Myanmar promptly issued warnings to the population living in areas that could be affected by the heavy rains and powerful winds and organized the evacuation of some people to areas in higher altitude.

The UN, NGOs and Red Cross mobilized their staff to get ready to respond. In particular the Red Cross mobilized its network of volunteers. No loss of life has been reported so far though no comprehensive assessment has yet been performed.

Partners present in the immediate surroundings of the affected area (ACF, MSF, Save the Children, Malteser) are deploying assessment teams to Kyaukpyu and Ann and the closest areas to assess the damages.

The Government has welcomed the suggestion that a small team of the humanitarian community accompanies the Government's mission, pending approval by higher authorities. Several ministries have been mobilized including the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Transports and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement have immediately made contact with the humanitarian community and the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator to welcome support.

A fact-finding mission has been organized by the Government and to the most affected areas of Kyaukpyu and its immediate surroundings. Other areas that have been or are still on the trajectory of the depression that has now slowed down to a Tropical Storm could also be assessed, such as the area of Ann, which is on the north-eastern side of Kyaukpyu.

III GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES / UPDATES as on 25/10/10:

- Ministerial mission already visited the area and Govt rescue flights are delivering supplies especially water and food. Ministry of Social Welfare is loading a ship with supplies that will go this pm.
- Myebon (access by boat from Sittwe) and Minbya (access by road from Sittwe) seem to be most seriously affected.

- Many local NGOs are active and INGOs have sent assessment teams but overview information on numbers still not available especially for islands and some inland areas where the needs may be high. Communications and access still difficult.
- The advance Disaster Preparedness response (DDR) efforts seem to have been effective in many places and the role of Red Cross in this was highlighted. People were moved out to camps - 9 schools and 6 monasteries. Families are now starting to return since the storm has passed.
- Destruction of houses and construction still biggest concern together with food security and clean water.
- Concern also related to cold chain and supply of vaccines.
- Red Cross estimates so far that over 5600 homes are damaged. Sporadic information on deaths (12 mentioned and UNDP confirmed 7 deaths) and injured. RC has distributed family kits with basic supplies of kitchen utensils etc.
- Myanmar Medical Association has presence in Myebon and has provided medical supplies and clean delivery kits. Currently an MMA assessment team of 5 medical doctors is there
- MSF Holland will start interventions once transport to the affected areas is possible. They are already consulting assessment as are SCF and they have supplies coming in to MMR.
- Difficult to have reliable information on health needs as yet. Hospital in Kyauk Phyu damaged but no details provided.

IV. HEALTH SECTOR INITIATIVES:

- MOH national focal point for EHA and 2 Regional Surveillance Officers (RSOs) from Yangon and Bago left this morning for the affected area. The RSO from Sittwe is in Myebon with MOH officials. They were accompanied by MOH officials, including DDG Communicable Diseases, Medical staff from CEU (Central Epidemiology Unit). Unit), DIR Medical Care, Orthopedic surgeon. They will go the affected areas of which Myebon is worst hit according to information received.
- The team carries with them emergency medical supplies, chlorination solution and powder and family kits for distribution.
- The team will liaise with UNICEF who has sent up a car today as well, to prevent overlap and concentration of visits to the same areas.
- MOH and UNICEF will also travel from Sittwe to affected areas
- WHO will be in regular contact with the team that has left and will liaise with MOH on surveillance, Malaria and WATSAN in addition to other expressed needs.

V. Issues for DISCUSSIONS in UNCT (United Nation Country team) & decision taken:

Issues	Decision taken by the humanitarian community in UNCT
Need for clear coordination focal point in Sittwe and coordination with local authorities.	<p>Important that the UN agencies already established in Sittwe take the lead (UNDP, UNICEF, WPF).</p> <p>UN and INGOs have held coordination meetings both in Maungdaw and Sittwe.</p> <p>UNDP will continue to support coordination and share information received from NGOs on assessments etc. and produce sit reps.</p>
Modalities of assistance were raised – this needs coordination with Govt with regards to who can supply.	Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) will discuss with government regarding arrangements.

NGOs can make supplies available but do they also have the permission to deliver?	
Issues	Decision taken by the humanitarian community in UNCT
Use of standard Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) format stressed.	WHO guidelines will be made available
Concern raised regarding risk of water borne diseases. However, ponds may be polluted due to the sea surge. Assessments need to look into this urgently so that if ponds are saline, they should be emptied as soon as possible in order to benefit from last rains. End of rainy season so water shortage could become a big problem	WHO guidelines will be made available
Should the Cluster approach be launched?	General feeling was that it would not be necessary but smaller sector coordination should be operationalised, especially in WASH, Shelter and Health.