



HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ministry of Health and health clusters partners are taking measures to minimize the health impact of a potential water scarcity situation in the dry season.
- Data from the Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) of disease surveillance reveal that malaria, dengue, acute jaundice and measles show a decreasing trend from May - September 2008.
- There is a shortage of health staff at the township level, and training of staff to meet this gap is a priority.

GENERAL SITUATION UPDATE

- The likely scarcity of water in the delta region in the approaching dry season, is a key issue. The Government of Myanmar and the Health and WASH clusters are taking steps to prepare for this eventuality.
- The Ministry of Health and health cluster partners plan to strengthen the disease surveillance system to help prevent any water-borne disease outbreak.
- Township Medical officers and health cluster partners will jointly assess the water situation in the different townships, such as the number of clean ponds, and the availability of potable water.

Disease Surveillance

- Data from the Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) of disease surveillance reveal that malaria, dengue, acute jaundice and measles show a decreasing trend from May - September 2008.
- Labutta had a significant number of measles cases in September 2008. The Ministry of Health and health cluster partners continue to conduct measles campaign in the affected areas. In addition, a measles campaign will be conducted in the second week of October covering children under

15 years of age in Labutta and Bogale. However, in the absence of data same diseases is in the previous year, it was not possible to compare with the pre-nargis situation

- For effective surveillance, case definitions need to be clear to all partners. All suspected cases of communicable diseases need to be reported to the Township Medical Officers (TMOs) by all partners, for appropriate investigation and confirmation.
- As an increase in the number of snake bites is anticipated with the end of the rainy season, manuals on the proper management of snake bites need to be distributed to the different townships, especially the use of anti-snake venom and immediate referral of snake bite patients.
- All rumours of communicable diseases need to be verified up to the village level. Therefore, unless confirmed, these rumours are not reported in the EWARS. Therefore, all partners are to report to the TMOs of any suspected cases for immediate and appropriate intervention.
- In addition, for EWARS, diagnosis of these suspected cases would need to be verified and confirmed as well. As such, case definitions from the MOH and WHO would need to be re-circulated to all health partners. Samples can only be confirmed at the NHL in Yangon.

HEALTH COORDINATION

- **Township Level Coordination**
 - The second health cluster partners coordination meeting, held in Patheingyi Divisional Township on October 2, 2008, was attended by nine TMOs (Myaungmya, Labutta, Mawlamyinegyun, Bogale, Kyaiklat, Pyapon, Dedaye, Ngapudaw and Kungyangone), four RSOs (Pyapon, Bogale, Labutta and Myaungmya) and representatives from 10 NGOs.
 - The meeting reviewed the current situation of coordination, including the WWW (who what where) and the gaps that remain at village level. The meeting discussed risk factors to human health in the next few months such as the probable diseases due to the scarcity of water during the upcoming dry season. It planned for

strengthening of EWAR system in the Nargis-affected areas and discussed Early Recovery plan for health to incorporate addressing all the factors.

- The TMOs shared information about their respective township profiles and the health coordination at the different townships including the use of the monthly strategic health plan. This plan is produced by all TMOs and health partners in all townships affected by Nargis.
- There is a shortage of health staff in some townships. In order to address such gaps, training needs to be prioritized at the different townships.
- TMOs will assess whether they need to advocate assistance from township authorities regarding the possible water scarcity in the coming dry season. If advocacy is needed, then existing data on the water situation such as the number of ponds available, or cleaned, needs to be provided.
- Sanitary coverage and use of latrines, which decreased after Nargis cyclone, are in the process of being stepped up to pre-Nargis levels.

GAPS AND NEXT STEPS

- Each township need to continue working on the WWW to identify villages that still has gaps. OCHA will assist the TMO and health cluster members to compile and share data including relevant maps.
- Some hard-to-reach villages in the delta are still in need of regular health services, though some services are available through mobile clinics by health partners. These villages need to be identified through the WWW exercise at the different townships.
- Some health facilities (RHC and SRHC) are still in need of rehabilitation and reconstruction and some partners have expressed an interest in this. A rough data of rehabilitation and reconstruction needs by

- township is available with MoH. TMOs of the townships will confirm this data and provide feedback to MOH in Yangon.
- Lack of transportation means, especially for investigation of suspected cases of communicable diseases as part of EWARS
 - Coordination between health partners and WASH partners exist but more concrete cooperation and collaboration needed, i.e. joint field visits.
 - The likely scarcity of water during the dry season is priority work for WASH cluster, in collaboration with the Health Cluster.
 - New health staff are being trained as part of MoH revitalization of health systems, but voluntary health workers' training need to be harmonized according to the national training guidelines of the MoH.
 - The Ministry of Health's Early Recovery Plan proposes to include the training of health staff. Feedback mechanism between Yangon level, Divisional, Township, village, MOH/ NGO/ INGO, UN level coordination will be strengthened.