

ASEAN's Post-Nargis Humanitarian Assistance



Fact sheet

About ASEAN: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok by the five original Member States, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined on 8 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999. The aims and purposes of the Association are: (i) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region, and (ii) to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar

On 2 and 3 May 2008, Cyclone Nargis made a landfall in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon Divisions of Myanmar, inflicting death and destruction on the people living in the Delta. Cyclone Nargis left almost 140,000 dead or missing in the Delta. It had a severe and adverse impact on some 2.4 million people, representing around one third of the people living in 37 affected townships, covering an area of about 23,500 square kilometres or almost twice the size of Lebanon. Cyclone Nargis is the 8th deadliest cyclone of all time and by far the deadliest in the history of Myanmar.

ASEAN's Humanitarian Assistance Efforts in Myanmar

At the Special Meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 19 May 2008 in Singapore, the Ministers recognised with appreciation the outpouring of goodwill and strong determination of the international community to help the victims of Cyclone Nargis. Following the recommendation of the ASEAN-Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ERAT) that was mobilised a week after Cyclone Nargis, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to establish an ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism and set up the **ASEAN**

Humanitarian Task Force for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis (AHTF).

AHTF's role is to facilitate effective distribution and utilisation of assistance from the international community and incoming international assistance to support Government of Myanmar's ongoing relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts. The Task Force provides policy decisions and sets the priorities and targets with regard to the implementation of this ASEAN-led initiative. An advisory panel comprising UN and other invited international organisations or countries assists the Task Force in providing relevant technical expertise and inputs. The AHTF comprises twenty high-level and senior officials from the ASEAN Member States, and is chaired by the Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Surin Pitsuwan.

The Tripartite Core Group

For the purpose of day-to-day operation, the Tripartite Core Group or TCG was set up following the decision of the First AHTF Meeting and with support from the ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference held on 25 May 2008 in Yangon. The TCG has successfully built trust and confidence and facilitated cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the international community in post-Nargis humanitarian relief and recovery work. The TCG consists of three representatives each from the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the international humanitarian community led by the UN. The TCG is chaired by the Government of Myanmar.

In close cooperation with other TCG components, ASEAN's component of the TCG has played a critical role in the TCG, including providing the lead and technical support for various TCG activities, such as the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment,

ASEAN's Post-Nargis Humanitarian Assistance



Fact Sheet

establishment of regional hubs to ensure intensification of relief and early recovery, periodic reviews of humanitarian needs on the ground, social impacts monitoring study, and formulation of the shared recovery plan.

More information about the TCG can be found at <http://www.asean.org/21691.htm>

Here is the Nargis website that documents AHTF activities on the ground: <http://www.asean.org/CN.htm>

Achievements of the TCG

PONJA: Post-Nargis Joint Assessment

Following the First TCG Meeting on 31 May 2008, the TCG decided to conduct a Post-Nargis Joint Assessment or PONJA to determine the full scale of impact of the cyclone and requirements for both immediate humanitarian assistance needs and medium- to longer-term recovery. This assessment was conducted in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon Divisions from 10 to 19 June 2008 and the report was published in July 2008. PONJA consisted of two components – the Village Tract Assessment (VTA) focusing on humanitarian needs and the Damage and Loss Assessment (DALA) focusing on damage and losses. PONJA was historical, as it was the first post-disaster assessment conducted under a regional-led mechanism, and the first assessment that attempted to provide an integrated and sequenced approach to the humanitarian effort, including relief and early recovery, and medium- and long-term recovery needs.

PONJA is available at: <http://www.asean.org/21765.pdf>

Community Monitoring: the Periodic Review and Social Impacts Monitoring

PONJA reaffirms that most of the needs are at the community level. In order to ensure that the relief and recovery efforts of all partners are effective in addressing the needs of the people of the Delta and to report on the scale

of these efforts, the TCG agreed to conduct community monitoring for twelve months. The community monitoring process comprises two exercises: (i) the Post-Nargis Periodic Reviews and ii) the Post-Nargis Social Impacts Monitoring. The first Periodic Review and the first Social Impacts Monitoring were completed six months from the start of the relief efforts.

Periodic Review

Periodic Reviews assesses periodically the progress of humanitarian relief and recovery efforts on the ground. By providing relevant data on the situation and needs of the affected people, coordination has been strengthened across sectors and between international and domestic actors. The comprehensive geographic and multi-sectoral coverage of the Periodic Reviews pioneers a new approach to post-disaster needs assessment and monitoring. The Reviews provide pertinent sources of information to help humanitarian actors identify priority areas for resource allocation and long-term recovery programming, as well as guide dialogues at the policy level.

The first Periodic Review was conducted between October and December 2008. The report was published in mid December 2008 and is available at <http://www.asean.org/22120.htm>

Preparation for the second Periodic Review is underway and the report is expected to be published in July 2009.

SIM (Social Impacts Monitoring)

The Social Impacts Monitoring (SIM) study aims to enhance the effectiveness of recovery efforts and enable aid organisations to understand how community assistance is affecting the social fabric of life in the Ayeyawardy

ASEAN's Post-Nargis Humanitarian Assistance



Fact Sheet

Delta. The report, among others, will reveal how much and what types of aid people are getting, needs and areas where there are shortfalls in aid, and how aid is being targeted and delivered; the effects of aid assistance on the affected people; and the impact on social relations and cohesion within the affected communities. The first SIM was conducted in November 2008 and the report was published at the end of January 2009. The second exercise is scheduled in April/May 2009.

SIM is available at <https://www.asean.org/CN.htm>

PONREPP (Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan)

As immediate humanitarian needs are increasingly met and early recovery is underway, the focus now gradually shifts towards the medium-term recovery and the re-establishment of safe and sustainable lives and livelihoods. The PONREPP is a response to this progression. PONREPP provides a framework for assistance for the international community, complementing the Government of Myanmar's reconstruction plan. It outlines an indicative three-year recovery plan (January 2009 – December 2011) which takes a people-centred approach to promote productive lives, healthy lives, and protected lives.

Consultations and development for PONREPP were conducted between October and December 2008. The report is published in early February 2009. PONREPP is available at <https://www.asean.org/CN.htm>

TCG Community-based Early Recovery (CBER) Projects

With a mission to help villagers with their urgent needs to recover from Cyclone Nargis, TCG pilot projects have helped Cyclone-affected people build back their lives. The projects are implemented with the participation of ASEAN volunteers and NGOs. These first

ever ASEAN volunteers' projects are part of ASEAN's intention to promote the 'people-centred approach' as reflected in the ASEAN Charter, which entered into force on 15 December 2008.

CBER - Seik Gyi Village, Kungyangon Township, Yangon Division (September – November 2008)

This project aimed to restore the livelihood of Seik Gyi's villagers by providing emergency relief assistance such as clean water through well renovation, and rebuilding the community micro-infrastructure. At the completion of the project in November 2008, 61 boats and 159,000 betel saplings were delivered to 159 households. About 33 wells were renovated and one monastery, which is the centre of village life, was reconstructed. The pilot project benefited approximately 1,328 people. Six ASEAN volunteers from Thailand and Myanmar worked hand in hand to implement this first pilot project of the TCG.

Rebuilding Small Farm Livelihoods during the Dry Season, Thaleikgyi village, Pyapone Township (December 2008 – March 2009)

The project aims to improve household food security and reduce dependency on food aid; provide rural households with significant income gains; create season-long wage employment for landless households; and improve agricultural production in the Thaleikgyi village tract. The project, which focuses on recovery in agricultural sector, plans to assist 300 farm households with rice crops and vegetable/cash crops by providing hand power tillers, fertilisers, irrigation pumps, vegetable seeds, and providing wage employment for landless households and wage employment through village infrastructure project. This project is being

ASEAN's Post-Nargis Humanitarian Assistance

implemented by the International Development Enterprise Myanmar in cooperation with six ASEAN volunteers from Cambodia, Myanmar and the Philippines.

Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Programme – Tha Htay Gone, Kyone Lout Thit, Kyone Lout Gyi, Nga Man Chaung, Pa Tat Villages, Bogale Township (January – August 2009)

This project seeks to raise community awareness through meetings and workshops with stakeholders in the targeted villages; gather data and develop initial DRM action plan to build the community's capacity; and plant mangrove with community participation. Focusing on disaster risk reduction, the expected results of the project include a community-owned DRM action plan, community asset improvement, mangrove plantation and preservation with community engagement, job creation for mangrove work group and nurseries, and village infrastructure improvement. This project is being implemented by Mingalar Myanmar, a local NGO, in cooperation with six ASEAN volunteers from Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand.

Strengthening Hub Coordination

To further strengthen coordination at the township level, the TCG agreed in August 2008 that common hub offices will be initially staffed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), later joined by ASEAN Hub Officers and they would all work closely with the Township Coordinating Committees (TCCs). Currently under the aegis of TCG, there are six common hubs established. The structure has facilitated better coordinated humanitarian assistance to the affected population at the township level. The ASEAN Hub Officers are the frontrunners for the implementation of the Periodic Review. The ASEAN Hub Officers also work closely with the OCHA hubs as well as the TCCs and other humanitarian actors in the field to enhance local research capacity and skills.

