

MYANMAR

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the days following the Tsunami, the relief community in Myanmar sent urgent emergency support to identified affected communities, with distribution of food and non-food items to cover for the immediate needs in terms of food, water, health, shelter, livelihoods, and sanitation of some 6,000 people affected by the Tsunami.

In parallel to these emergency first-phase distributions, a series of assessment and verification missions were undertaken over the course of the first 10 days following the Tsunami by one or more of the partners already working in Myanmar. Assessments went from the Rakhine Coast, Ayeyarwady Delta to the southern coast including the most populated islands of the Myeik archipelago and the islands off Kawthaung around Lampi Island and aimed at determining the immediate impact of the Tsunami. This first round of assessment was followed by joint evaluation missions, aiming to assess the following mid- to longer-term needs.

The emergency response to the Tsunami disaster in Myanmar highlighted a lack of disaster preparedness and further revealed the inherent complications linked to coordination between international partners and national authorities. A lessons-learned exercise is underway to identify opportunities for a more efficient response in the future.

During the next few months, the Tsunami response will focus on medium to longer-term needs. Shelter and infrastructure (including water and sanitation) rehabilitation activities have been planned and will be implemented, sometimes coupled with food for work support. Other programmes, such as support to education (provision of supplies and school furniture) and to child protection, as well as a generalised focus on malaria-related activities in affected townships, will be implemented. As for livelihoods (especially fishing), organisations and agencies already involved in those sectors are scaling up their activities to respond to the newly created needs.

Damage caused by the Tsunami in Myanmar was limited in comparison to other countries in the region. Relief agencies were able to provide assistance quickly precisely because the number of victims was not overwhelming and basic stocks were available locally. Funds already made available by various donors and the agencies themselves since the onset of the disaster will be sufficient to cover recovery activities until the end of 2005. No additional funding requirements are being proposed at UNCT level, yet individual agencies will coordinate with their respective Regional Offices or Headquarters to receive the funds required for proposed programmatic scaling up in affected areas.

2. REVIEW OF CURRENT PLAN

In addition to initial support provided by the Government of Myanmar, relief agencies have carried out assistance in accordance with the planning outlined in the Indian Ocean Flash Appeal. The number of directly affected people identified by early assessments remained unchanged. Approximately 6,000 people were in need of emergency assistance. Priority needs were food and non-food items including clothing, essential drugs as well as drinking water. Epidemiological surveillance was also conducted.

By the end of January 2005, acute food and non-food items needs were generally met and no major outbreak of disease was reported. Relief agencies have had some access to affected populations until now and local authorities have so far been cooperative in sharing information.

One of the main complications faced during the early stage of the emergency was the lack of consistency in the assessment of the situation in reports from different agencies and in the media. This contributed to tension with local authorities in some of the affected areas as well as confusion about the accuracy of the various assessments, including those of the UNCT. As a result, the UNCT is looking at ways to strengthen the public information strategy in future disaster situations.

Since the issuance of the Flash Appeal, UN agencies and relief organisations in Myanmar have conducted a series of new assessments in affected coastal areas, primarily in the Ayeyawaddy Delta but also in Tanintharyi Division and in Rakhine State. Most of those assessments covered mid- to longer-term needs for a total of 15,000 people and communities in affected states and divisions. These different reports allowed the aid community in Myanmar to identify priority needs for the remaining of the current year. Specific Tsunami recovery activities will primarily take place in the following sectors: Shelter and Infrastructure Rehabilitation, Health, Livelihoods and Water and Sanitation. Disaster Preparedness is also a priority for this year and beyond. Current activities in, Education and Special Vulnerable Groups sectors will be strengthened to improve the general living conditions of Tsunami affected populations.

UN agencies have reallocated existing resources from available in-country funds and supplies as well as called forward additional resources through their respective regional appeal mechanisms to cover immediate response. Various donors also made specific Tsunami funds available to selected agencies and organisations. This will provide for adequate mid- to longer-term response.

3. REVISION TO RESPONSE PLANS

The overall response priority has not changed. The UNCT and relief partners' view is that the situation in Myanmar primarily requires for agencies to scale up and/or re-direct their existing programmes in Tsunami affected areas in order to provide adequate support for a quick recovery and improve living conditions.

With the emergency phase over, the prioritisation of sectoral response has now shifted from survival assistance to more sustainable recovery and rehabilitation activities. Basic community services in many of the affected areas were already precarious. The international community in Myanmar will seize the opportunity of availability of funds and access to ensure that the greatest number of citizens benefit from a comprehensive approach.

Update on sectoral achievements and planning

LIVELIHOODS AND INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION

Progress to date

- Assessments of needs have been conducted and procurement of income-generating activity material has started;
- Objectives;
- Provide inputs and technical guidance for restoration of income generating tools especially in fisheries (replacement of boats and nets);
- Provide support for the reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of community infrastructures such as bridges and schools;

- Expand livelihoods activities by including skills training, job linking and market chain development for vulnerable groups, and provide micro-credit.

WATER AND SANITATION

Progress to date

- UNICEF has supported the installation of water and sanitation systems in many affected areas before the tsunami hit. In Ngaputaw Township alone, 143 systems - covering one third of the township's requirements – had been installed by UNICEF. Nevertheless, emergency assessments revealed that many systems were degraded by the tsunami and/or earthquake, and in many tsunami-affected areas, water quality and availability remains a concern. In the aftermath of the tsunami, UNICEF provided 9,000 people with clean water access and more than 2,000 families with latrine systems;
- 828 latrine systems were distributed to affected households;
- 20 temporary water tanks have been installed throughout Ngapudaw and Laputta Townships in the Delta area;
- Approximately 2000 bottles of WaterGuard chlorine were distributed in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta and Southern Tanyintharyi areas.

Objectives

- To continue to protect affected households from water-borne diseases by: providing temporary water supplies, storage and water purification; supporting medium-term rehabilitation of water systems; supplying chlorination equipment; and supporting the provision of basic sanitation and solid waste disposal.

Today, UNICEF is focusing its post-tsunami water and sanitation efforts on rehabilitating and repairing existing structures – and training communities in their maintenance and care – rather than building new structures. This requires comprehensive assessments and, where needed, rehabilitation activities and the creation and training of local community maintenance groups.

This operation embraces community-based activities and monitoring, with a particular focus on regular water-scarcity areas. Additional activities are planned to raise sanitation, health education and water quality services in affected areas to the national standard, and, if possible, to the regional standard levels.

In the mid term, UNICEF will:

- Continue rehabilitation and improvement of school water and sanitation systems;
- Continue rehabilitation and improvement of health centre water and sanitation systems.

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

Progress to date

- Family survival kits (including blankets, clothing, cooking utensils, etc.) and other basic non-food items (NFI) were distributed to all listed affected households (approximately 1270 households). A few numbers of affected households were absent during initial assessments and still need to receive support;
- Design of pre-permanent houses in the process.

Objectives

- To distribute NFI to affected households which have not received support;
- To support the reconstruction of more than 200 houses.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Progress to date

- Prior to Tsunami, some disaster mitigation and preparedness training was offered at the community level and for staff, volunteers and local authorities by some partners but no coordinated response plan was in place.

Objectives

- Develop a common contingency plan amongst relief partners;
- Organise village and Township level disaster preparedness workshops and trainings;
- Support the construction of community resource centres;
- Establish up-stream linkages on disaster preparedness and mitigation;
- Develop training programmes on Vulnerabilities and Capacities Assessment (VCA), hazard assessment and contingency planning;
- Refurbish and replenish regional warehouses;
- Advocate for the need of a national disaster preparedness plan.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Progress to date

- Two cycles of relief distribution completed in Ayeyarwaddy Delta and Tanyintharyi division reaching 7,000 beneficiaries with 170 MT of food;
- FFW activities started in Ayeyarwaddy Delta- reconstruction of houses, toilet repair, pond and road construction and clearing of drainage canals. Some 8,000 people will benefit from FFW;
- In Tanintharyi division, FFW activities are being planned for 1,000 beneficiaries by end March;
- Additional quantities of 660 MT of rice and 140 MT of pulses have been procured locally by WFP to suffice food requirements till June 2005;
- Adequate warehouse facilities have been established in the affected areas for pre-positioning of food before onset of rainy season.

Objectives

- Reduce the risk of food insecurity for a total of 15,000 people through relief and food for work activities supporting the rehabilitation of community infrastructures in the affected areas.

HEALTH

Progress to date

- Shortly after the tsunami hit Myanmar, UNICEF responded by providing essential drugs and family kits to affected areas to protect children and families from diarrhoea, respiratory infections and other threats to their health. UNICEF also provided anti-malaria drugs and impregnated bed nets to protect affected populations from malaria;
- Immediate health needs have been addressed and no outbreaks have occurred. Health kits, anti-malarial drugs and mosquito nets were distributed. The focus was put on reducing the risk of disease outbreaks and morbidity by supporting disease surveillance and providing emergency medical supplies.

Objectives

- Support disease prevention and health promotion by improving surveillance and early warning systems;
- Support health services delivery to help ensure continuity of basic health services through provision of essential medicines and supplies;
- Support health policy and coordination by strengthening of the national disaster management programme;
- Continue immunisation programmes and support to HIV prevention activities UNICEF is now focusing its activities on the rehabilitation and improvement of health services in affected areas, which includes:
 - The reinforcement of Primary Health Care services through the provision of support to Rural Health Centres (RHCs) in the three most heavily affected State and Divisions (53 townships). These facilities will be receiving new basic medical equipment

(including one kit for each of the 348 RHCs), essential drugs, and basic cold chain immunisation equipment (cold boxes, vaccine carriers for the 2,000 midwives in charge on immunisation services, ice packs, and ten solar refrigerators for strategically located RHCs);

- Support for malaria activities through increased support for Roll Back Malaria efforts in coordination with WHO, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF), the Global Fund AIDS Tuberculosis Malaria (GFATM), and the National Malaria Control Programme. This will include the provision of 100,000 insecticide-impregnated bed nets, diagnostic devices, and anti-malaria drugs.

In the mid term, UNICEF will:

- Provide essential drugs, anti-malaria drugs, and bed nets.

EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TO SPECIAL VULNERABLE GROUPS

Progress to date

(Education in Emergencies)

- UNICEF's initial response in the education sector focused on the repair of damaged schools, including essential water and sanitation facilities. The provision of learning and recreational materials also proved to be of crucial assistance in helping children return to school and to restore normalcy to their lives;
- School supplies and textbooks have been ordered;
- 500 recreational/psychosocial kits have been distributed for Tsunami affected children.

(Child Protection and Psychosocial support)

- Following the tsunami, children in affected villages, particularly those bordering Thailand and in Tanintharyi Division, were found to be particularly vulnerable to economic and sexual exploitation as well as trafficking. These communities have higher proportions of migrants and less access to livelihood and income generating activities, and some communities lacked the information, knowledge and skills needed to effectively undertake initiatives addressing these threats and strengthening the protective environment for children – including any psychosocial and social welfare support to the most vulnerable amongst them;
- In the aftermath of the tsunami, UNICEF worked in close coordination with a range of partners to monitor threats to children's well being and began initiating psychosocial support activities to heighten the level of support available to affected children.

Objectives

- Improve the quality of learning in Tsunami affected areas;
- Respond to access issues and support to school rehabilitation;
- Continue the support the psychological recovery of especially vulnerable groups including children, through psychosocial support activities, distribution of recreation and basic education kits.

UNICEF is now targeting a broader range of educational issues, and reaching out to many more children in tsunami-affected areas. Even before the tsunami struck, many children of families in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta, Rakhine State and Tanintharyi Division who do not speak Myanmar language – the official language of instruction – were not completing their education. Many other families in affected areas regularly find the cost of schooling to be prohibitive, and the destructive effects of the tsunami and loss of livelihoods/income further exacerbated these pressures. The tsunami crisis simply highlighted the urgent need to tackle a range of factors limiting Myanmar children's access to education, and to develop strategic approaches to address rising school dropout rates and ensure access to learning opportunities for out-of school children and young people.

Renewed emphasis is therefore being given to fostering quality education for children in affected areas through the training of teachers in "child friendly" teaching and learning methodology. To help families overcome economic barriers, UNICEF is also providing textbooks and other basic school supplies to children for the coming school year starting in May.

To further strengthen partners' capacity to help communities contend with threats to children's well being – particularly trafficking and exploitation – UNICEF is also:

- Expanding and scaling up partnerships and programmatic activities in the field of prevention of trafficking and sexual abuse, focusing on cross-border initiatives with Thailand and prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations;
- Conducting a systematic training and capacity building initiative in the field of community-based social and psychosocial work to benefit the most vulnerable and at-risk children;
- Supporting the capacity of local community-based partners and service providers (health workers, teachers, community leaders) in the field of child protection to be able effectively to monitor relevant threats, and initiate and implement appropriate long-term initiatives on behalf of children in affected and vulnerable communities.

In the mid term, UNICEF will:

- Provide “back to school” packs for children and teachers in tsunami-affected areas;
- Provide basic materials and supplies for damaged schools;
- Provide Early Childhood Development kits to initiate preschool services in affected areas;
- Train teachers in tsunami-affected areas on Child Friendly School methodology.

Regarding further child protection and psychosocial activities, UNICEF will:

- Train national trainers on psychosocial support and child protection;
- Provision of recreation kits for children in affected communities;
- Community-level awareness raising and capacity building on trafficking, including support for victim reintegration, and ongoing on-the-ground surveys;
- Translation of IEC materials on protection in six different minority languages.