Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Nargis

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Contents

Acronyms

ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AusAid	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
CBO	Community Based Organization
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CT	Country Team
DALA	Damage and Loss Assessment
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GOM	Government of Myanmar
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LRC	Learning Resource Center
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNGO	National Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PONJA	Post Nargis Joint Assessment
PONREPP	Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan
PROCAP	Protection Standby Capacity
RC	Resident Coordinator
RTE	Real Time Evaluation
TCG	Tripartite Core Group
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VTA	Village Tract Assessment
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WWW	Who/What/Where

Acknowledgments

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This report summarizes the Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IA RTE) of the response to Cyclone Nargis, which made landfall in Myanmar on 2 May 2008. This is the third in a series of an IASC-mandated pilot to conduct IA RTEs in the aftermath of major humanitarian disasters in order to provide an overarching analysis of the international community's response and recommend improvements for ongoing activities.

A four-person team conducted this IA RTE during October 2008. Information was gathered through a document review, over 120 key informant interviews, observing cluster, IASC and UN Country Team meetings, and a field visit to Bogalay Township. During the field visit, 17 focus group discussions were held in 10 villages in different parts of the township. The IA RTE team also interviewed agency staff in regional and global headquarters in Bangkok, New York and Geneva.

Undertaking such an exercise in a complex operating environment like Myanmar will invariably be perceived as prone to politicisation. The IA RTE team's objective was nevertheless to develop as credible an account as possible taking into consideration the various constraints and biases that are described in more detail in Annex #1. The team thus takes responsibility for any errors or misperceptions.

1.2 Summary of Key Findings

The IA RTE, like other joint evaluations, is best suited to capturing learning around how humanitarian actors have been working together and assessing the collective outcomes of their activities. While it was necessary for the IA RTE team to develop a good understanding of emergency phase of the response, the bulk of the team's investigations and analysis focused on priorities at the time of the field mission.

Evidence gathered during the IA RTE, including document reviews, interviews with some of the first responders, focus group discussions in affected villages, as well as available mortality, morbidity and qualitative/quantitative assessment of assistance coverage – points to a relatively good overall humanitarian response to Nargis. However, the international community can only take limited credit for this as it has been largely a national response, led by national organizations, individuals and national staff of international organizations.

Based on discussions with communities, agency reports and observations, coverage of food, shelter, health care and other vital sectors has been extensive. That is not to suggest the response was perfect; assistance was not as timely as it should have been, geographic coverage was not always consistent with need and commitments made by individual agencies were not always honoured. However, relative to what was *reasonably possible* given the very real logistical, material and access constraints, the IA RTE team's overall assessment was that the response has gone well.

Looking forward, three issues stand out as requiring particular focus moving into the next phase of operations, namely community consultation, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and restorations of livelihoods. This is in addition to improvements in coordination structures and practices that could facilitate a more effective response as it transitions to recovery. The IA RTE also identified two potential gaps in relief assistance. One of these is severe psychosocial stress in communities who

have become acutely aware just how vulnerable they are if another cyclone strikes. The second residual relief need is potable water during the dry season, which began in October.

1.2.1 Consultation and Capacity Building

The predominantly national nature of the response has created both challenges and opportunities for consultation and capacity building. Measured in terms of mortality, Cyclone Nargis was one of the most severe cyclones in recorded global history. Communities and national staff were adamant that Myanmar had never faced a disaster of this scale in living memory and, since very few of the national responders had prior emergency experience, there has been a steep learning curve, particularly in planning and technical fields. This includes staff of international agencies, since much of the response was (and continues to be) carried out by their national staff or national partners.

Numerous studies, such as the TEC, have identified one of the most common mistakes in post-disaster planning as the lack of consultation with the affected communities. To avoid repeating this mistake in Myanmar improvements in the quality and frequency of consultation will be required during this transition stage. Based on interviews with international agencies and in communities along with reviews of agency assessments, it was evident that outreach to national organizations and affected communities needs to be further strengthened.

1.2.2 Disaster Risk Reduction and Livelihoods

The disaster in the Ayeyarwady Delta was not just a cyclone, which is a natural event. The disaster was the preventable deaths and damage due to a lack of preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR). As noted above, Myanmar had not experienced a disaster of this scale in living memory so it is not surprising that preparedness was weak. While communities will be quicker to act when they are warned of another cyclone, continued lack of preparedness and DRR means that they remain vulnerable both mentally and physically.

Cyclone Nargis has left behind frightened survivors acutely aware of their own vulnerability. Agencies implementing psychosocial activities report that, whereas the most frequent problem they were dealing with until July was shock, this has now evolved into significant anxiety about the prospect of another cyclone. Psychosocial support thus needs to be added to dry season water as one of the two remaining priority relief needs for this particular response.

While FGD in communities confirm that beneficiaries appreciate the humanitarian aid they have received, they are at the same time very clear that their priority is to return to self-sufficiency. Many potentially useful efforts and initiatives are currently underway to promote livelihoods but the IA RTE team's analysis was that these discussions to be fragmented between different clusters and working groups resulting in the lack of a coherent strategy. This lack of coherence is most visible at the hub and village tract level where many agency staff remain involved in implementing relief activities and appear to be unsure of next steps.

1.2.3 Coordination

Coordination involving international actors occurred at various levels, and included both standard and "atypical" coordination mechanisms, of which a noteworthy example is the Tripartite Core Group (TCG), an ad hoc coordinating body bringing together senior representatives from the Myanmar government, UN, and ASEAN to facilitate humanitarian operations. Based on interviews of both national and international agencies along with a review of minutes, guidelines and tools, coordination has been relatively good at the central level.

While the cluster system was seen as relatively effective at Yangon level, observations by the team, document review and interviews highlighted weaknesses in terms of linking clusters with their counterparts in the field, outreach to beneficiaries and inter-cluster planning and coordination.

1.3 Summary of Recommendations[1]

Consultations with communities

R.1.   Senior program staff in international agencies should improve consultation with affected communities.

R.2.   Agencies promoting the establishment of village-level committees need to ensure that these are mutually supportive with representative membership and provide appropriate capacity building.

Funding

R.3.   Donors should make available adequate funding for livelihood activities for the response to Cyclone Nargis and for appropriate international components of a national DRR strategy.

Clusters

R.4.   OCHA and the Inter Cluster Coordinator should facilitate discussions within each cluster to clarify roles and responsibilities.

R.5.   The HC should oversee a review and rationalization of the current cluster system, using desired outcomes at community level as the primary focus.

R.6.   Discussions on livelihoods should be consolidated, possibly as a single cluster in support of the PONREPP process.

R.7.   Outreach from the clusters and the humanitarian community should be reinforced while reducing reliance on meetings as a primary coordination mechanism.

Protection

R.8.   The HC should revisit protection gaps and approaches should be revised accordingly.

Capacity Building

R.9.   More international support is required for capacity building, of national staff in international organizations, and of local partners.

Coordination

R.10.   The Humanitarian Coordinator should oversee the formation of a local IASC.

R.11.   To better support recovery at community level, the IASC should examine the feasibility of assigning a lead agency for those village tracts which have been most severely impacted.

R.12.   OCHA should guide the adjustment and adaptation of coordination systems that are better suited to local actors.

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[1] More detailed versions of these recommendations, including brief "how to" guidance, is embedded in relevant sections of the main report.

R.13. Local Resource Centers, based on the model in Yangon, should be established at the hub level, staffed with national NGO Liaison Officers, to provide outreach, improve access to information, strengthen hub-level coordination

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

R.14. The international community should support the development of a national DRR strategy for Myanmar, facilitating learning and technical expertise as appropriate. This strategy should have a robust community level component and immediate priority given to community consultations around DRR, not only to improve planning, but to help alleviate widespread psychosocial stress.

R.15. The Humanitarian Coordinator should take appropriate steps to ensure that all recovery activities incorporate appropriate DRR components at a community level.

Livelihoods

R.16. Recovery of livelihoods, along with DRR, should be ac top priority over the coming months and the HC should oversee a process of consolidation, reprioritization and strengthening of supporting monitoring and accountability systems.

2   Introduction

2.1   *Context and Background*

Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2 and 3 May 2008, making landfall in the Ayeyarwady Division and passing into Yangon Division before hitting the former capital, Yangon. With a wind speed of up to 200 km/h the damage was the most severe in the Ayeyarwady Delta region (hereafter referred to as 'the Delta'), where the effects of the extreme winds were compounded by storm surges that reportedly exceeded five metres in some areas. It was reported that some 2.4 million people were severely affected by the cyclone, of a total 4.7 million people living in the affected Townships. According to the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) the official death toll was 84,537, with 53,836 people missing and 19,359 injured. Cyclone Nargis was the worst natural disaster in the recorded history of Myanmar, and globally the third deadliest storm ever recorded at a global level.[2]

As an IA RTE, the focus of this exercise is on what is happening at the present time, not on immediate post-cyclone events. However, evidence gathered during the IA RTE, including from document reviews, interviews with some of the first responders, focus group discussions in affected villages, as well as a combination of existing mortality, morbidity and qualitative/quantitative assessment of assistance coverage – points to a relatively good overall humanitarian response to Nargis.

Coverage of food, shelter, health care and other vital sectors has been extensive, as is visible when traveling through the Delta and from discussions with affected populations. Assistance was not as timely as it should have been, and commitments of individual agencies were not always honoured. One example observed during a *"Who? What? Where?"* (WWW) coordination meeting observed by the IA RTE team in Bogalay Township showed clearly that international assistance had primarily targeted areas around urban centers in the northern part of the township which, although more populated, were far less affected than areas further south that had been hit with the full force of the storm. Nevertheless, relative to what was *reasonably possible* given the very real logistical, material and access constraints, the response has gone well.

It proved difficult, however, difficult to quantify the total response. During the initial weeks, this was predominantly a national response involving a combination of religious groups, NGOs and CBOs (both existing and newly formed), the Myanmar Red Cross Society, the private sector, spontaneously-formed civic groups and the Government of Myanmar. The activities of such actors are difficult to quantify within the present international humanitarian system, an issue that was also highlighted in recent studies from the tsunami[3]. Some information was gathered by the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) but the full extent of the national response, and support from regional neighbours, will likely never be known.

Interviews and reports show that this national effort was reinforced by international support from bilateral sources, including substantial assistance from within the region, international NGOs, United Nations and international organizations. All efforts supplemented extremely robust community level coping mechanisms.

The response has not been as efficient, organized or coordinated as it may have been, particularly in the early weeks. This is to a large extent the result of the large number of organizations and

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[2] EM-DAT Emergency Events Database. Available via http://www.emdat.be/Database/DisasterProfile/profiles.php.
[3] *TEC Thematic Study on Local Capacities*. Available via http://www.tsunami-evaluation.org.

individuals responding without any emergency experience – but also to the very real logistical difficulties of working in the affected areas, most of which were accessible only by air or boat (many boats having been damaged or destroyed). Compounding the problem was that field level coordination was handicapped due to delays in deploying OCHA staff.

Although early international media reports implied that the government was blocking aid to affected populations, interviews and agency reports showed that local groups and even some international organizations were able to access affected areas immediately after the cyclone. For example, one international NGO had 28 medical teams in some of the most affected areas of Labutta Township within a few days after the cyclone. There were certainly very real restrictions on access, but even so, those organizations already in the country that were less risk-averse and were less constrained by issues around national sovereignty reached affected populations soon after the cyclone. International agencies were also quick to mobilizing funding, activate the clusters, and mount a concerted diplomatic effort that eventually resulted in, among other things, the TCG and the air bridge in Thailand that helped to expedite the delivery of aid.

The government restrictions placed on international agencies were not imposed because of cyclone Nargis, but the effect was to limit the number of international agencies and staff responding. It is safe to assume that this factor decreased coverage of affected areas and probably prolonged suffering in some communities. Due to the relatively small number of responders, the restrictions obliged several organizations (both NGOs and UN) to take on a relatively wide variety of sectoral activities, going beyond the institutional technical expertise of agencies. At the same time, the team saw no evidence from agency reports/surveys or interviews that there has been any epidemic or increase in acute malnutrition from pre-cyclone levels. While there were post-cyclone deaths, based on interviews with responders who were among the first arrivals in the Delta there was no evidence of a massive second wave of preventable deaths as predicted by many international media reports in early May.

It is illuminating to draw further comparisons with the tsunami response in Aceh, which was flooded with hundreds of international NGOs staffed mainly by expatriates operating with private funds raised from outside the country. Most of the aid workers in Aceh had never worked in Indonesia before the tsunami, had little emergency experience or relevant technical expertise. In Myanmar, due to limited restrictions on access, these 'fringe' organizations were by and large not able to deploy. Stakeholder interviews and reports indicated that local organizations, local businesses, national celebrities (musicians, actors, etc.), schools and groups of private citizens had been able to mobilize significant amounts of private funds to complement funds that were being provided by the Myanmar government and neighboring countries. This translated into a much more prominent role for local actors than in Aceh, aided by the relatively good access to the Delta from the main commercial center of Yangon.

The result was impressive. Although hardly any of the (primarily national) individuals, private businesses, student groups, and local agencies responding had previous disaster management experience, they spoke the local language, understood what constituted a culturally appropriate relief item and knew how to interact with local authorities and communities. Findings of this IA RTE mirrored those of the TEC which suggested that most of the live-saving activities after cyclone Nargis were carried out by national actors prior to the arrival of international agencies, but this time national actors were not pushed aside by an influx of international agencies under pressure to disburse funds quickly as was the case in Aceh.

Procedures for obtaining visas and travel permits, even when they were later revised and streamlined, meant that the vast majority of aid workers who did eventually enter the country were either staff of agencies already present in Myanmar or partnered with such agencies. Both international members on the IA RTE team had been involved in reviewing the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and it was clear that in comparison there was a significantly higher level of professionalism overall amongst international staff in Myanmar. There is also a tangible sense of self-discipline amongst international aid workers interviewed. These factors, along with the impressive efforts of national actors described above contributed to a situation where, in the words of one head of agency, "*aid workers have behaved like real humanitarians*".

As impressive as this national effort was, it is nevertheless likely that a larger-scale response with more experienced international organizations and staff would have significantly improved efficiency and effectiveness. Interviews with national organizations and national staff of international organizations indicated that many lessons learnt from earlier humanitarian responses were re-learned after the cyclone, something that could potentially have been reduced if more experienced emergency responders had been involved from the outset.

This IA RTE is not recommending that host governments should impose severe restrictions on international aid workers whenever a large disaster strikes, but somewhere between the responses to cyclone Nargis and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami lies a balance that provides adequate, and timely, access to professional responders but does not open the doors to all. Such a balance is suggested by development of the *Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance*, a process led by the IFRC:

- "If an affected State determines that a disaster situation exceeds national coping capacities, it should seek international and/or regional assistance to address the needs of affected persons.

- Affected States have the sovereign right to coordinate, regulate and monitor, disaster relief and recovery assistance provided by assisting actors on their territory, consistent with international law.

Following the establishment of the TCG, the response to Cyclone Nargis appears to fit well with this guidance, albeit with some delay in their application. However, a large scale international humanitarian response was not possible in the early weeks and, if not for the effective intervention of ASEAN with UN support, the role of the international community would have been much smaller. There was broad agreement amongst senior international staff interviewed that the engagement of ASEAN with the Government had been critical to the easing of restrictions and, without their involvement, even UN engagement at the top level would have been insufficient.

A special meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 19 May and the ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference on 25 May led to an agreement to form the Tripartite Core Group to "…*act as an ASEAN-led mechanism to facilitate trust, confidence and cooperation between Myanmar and the international community in the urgent humanitarian relief and recovery work after Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar*".[4] The TCG is comprised of the Government of Myanmar (Chair), ASEAN and the UN and, based on the teams own observations and an unanimous agreement amongst international staff interviewed, it has been invaluable in facilitating the humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis, particularly since it has helped to streamline government interactions and decision-making down to this single focal point.

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[4] *Post-Nargis Joint Assessment*, p. 178.

According to a recent ICG report, "[c]*ommunication between the government and international agencies has much improved. Visas and travel permits today are easier and faster to get than before. Requirements for the launch of new aid projects have been eased. By and large, the authorities are making efforts to facilitate aid, including allowing a substantial role for civil society.*"[5]

The experience of the RTE team was entirely consistent with this observation. International team members received both visas and travel permits within a matter of days and, once in the Delta, met with authorities but had no restrictions placed on their movements or whom they spoke to. Interviews with international staff indicated that this was consistent with their own experience, although restrictions reportedly remain in place in other parts of Myanmar.

2.2 Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation

In recent years, efforts have been increasingly directed towards improving humanitarian response through learning and accountability. The Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IA RTE) – endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group in March 2007 as a one year pilot, and extended for an additional year until the beginning of 2009, is an important tool through which such analysis may be conducted. In accordance with the IASC mandate, an IA RTE on the response to Cyclone Nargis was proposed and received the consent and support of the UN Country Team and humanitarian community in Myanmar.

This IA RTE afforded the opportunity for the international humanitarian community to reflect collectively upon the systems in place, taking into consideration the individual capacities of agencies on the ground, as well as their unique strengths and challenges. It also provided an opportunity for UN and non-UN actors within the international aid system to assess their considerable efforts, recognized and placed in the context of the overall response.

The approach for this IA RTE differs in two important ways from more "traditional" evaluations.

- Although RTEs are potentially most effective at the early stages of a response when they can have the greatest influence on the humanitarian response, the team approached this exercise on the assumption that an IA RTE can also be effective at times of programme transition. While it was seen to be necessary for the IA RTE team to develop a good understanding of emergency phase of the response, the primary focus was on the "here and now" - i.e. the current status of the recovery and rehabilitation phase. The IA RTE team began its work five months after cyclone Nargis made landfall in Myanmar and the focus of this IA RTE was to guide the international humanitarian community in making appropriate adjustments in their activities related to cyclone Nargis over the succeeding months to improve overall quality and accountability, rather than only aiming to capture learning for use in future responses.

- Evaluations typically look a specific project or program. The IA RTE is an interagency exercise and, as with most other joint evaluations, is best suited to capturing learning around how humanitarian actors have been coordinating/collaborating together and assessing the collective outcomes of their activities. While references may be made to individual agencies in the report either for illustrative purposes or because the team felt that there were particular impacts on the broader response, the IA RTE is intended to support, rather than replace evaluations and reviews commissioned by individual agencies, clusters, etc. to assess their individual operational performance.

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[5] *Burma/Myanmar After Nargis: Time to Normalise Aid Relation,* Asia Report N°161 – 20 October 2008

To illustrate the approach described in the first point above taking examples from the clusters, much of the team's attention was occupied by the structure and functioning of coordination mechanisms relating to early recovery and livelihoods since this was the primary focus of agencies and communities at the time that the IA RTE took place. In contrast, the reader will find much less space devoted to the logistics cluster, which phased out in August 2008 due to reduced demand and improved accessibility. By the time the IA RTE team arrived in Myanmar, logistics was no longer a high priority and any attempt to conduct a retrospective analysis would have been very time-consuming given that most of the key actors had already left Myanmar.

Following preliminary orientation and briefings in New York, Geneva and Bangkok, the RTE team spent three weeks in Myanmar, interviewing over 120 key informants from UN agencies, Myanmar government, INGOs, local NGOs, CBOs, private sector and donor representatives. They also participated in nine cluster meetings both in Yangon and in Bogalay and held 17 focus group discussions with communities in Bogalay Township. Following the field visit two validation workshops of initial findings were held in Yangon with NGOs, one for international NGOs in English and a second one for national NGOs in Myanmar language. Revised findings were then presented during separate validation sessions with the UN Country Team, Cluster Leads, donors and the local IASC. More details on the methodology used can be found in Annex #1.

A Terms of Reference (TOR Annex #4) that was based primarily on inputs by actors within Myanmar – UN and NGO - guided the RTE. Within this TOR was a series of questions, eventually distilled down to 18, which the RTE was asked to review. By using a 'humanitarian reform' lens these questions were grouped into three 'themes': accountability, predictability and, coordination and partnerships.

The TOR also called for a particular emphasis on assessing beneficiary views on the overall response, their level of engagement, and the relevance of the assistance provided in relation to their perceived needs. The IA RTE team was also asked to examine efforts by international agencies to fulfill their accountability commitments towards communities

How the international community has performed at strategic planning in this humanitarian context – both within and external to – the cluster system, for initial response and early recovery programming provided another focus of this RTE. Also included was a review of the efforts undertaken to help build national capacities to harness response to the humanitarian crisis. Further, the RTE reviewed how and to what extent local organizations have been involved in the response to date.

Predictability related questions included reviewing the effectiveness of the cluster system at mobilization and setting direction, level of strategic planning, involvement of national entities, information management, early recovery planning and the effect of access restrictions.

The RTE looked at the coordination mechanisms employed during this response at the field, country and regional level. In addition to the overall operational effectiveness of the cluster approach in facilitating and supporting the joint humanitarian response at country level, and on allowing appropriate delivery of humanitarian assistance, emphasis was also placed on providing a vision of those coordination structures employed at the field level in lieu and/or in addition to the cluster mechanism.

Coordination and partnerships issues to be reviewed included messaging by the humanitarian community, atypical partnerships, ways in which the clusters may be improved, the role of regional clusters, and the quality of partnerships.

3   Findings and Recommendations

3.1   Consultation

Reviews of agency reports as well as interviews of agency staff and communities highlight some significant efforts to consult communities regarding their needs and priorities (e.g. the PONJA and FAO household surveys). However, while there have been consultations at the village level, communication flows tend to be one-way (upwards), with little or no feedback to communities. With few exceptions[6], there was little evidence during FGD with communities that they were aware of what agencies were planning to do with the information they had collected from assessments or indeed which organizations were planning longer-term engagements.

In all 10 villages visited by the RTE team, community members gave the impression that interventions have predominantly focused almost exclusively on donations of goods, services or, in a few instances, cash grants.   While community members clearly appreciated this assistance, a frequent refrain in virtually every focus group was "*we have nothing to do*" – i.e. they needed to restore livelihoods.

One of the lines of questioning with communities explored various assessment methodologies employed by international agencies.   The IA RTE team was surprised to learn that none of the villages they visited appeared to have previous experience of separate male and female focus groups during assessments.   This was a finding subsequently validated by a number of international agencies based in Bogalay, although it should be noted that UNDP set up women's committees prior to the cyclone which they continued to consult.   While the IA RTE found that men and women FGD shared views on most issues, important differences were evident during livelihood discussions.   This is perhaps not so surprising given that the impact on family and community structures in some areas where there has been a high death toll – principally women, children and the elderly.   In general, women tended prioritize small livestock and small-scale marketing as livelihood opportunities.

In two villages, the IA RTE divided communities into "committee" FGD instead of by gender. Committees have been established by (usually) international NGOs or UN agencies in many communities to help in the implementation of project activities; two such committees had been established in the villages visited by the IA RTE team.   One of these was a Food Management Committee, which WFP requires cooperating partners to have in place as part of their agreement and in this case was also used by the cooperating partner to facilitate NFI distributions.   The other committee had been set up by UNDP prior to the cyclone as part of their microfinance program. While these committees did facilitate consultation, it quickly became clear during FGD in both villages that multiple committees have created confusion and conflict in the village, which has occasionally required the intervention of the head Monk or village chairman to mediate disputes.

With few exceptions, committees described their role as facilitating implementation. Probing by the IA RTE team yielded little evidence that they had been consulted on priorities, had been given any delegated programme authority, received training or have a clear understanding of their TOR. To the team, the approach seemed almost like a 'checklist' initiative whereby an organization's internal accountability mechanism calls for creating a committee so field staff do so - "check". It is supposed to have an odd number of members (although committee members didn't know why) so it does, "check". It is supposed to have female members so it does, "check". The IA RTE team of course

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[6] An exception was WFP food aid deliveries where community members said they were always given advance notice.

only saw a small sample and other committees may be cooperating and performing better in other areas, but this was a consistent experience in the villages visited by the team.

From FGD discussions and interviews with INGO staff, there was a sense that more effective consultations with communities around vulnerability criteria and cultural context could have resulted in more efficient distributions. For example, some INGO staff felt that a considerable amount of time and effort had been expended on developing food assistance targeting criteria that was inconsistent with community traditions. Targeting criteria is of course required to move beyond general food distribution and there is little other option for high unit value assistance such as permanent shelter. Nevertheless, reflections by cooperating partner staff were that, since "targeted" recipients mostly redistributed to other community members and relatives, attempts to enforce targeting criteria during the early phases of the response was not the best use of their time. The general point emerging from this and other examples is that, if assistance policies are developed in a participatory manner, the additional time invested in consultations can pay off in increased efficiency.

In a global synthesis of fifteen post-disaster evaluations the World Bank the third most common lesson identified (out of a total of 51) was that "*even in the difficult circumstances of a disaster response, beneficiary participation during the design and implementation stages is essential to success*"[7]. While the potential for beneficiary consultation tends to be more limited during the initial phase of the response, the IA RTE team was surprised to learn that the original design of the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) exercise that will develop plans for the next two to three years of recovery activities contained little scope for beneficiary participation during the design phase.

3.1.1 Consultation Recommendations

R.1. Senior program staff in international agencies should improve consultation with affected communities by:
- Ensuring voices of vulnerable groups are heard through, for example, promoting the use of focus groups;
- Engaging communities in setting priorities and planning. This implies not just seeking community views on their current needs, but also their future needs and plans; and
- Establishing or refining systems for monitoring outcomes and impacts of interventions, complaints/feedback mechanisms and communication strategies that includes providing feedback about agency plans to communities.[8]

R.2. Agencies promoting the establishment of village-level committees (e.g. WFP cooperating partners, UNDP, national and international NGOs) need to ensure that these are mutually supportive with representative membership and provide appropriate capacity building so that they are better able to engage in a substantive way with planning and monitoring interventions. The Accountability and Learning Working Group could be used as a resource to pilot and disseminate good practice.

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[7] *Disaster Risk Management: Taking Lessons from Evaluation,* IEG Working Paper 2008/5.
[8] Note that such improvements will be particularly important for wide-ranging activities such as the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP).

3.2   Assessment

The Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) was a joint undertaking of the TCG and included some 250 staff from the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN (supported by the ADB and WB), UN agencies and NGOs. It consisted of two parts, a Village Tract Assessment (VTA) and a Damage and Loss Assessment. It was organized and implemented in a relatively short time for such far-reaching exercise. Agreement to conduct the exercise was reached at the 25 May pledging conference and teams were in the field gathering data by 10 June, with the report released on 21 July. The PONJA stands out not only as a good practice example of an interagency assessment with extensive community consultations undertaken at a relatively early phase of the emergency, but also helped to build trust between stakeholders (notably western bilateral donors and the Myanmar government) by developing the basis for a common plan of action.

Other significant ongoing assessments include the WFP/FAO Food and Crop Assessment and a large-scale nutritional survey which should provide a complete food security picture for the affected areas. The Periodic Review of the PONJA should similarly provide a useful update on overall activities.

3.3   Funding

Based on interviews with key informants from international agencies and communities, sectoral reports, observations and an analysis funding patterns funding for life-saving humanitarian activities appeared to have been adequate. Nevertheless, well-founded concerns exist amongst many international agencies about the availability of funds for ongoing humanitarian needs and for recovery in future. At the time of the IA RTE field visit, the bulk of the humanitarian funding was scheduled to terminate either at the year or at the end of the Flash Appeal period in April 2009. Some additional humanitarian funding had been made available (e.g. 30m AUD from AusAid) and other donors were planning to make more available (e.g. ECHO, DFID), but key informants from both INGOs and donors suggested that recovery funding may be quite limited.

One impact of this uncertainty has been that agencies are being cautious about their longer-term planning, including human resources with most INGOs maintaining a cadre of relief workers rather than proceeding with recruitment of staff with more specialized backgrounds in livelihood recovery and DRR more relevant to the current context.

Table 1 – Data from OCHA's Financial Tracking System against the Revised Flash Appeal

	Original Request	Revised Request	Funding	% Covered
Agriculture	10,000,000	58,406,169	14,274,959	24%
Coordination and Support Services	52,883,057	41,690,925	40,167,125	96%
Economic Recovery and Infrastructure[9]	3,889,947	53,731,489	20,122,354	37%
Education	7,500,000	25,896,000	19,339,049	75%
Food	56,000,000	115,295,897	79,470,164	69%
Health	23,580,000	65,756,252	37,009,727	56%
Protection	4,390,000	16,848,700	8,651,319	51%
Safety and Security	209,977	476,282	0	0%
Sector Not Yet Specified	0	0	21,541,557	0%
Shelter and Non Food Items	20,300,000	45,694,699	26,259,683	57%
Water and Sanitation	8,785,120	49,751,064	25,941,007	52%
Total	**187,538,101**	**473,547,101**	**292,776,944**	**62%**

As of 26 November 2008

Funding for emergency interventions is 50-70% of the revised request was seen to be adequate based on assessments of outstanding relief-related needs. That short term needs are largely met despite the shortfall was judged to be largely due to the fact that the considerable contribution from local resources, both in the form of community coping mechanisms and assistance provided by national actors, is not reflected in this data. Of concern are under-funded clusters such as agriculture, a critical component of livelihood recovery in the Delta identified by this IA RTE as a priority focus area. Apparently under-funded clusters such as health and WASH may not represent a true picture since a significant amount of funds ($26m USD) remained unallocated at the time the IA RTE took place. Much of these funds are allocated to Save the Children, which is active in both sectors.

It should be noted that both the US government and the European Union (through its Common Position[10]) impose quite stringent restrictions on aid in Myanmar. The US government restrictions on assistance provided by UN Agencies such as UNDP and ILO effectively bars them from activities that could be interpreted as supporting the government. Some examples of such barred activities cited by key informants from these agencies included teacher or midwife training or purchasing seeds from a government owned seed bank.

As described above, two priority areas that stood out include DRR and support for livelihood recovery. Given there has not been a disaster of this scale in living memory in Myanmar, it is not surprising that there was little preparedness or that there is not a great deal of local expertise for developing and implementing a DRR strategy. It is in DRR that the international community appears to have both a comparative advantage and a moral duty to assist. The government of Myanmar has already requested assistance in this regard and various actors have begun to participate. Community disaster risk management plans are being drawn up and trainings have started. DFID has commissioned the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) to conduct a hazard mapping and risk assessment (see section #10 for additional information on DRR).

During the community FGD it was clear that beneficiaries remain grateful for the humanitarian assistance they continue to receive. However, when questioned about future needs the reply in

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[9] This is the category listed in FTS although "Early Recovery" is listed in the revised Flash Appeal for Myanmar.
[10] For more information on the EU Common Position see
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/myanmar/intro/index.htm.

virtually all communities in the worst-affected areas was that they "have nothing to do" and a desire for livelihood support in the form of agriculture or fishing inputs, or capital to (re)start businesses.

Time constraints precluded detailed investigations into the CERF or Flash Appeal. From the handful of interviews with UN and INGO staff where these issues were raised it was clear that more remains to be done in improving transparency and consultation and in educating NGOs regarding CERF and Flash Appeal processes and objectives. For example, there was still confusion amongst some senior INGO staff about the difference between the CERF and a Flash Appeal.

3.3.1 Funding Recommendation
R.3. Donors should make available adequate funding for livelihood activities for the response to Cyclone Nargis and for appropriate international components of a national DRR strategy.

3.4 Clusters

Based on interviews and document review, clusters in Yangon were seen as useful in setting direction, mobilizing resources and, particularly in the case of national staff, perceived as a useful capacity building forum. "Predictability" played out in various ways. A pre-existing in-country IASC established the previous year helped ensure that clusters were established in Yangon almost immediately after the cyclone hit. UNHCR played a useful interim role in leading the shelter cluster until IFRC assumed leadership once they were able to deploy the necessary staff.

Another favorable comparison with the tsunami response is that national agencies are relatively well-represented at all cluster meetings, particularly at hub level, and most of the staff interviewed (including from the private sector) found them very useful learning opportunities.

Key informants were asked to rate clusters and describe the features that they felt contributed to an effective cluster. The health cluster was ranked highest by virtually all respondents, and the positive features they mentioned included:

- Strategic level of discussion (i.e. not limited to information sharing);
- Government participation;
- Development of useful technical tools and guidelines;
- Effective meeting management, including efforts to engage local actors; and
- Co-chairing by UN and NGO. Co-chair arrangement was perceived to limit potential conflict of interest, reduce problems related to frequent cluster lead turnover and the shared workload afforded cluster leads the possibility of spending more time in the field.

There was widespread acknowledgement amongst both national and international key informants of weak linkages between Yangon clusters with hubs and national actors. Many staff in the hubs were only partially aware of the planning processes going on at Yangon level. This was viewed by the IA RTE team as a contributory factor in limiting information flows to communities. Another example of the weak linkage was a geographic prioritization on more populated areas leaving some of the worst affected areas underserved (described in section 6.1 above).

Most cluster meetings in Yangon are conducted in English with no translation services available, which some interviewees from national organisations claimed made them feel "unwelcome". The situation was observed to be much better at hub level since verbal translation services are available. Meetings observed by IA RTE members were all conducted in English, and translated from

Myanmar to English when a participant spoke in the national language. Key informants from international and national agencies did report that some cluster meetings are mainly conducted in Myanmar language, and one cluster in Labutta Township is chaired by a national NGO.

Most documents seen by the team, particularly drafts, are produced only in English and few seem to be translated. The team could find no evidence of a systematic communication strategy for relaying cluster decisions and outputs and there seemed to be an over reliance on the internet as a means of dissemination. This was cited as a particular problem by local organizations and almost all agency staff based in the Delta.

At the time of the IA RTE visit there were 11 clusters and at least 28 technical working groups in Yangon alone (see Annex #6 for more details). Apart from a general sense amongst interviewees that coordination equals meetings, inefficiencies were observed in the fragmentation of discussions and subsequent lack of coherence (livelihood and protection/vulnerability being two examples), changes of strategic direction linked to turnover of cluster leads, and over-emphasis in some of the clusters on information-sharing.

The team's analysis was that development and implementation of a coherent livelihood strategy was hampered to some extent by being spread across a number of clusters and working groups. Flash Appeals are based on clusters led by different agencies with seemingly little incentive to develop joint proposals. This situation appears to have created an artificial division between early recovery activities, agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods. Added to this rather confusing livelihood "mix" is the food cluster. INGO cooperating partners and the team's own observations suggested that this functions not so much as a cluster as a well-run food aid coordination mechanism. The IA RTE team's view was that a food cluster should be dealing with broader food security issues, which would include food aid (though this should not be interpreted as a recommendation to create yet another cluster!).

While overall performance of clusters has been relatively good, interviews with cluster leads and cluster coordinator indicated that very few had received more than an hour's orientation on the role they were expected to play, even though most were performing this function for the first time. Five months into the response, only one of the cluster leads interviewed seemed to be familiar with his role of 'provider of last resort' and none of the cluster leads had led any kind of discussion to clarify roles and responsibilities either within the clusters they were leading or with their counterparts in the field. One of the resulting gaps in all clusters was deficiencies in feedback/complaints systems. Recommendations and complaints received by clusters were usually forwarded to concerned agencies, but there were no mechanisms in place for monitoring follow-up, except in cases where agencies of the cluster leads were directly implicated.

One of the biggest challenges has been the high turnover of cluster leads. In Yangon alone, there have been at least 60 different cluster leads between the beginning of May and the end of October. Several cluster participants mentioned turnover of cluster leads as a problem, some claiming it made coordination inefficient (e.g. new cluster leads going over the same ground) and sudden changes of strategic direction depending on the skill set of a new cluster lead. As noted above, this was reported to happen less frequently with co-chaired clusters since there was only one instance when both co-chairs departed simultaneously.

Minutes of the Cluster Heads meetings reviewed by the IA RTE team and interviews with cluster heads indicated a focus on information-sharing. There are some issues which, in the opinion of the IA RTE team, may warrant a more strategic approach. One example of this is water during the dry

season, which impacts a number of clusters and working groups, notably WASH, shelter, health and livelihoods. The WASH cluster developed a dry season water strategy in early October and the health cluster has started providing support, but the team's judgment was that a coherent, cross-cutting approach could help address this issue more systematically.

Clusters were established in Bangkok during the initial weeks of the response. As many organizations deployed staff to Bangkok in anticipation of entering Myanmar, the regional center became a coordination hub 'in exile'.

Those interviewees who participated in these general coordination fora and cluster meetings all indicated that they had been useful. A Bangkok-based NGO worker likened regional clusters to "*wasps in a jar*". However, the clusters in Bangkok were not seen by Myanmar-based key informants as having a substantive role, with the notable exception of the logistics cluster which established and operated the air bridge. Otherwise, the main benefit of these clusters was perceived by participants as facilitating information flow and as a way of releasing pent-up energy of aid workers waiting to be deployed to Myanmar.

3.4.1 *Cluster Recommendations*

R.4.   OCHA and the Inter Cluster Coordinator should facilitate discussions within each cluster to clarify roles and responsibilities. Some areas that need to be addressed include:

- Cluster leads need to understand their accountability for ensuring effective cluster coordination through their counterparts in each hub in the Delta, not only in Yangon. More resources should be dedicated to supporting and training hub level coordination, including cluster leads spending more time in the field; and
- Rather than merely forwarding recommendations/complaints from the field, clusters need to improve their accountability systems so that they can monitor whether they have been acted upon and provide regular feedback to their counterparts in the field and communities.

R.5.   The HC should oversee a review and rationalization of the current cluster system, using desired outcomes at community level as the primary focus. Key areas for review include:

- DRR should be strategically integrated throughout clusters. All cluster strategies should incorporate contingency plans;
- Look for appropriate opportunities to incorporate into national systems (e.g. education); and
- Start developing a phase-out strategy for clusters based on a mapping of coordination mechanisms. It is useful to do this at this stage, since this will help to guide approaches to coordination with more immediate priorities such as livelihood and DRR.

R.6.   Discussions on livelihoods should be consolidated, possibly as a single cluster in support of the PONREPP process. Ad hoc technical working groups will still be required, but it will be important that there is a focal point accountable whose role is to ensure that livelihood recovery in the Delta is approached in a coherent fashion;

R.7.   Outreach from the clusters and the humanitarian community should be reinforced while reducing reliance on meetings as a primary coordination mechanism. The HC should designate OCHA to lead development of a communication strategy with clear feedback

mechanisms incorporated and focus groups should be used more widely with national actors and beneficiaries (gender specific when appropriate). Outreach activities could be combined with information-gathering for WWW data to help improve the reliability of data collected, increase coverage and alleviate the workload of field-based staff by reducing information demands and providing more reliable and consistent planning data. Dissemination must include wider availability of translated, hard copy documents.

3.5 *Protection*

A gap in this humanitarian response highlighted by a number of UN and INGO staff both in Myanmar and at a HQ level has been protection - understandably so, since its link to rights makes it a sensitive issue in Myanmar. When the clusters were initially established following Nargis it was agreed that UNICEF would lead a Child Protection cluster, later expanded to include women, with Save the Children agreed co-chair.

However, there were a number of protection concerns that fell outside the mandate of this group and a Vulnerability Network was established, chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator and supported by a Senior Protection Officer deployed in August through ProCap[11]. UNHCR is an occasional participant. In reality, however, resources at hub level are extremely limited and meeting minutes illustrate a distinct focus on child protection. Other issues, many which are not necessarily politically sensitive (e.g. other vulnerable groups, documentation, access to land, displacement, resettlement, etc.) are not being adequately addressed.

Given the increasing trust that has been established with authorities over the past six months it now seems possible to revisit the issue of protection activities and coordination. In this regard, discussions related to establishing a full protection cluster, or a similar mechanism, and agencies increasing protection capacity on the ground are timely and useful and should be encouraged to quickly resolve the future direction of protection activities. A culturally sensitive approach is required, but what was good enough in May is no longer sufficient.

3.5.1 *Protection Recommendation*
R.8.   The HC should revisit protection gaps and approaches should be revised accordingly. Any future recruitment of a protection adviser should prioritize previous experience in natural disaster recovery programmes.

3.6 *Information Management*

When Cyclone Nargis made landfall, the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) had only recently recruited staff. MIMU was conceived based on lessons learned during the Pakistan earthquake response in 2005, where a lack of pre-existing in-country information management capacity undermined the effectiveness of the Pakistan HIC (and the relief operation) as they struggled over several months to create standards, baseline data and products useful for humanitarian agencies.

According to regional and in-country IT staff, cyclone Nargis provided the UN Myanmar with the necessary resources to operationalize the concept paper and (although some internal debates within

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[11] Unfortunately, the request to ProCap was for a human rights expert whereas a protection specialist with experience of programming in natural disasters may have been more useful.

OCHA on how to support MIMU caused some delay) MIMU was soon producing and disseminating useful materials including maps, meeting minutes, etc.

At the time of the IA RTE visit to Myanmar, MIMU was still producing a range of products, many of which were appreciated by agency staff, and all of the clusters at Yangon level were supported by information managers. However, many international and national agencies expressed concerns that the "who-what-where" (WWW) data was of only limited value as it often did not provide sufficient detail for planning purposes and failed to differentiate between an organization with a significant, long-term presence and a one-off relief distribution. Many agency staff, particularly at hub level, felt overburdened with constant information demands while expressing doubts about the reliability of data being produced. The IA RTE team observed that a lack of credible data had both a negative impact on efficiency since agencies tended to conduct their own assessments rather than rely on WWW data, and on coverage, as the data did not adequately highlight the worst-affected areas in Bogalay Township that remained underserved.

As with the clusters more generally, agency staff at hub level have not been adequately involved in IM. Beyond the substantial investment of staff time in gathering data the IA RTE team observed little IM capacity at hub level. Information from national organizations and non-traditional actors (e.g. the private sector) appeared to be even more limited.

3.7   Planning

Humanitarian strategic planning has not been particularly strong during the Nargis response. Interviewees indicated that this was hampered both by the lack of a completed contingency plan that could have provided greater guidance on activities and roles and also the high level of uncertainty (e.g. about access) that prevailed during the initial weeks. Planning that has occurred has mostly been 'stove piped' within clusters, but not necessarily within a coherent, holistic, view of what the international community was trying to achieve in the Delta.

A contingency planning process had begun in Myanmar but was still incomplete when Nargis hit, but the process itself tangibly benefited a coordinated response, with the creation of a regional and in-country IASC as one striking example. Prior to Nargis, both the regional IASC in Bangkok and the IASC in Myanmar was viewed by INGOs as having limited utility ("more UN meetings"). But there was broad acknowledgement amongst both UN and INGO interviewees that both IASC mechanisms more than proved their value-added once an emergency response was required. The fact that the mechanism was already established and there were pre-existing relationships facilitated timely decision-making. Another example, already cited above, was the rapid appointment of cluster leads.

3.8   Capacity Building

As described above, the response to Nargis has been predominantly a local one. Civil society cannot help but be strengthened through the hands-on experience gained by literally thousands of national volunteers and staff who, in most cases, are getting their first opportunity to manage projects, develop operational plans, and (one hopes) see the immediate impact of their work. Some international organizations have prioritized working directly with civil society groups at the village level on humanitarian activities.

Much has already been done for capacity building but the IA RTE team observed many potential opportunities that would benefit local agencies (including private sector), national staff and communities, notably in operational planning, aid delivery and DRR. An interesting illustration of this potential was the Sphere training provided by Yangon-based staff from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) which was so well-received that DSW requested the training be replicated at hub level for its field staff.

With few exceptions, national staff (of both national and international organizations) interviewed showed relatively little awareness of strategic planning processes that were being discussed at Yangon level or, more importantly, what the implications were for their particular roles.

This appeared to the IA RTE team to be a reflection of the cultural context to a some extent, but this calls into question the appropriateness and long-term sustainability of agency programs if field staff who interact with communities have little understanding of agency strategies.

3.8.1 *Capacity Building Recommendations*
R.9. More international support is required for capacity building, of national staff in international organizations, and of local partners. Immediate benefits can be realized if experienced international staff spend more time in the Delta in advisory roles which would not only allow more capacity building, but help better understand capacity building needs.

3.9 Early Recovery

Early recovery planning has been integrated into overall planning through the establishment of a network, whereby each cluster is provided with a dedicated early recovery focal point. At the time of the IA RTE, the Early Recovery Strategic Framework remained in draft form and did not seem to be widely distributed or available on the MIMU website (in fact, almost all documents from the ER cluster on the website were outdated).   Most staff from national and international agencies at the hub level demonstrated little awareness of any recovery strategy beyond "seeds and tools" distribution type of activities. Broader recovery issues around food security, restoration of local markets and small-scale infrastructure were rarely mentioned.

Capacity for early recovery planning and coordination has been limited. While UNDP deserves credit for deploying a team of early recovery specialists at an early stage of the response, it was short term in nature. Interviews suggested that UNDP's attempts to build on this early mission were put on hold when one of the early recovery advisors had to be redeployed during June to fill the role of OCHA Head of Office as the post had not been filled and was an urgent priority. Since early July early recovery coordination has relied solely on one Yangon-based staff member within the Resident Coordinator's office, with no international field presence. While additional funding and posts have now been secured, recruitment processes are still ongoing.

UNDP was aided during the response by its pre-cyclone presence in the Delta and, due to donor restrictions, an atypical structure which resembles more an NGO than a UN agency with a large field presence and employing community-based approaches. From interviews and IA RTE observations it appeared that a significant amount of UNDP's field capacity was still being devoted to distributions, despite an evident need for early recovery leadership and the presence of other agencies which seemed to be better equipped to handle such activities.

3.10 Communications

Largely due to restricted access, public communications by the international community in the early days of the response was based on incomplete information. One result was that a number of international organizations rang the alarm about the threat of a massive second wave of deaths[12] without a sufficient appreciation of the significance and effectiveness of the local response. The media spotlight has long since moved onto other news stories, but another unfortunate result is that the prevailing erroneous perception outside the country continues to be that survivors were not receiving humanitarian aid although, as described above, it is now clear this was not the case.

One particular weakness of communications has been the lack of visibility of local efforts. As recommended in Aceh by the TEC studies, more prominence to local efforts in public communications would have been, and continues to be, useful. However, at this point it is not clear that sufficient media interest still exists outside of Myanmar to make such accounts newsworthy.

3.11 Partnerships

Once the IA RTE team had acquired a good understanding of the context, it was difficult to imagine how international agencies could have mounted a humanitarian response of such a scale in the absence of ASEAN and the TCG. While a handful of international organizations were already operating in the Delta within days, the sustained large-scale response that unfolded required significant changes in government policy and attitudes for which ASEAN's role, supported by the UN and other agencies, was perceived by virtually all international stakeholders as critical in bringing about this transformation .

From meeting minutes and interviews it is clear that the TCG continues to play a vital facilitation role in maintaining humanitarian space, a role appreciated by all international agencies. Since its establishment on 31 May, the TCG has emphasized this facilitation role and has minimized involvement in policy issues, an approach which appeared to be one of the keys to its success. As described above, the PONJA (and presumably the upcoming Periodic Review) not only resulted in useful assessment data, but had the effect of strengthening relationships between the government, ASEAN and international agencies.

While the TCG and PONJA process were effective at building bridges with the government, international agencies have been facing a number of challenges with building partnerships with local organizations. Minutes from a national NGO "reflections" meeting held during October note that coordination mechanisms set up by the international community are not meeting the objective of working better together. Particular obstacles to full participation cited by local agencies included the use of English as the almost the sole way of communicating, facilitation style, meeting structures, and the way agendas are established. A recommendation targeted at international agencies challenged them to explore different ways of partnering with local groups and communities so that local capacity can be supported and built without making such heavy demands on their time. This was consistent with a number of interviews of national NGO staff who referred to the relatively 'unfriendly' cluster system, along with the opinion that many national actors (particularly NGOs) have been left out of important planning processes.

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[12] See, for example, the 10 may 2008 Reuters release entitled, "*Slow Myanmar aid raises health risks for survivors*" available via http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/EVOD-7EHGQA?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=mmr.

Another "atypical" partner that played a significant role during the humanitarian response was the Myanmar business community. From interviews with private sector representatives, local agencies, communities and observations by the IA RTE team it was evident that the business community in Myanmar had spent significant amounts of their own resources in providing humanitarian assistance. Some companies started relief activities almost immediately, even before the government requested their support. Activities ranged from distributing relief items, to mobilizing their employees into relief teams, to constructing shelters, to provision of logistic support to humanitarian operations (including providing warehouse space and transport for aid donated by international organizations at no cost). Some companies have also committed to constructing cyclone shelters. As with local agencies, the role of the private sector in the response to Cyclone Nargis remains largely undocumented and invisible outside of Myanmar.

Interviewees and reports indicate that activities of local businesses were coordinated to some extent by the government, but remained mostly uncoordinated with/by the international community with some exceptions of NGOs and donors utilizing private companies for specific tasks (e.g. customs clearance, transport and logistics). In future emergencies it may be possible to utilize these partnerships more effectively.

3.12   Coordination Structures

Coordination involving international actors occurred at various levels, and included both standard and "atypical" coordination mechanisms, of which one example is the Tripartite Core Group (TCG), an ad hoc coordinating body that brings together senior levels of Myanmar government, the UN, and ASEAN to facilitate humanitarian operations in the Delta. Based on interviews of both national and international agencies along with a review of minutes, guidelines and tools, coordination has been relatively good at the central level. There was unanimous praise from international agencies regarding TCG achievements in opening humanitarian space, and similarly that Humanitarian Coordinator had fulfilled his mandate extremely effectively under challenging circumstances.

The NGO Liaison Officer position in Yangon combined with the Local Resource Center (LRC) were observed to perform a number of particularly useful functions including acting as a liaison between international and national agencies, facilitating access to information and providing outreach to national NGOs, capacity-building for local NGOs, and providing an alternative meeting space for agencies. The IA RTE itself can be seen as a successful "test" of this model since in the absence of these resources it would have very difficult to have such a substantive NGO involvement in the process. The team's assessment is that this model provided the basis for similar outreach initiatives at hub level.

The body best positioned to lead the international component of planning and prioritization is the local IASC. However, as currently constituted it more resembles a standard humanitarian briefing. While this continues to be required it should be chaired by OCHA and include national organizations. With the departure of the Humanitarian Coordinator it is an opportune time to review this mechanism and establish a truly strategic, policy setting IASC. This would require the international NGOs, through their existing forum, to elect representatives to the IASC.

A hub-level LRC, with national NGO Liaison Officers, could serve to ensure national actors are better integrated into planning and coordination exercises, assist with data collection to improve national inputs to ongoing information management, provide capacity building services, and bring to attention issues raised by national actors working outside the traditional coordination structures.

Findings on cluster coordination are detailed in Section 16.8.

3.12.1 Coordination Recommendations

R.10. As is increasingly common practice in other countries, the Humanitarian Coordinator should oversee the formation of a strategic, policy setting local IASC which includes the UN members of the global IASC, the IFRC and ICRC (as an observers) and a small number of elected NGO representatives;

R.11. To better support recovery at community level, the IASC should examine the feasibility of assigning a lead agency for those village tracts which have been most severely impacted, to improve coverage and aid effectiveness. Lead agencies could be UN agencies, INGOs or national organizations and possess sufficient capacity to fulfill a lead role and plan to remain for two to three years;

R.12. OCHA should guide the adjustment and adaptation of coordination systems that are better suited to local actors. This would include raising awareness amongst international agencies about alternative coordination mechanisms commonly employed within Myanmar. OCHA should also support the development of outreach systems that are designed not only to improve communication and coordination with local agencies and communities, but also help to improve the reliability and consistency of data collection; and

R13. Local Resource Centers, based on the model in Yangon, should be established at the hub level, staffed with national NGO Liaison Officers, to provide outreach, improve access to information, strengthen hub-level coordination through working with their UN and ASEAN counterparts. National NGO Liaison Officers should be able to easily combine their outreach activities with information collection to help improve the reliability of assessment and WWW data.

3.13 Disaster Risk Reduction

While Cyclone Nargis was the worst disaster to have struck Myanmar in living memory, the Ayeyarwady division in the Delta is not actually the area at greatest risk. As can be observed from risk maps attached as an annex to this report, the area of Myanmar most vulnerable to cyclones is Rakhine State. There is also a significant seismic risk in different parts of the country and Myanmar has high levels of disaster vulnerability.

Experience elsewhere in the region has repeatedly demonstrated that preparedness and disaster risk reduction can significantly reduce vulnerabilities. As noted in a recent ISDR press release "*Many cyclone-prone countries, such as … Bangladesh, have implemented efficient early warning systems that have reduced the death toll caused by cyclones. When there are comprehensive early warning systems in place, starting from meteorological technology all the way through to preparedness and contingency plans, people can be effectively warned and have time to evacuate to safer places. Bangladesh has a 48-hour early warning system in place that allows people to evacuate to safe cyclone shelters hours before any cyclone makes landfall. This has drastically reduced their death tolls from cyclones - from 300,000 deaths from Cyclone Bhola in 1970, to 3,000 last November during Cyclone Sidr.*"[13]

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[13] UN/ISDR 2008/05 Press Release 6 May 2008

Communities know that Bangladesh is frequently hit by cyclones and a question posed by the IA RTE team during FGD was to think of three questions they would ask someone from that country if they joined the discussion. Although posed in slightly different ways, the three questions were otherwise identical in all seventeen FGD: 1) *How should I prepare for a cyclone*? 2) *What do I do during a cyclone*? 3) *What do I do afterwards to recover*? While this eagerness to learn should be viewed positively, it was clear that Cyclone Nargis has made survivors acutely aware of their own vulnerability. Agencies implementing psychosocial activities report that, whereas the most frequent problem they were dealing with until July was shock, this has now evolved into serious fear about the prospect of another cyclone. Psychosocial support thus needs to be added to dry season water as the two remaining priority relief needs for this particular response.

However, the humanitarian imperative does not finish there. DDR is an area for which the international community needs to hold itself accountable for ensuring that the relevant information, lessons, and appropriate technical expertise is made available in Myanmar. This does not necessarily imply funding for large-scale infrastructure projects, but it does mean that technical support, particularly for community-based preparedness, planning, and risk-reduction activities should be given priority and resources made available. It was encouraging to observe that various processes have already been set in motion. UNICEF has increased the unit cost in its school construction program to build cyclone-resistant schools and the UN is in the process of organizing cross-visits for senior government officials. Some INGOs and the Red Cross are looking at promoting similar cross-learning in communities and with national NGOs.

The PONREPP is correctly focusing on DRR and it is anticipated that a strategy appropriate to the Myanmar context will emerge from that process, which in turn can feed into a national strategy.

3.13.1 DRR Recommendations
R.14.   The international community should support the development of a national DRR strategy for Myanmar, facilitating learning and technical expertise as appropriate. This strategy should have a robust community level component and immediate priority given to community consultations around DRR, not only to improve planning, but to help alleviate widespread psychosocial stress. Regional actors, including neighbouring governments, ASEAN, the ADPC, should be expected to continue to play an important role; and

R.15.   The Humanitarian Coordinator should take appropriate steps to ensure that all recovery activities incorporate appropriate DRR components at a community level. In practice this will range from encouraging mangrove regeneration to protect against sea surge, to ensuring adequate consultations are taking place in communities.

3.14   Livelihoods

Based on focus group discussions it is clear that cyclone victims appreciate the humanitarian assistance that has been provided. However when questioned about their future instead of focusing on immediate needs, the most frequent reply by far from both men and women, was "*we have nothing to do*". The Delta is a rich agricultural and fishing area with many villagers describing themselves as well off before Cyclone Nargis. With close to 100% asset depletion in the most affected areas, the priority requirement is livelihood support.

Many local organizations, particularly those formed spontaneously for the cyclone response, and private sector companies, have realized that providing relief assistance by itself is not enough. They are now looking at ways to move past relief and engage in longer-term recovery activities.

As described in the Clusters section, planning and implementation of livelihood related activities was seen to be hampered by the fragmented nature of livelihood coordination in different clusters and working groups The Periodic Review and PONREPP processes appear to offer the prospect of a more coherent approach to livelihoods.

3.14.1 *Livelihoods Recommendations*
R.16. Recovery of livelihoods, along with DRR, should be a top priority over the coming months and the HC should oversee a process of consolidation, reprioritization and strengthening of supporting monitoring and accountability systems as follows:

- Consolidate the current fragmented planning and discussions taking place in various clusters and working groups. A suitable starting point may be to define the desired outcomes of the PONREPP from a community perspective as a point of reference and work backwards to help decide which groups should continue and which should be phased out;
- Reprioritize use of capacities. For example, UNDP should phase-out their relief distributions as soon as possible and focus their efforts on coordinating DRR and early recovery efforts. NGOs who are continuing relief food and NFI distributions should ensure that they are not monopolizing resources that would be better utilized promoting livelihood recovery and DRR; and
- Support these efforts with consultations, outcome-oriented monitoring and accountability systems, and a robust two-way communication strategy that is targeted at communities and local actors in the Delta.

4   Conclusions

Despite initial fears during the beginning of May of an extended humanitarian crisis within the international community, much has been accomplished in responding to Cyclone Nargis by both national and international agencies when measuring in terms of humanitarian indicators such as mortality and morbidity rates and coverage of assistance. As most relief activities are phasing down, this IA RTE has identified the two key remaining relief needs as water during the dry season and psychosocial support for communities through improving DRR and preparedness accompanied by more systematic consultations. The current focus on transitioning to recovery activities needs to have a particular focus on restoration of livelihoods while significantly strengthening consultation with and accountability to communities.

As the response has largely being implemented by national staff or through national partners and capacity building efforts are needed, particularly at the township level. National staff from both international and national agencies have by and large demonstrated an impressive eagerness and ability to learn and international agencies thus need to ensure that staff entrusted with capacity building have the necessary skill sets to support the recovery process.

Cyclone Nargis left a human tragedy in its wake, but this has been transformed into renewed hope as survivors recover, thanks in no small part to a huge humanitarian effort by their compatriots, along with significant support from international actors. A number of valuable lessons have been learned

about the value of involving regional actors in humanitarian operations and how the various pillars of the humanitarian reform can function effectively.

Annex 1: Methodology

IA RTE Approach

In line with the TOR, the approach adopted for this IA RTE was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards and ALNAP quality pro forma, albeit with certain limitations since these were developed for more "traditional" evaluations. Certain aspects of IA RTEs are worth highlighting, including:

- Although RTEs are potentially most effective at the early stages of a response when they can have the greatest influence on the humanitarian response, the IA RTE team approached this exercise on the assumption that an IA RTE can also be effective at times of programme transition. While it was seen to be necessary for the team to develop a good understanding of emergency phase of the response, the primary utilization focus was on the "here and now" - i.e. the current status of the recovery and rehabilitation phase. The IA RTE team began its work five months after cyclone Nargis made landfall in Myanmar and the focus of this IA RTE was to help guide the international humanitarian community in making appropriate adjustments in their activities related to cyclone Nargis over the succeeding months to improve overall quality and accountability, rather than only aiming to capture learning for use in future responses.

- Evaluations typically look a specific project or program. The IA RTE is an interagency exercise and, as with most other joint evaluations, is best suited to capturing learning around how humanitarian actors have been coordinating/collaborating together and assessing the collective outcomes of their activities. While references may be made to individual agencies in the report either for illustrative purposes or because the team felt that there were particular impacts on the broader response, the IA RTE is intended to support, rather than replace evaluations and reviews commissioned by individual agencies, clusters, etc. to assess their individual operational performances.

To illustrate the approach described in the first point above taking examples from the clusters, much of the team's attention was occupied by the structure and functioning of coordination mechanisms relating to early recovery and livelihoods since this was the primary focus of agencies and communities at the time that the IA RTE took place. In contrast, the reader will find much less space devoted to the logistics cluster, which phased out in August 2008 due to reduced demand and improved accessibility to the Delta. By the time the IA RTE team arrived in Myanmar in October, logistics was no longer a high priority and any attempt to conduct a retrospective analysis would have been very time-consuming given that most of the key actors had already left Myanmar.

In line with guidance from the TOR and the in-country IA RTE Advisory Group, this study focused on the international humanitarian community (UN agencies and international NGOs) with a caveat that, given the dominant role played by national and regional actors in the aftermath of cyclone Nargis, it would present a misleading picture if the results were not framed within the overall response.

Evaluative Framework

There is currently no agreed evaluative framework for IASC-mandated IA RTEs and, as a result, IA RTEs in Mozambique and Pakistan each employed different approaches. Related to this, the Mozambique RTE has already drawn attention to the lack of benchmarks for clusters which made it more challenging to attempt to measure performance. Nevertheless, a common point of reference

for both these IA RTEs has been the Humanitarian Reform, and this IA RTE also employed an evaluative framework based on the 18 questions in the TOR grouped using three humanitarian reform themes, namely:

Accountability: A major focus of the IA RTE was to assess the effectiveness and outcome to date of the humanitarian response, identifying its success rate in delivering against stated objectives and indicators, as well as how the obstacles unique to this response were addressed. As required by the TOR, particular emphasis was placed on eliciting beneficiary views on the overall response, their level of engagement, and the relevance of the assistance provided vis-à-vis needs as perceived and/or articulated by the recipient populations.

Predictability: How the international community has been at strategic planning in this humanitarian context – both within and external to – the cluster system, for initial response and early recovery programming provided another focus of this IA RTE, as well as the efforts undertaken to help build national capacities to harness response to the humanitarian crisis. However, the TOR also called for a review of how local organizations were involved in the response.

Coordination & Partnership: The IA RTE looked at the coordination mechanisms employed during this response at the field, country and regional level. In addition to the overall operational effectiveness of the cluster approach (including the role of the Global Clusters) in facilitating and supporting the joint humanitarian response at country level, and on allowing appropriate delivery of humanitarian assistance. Emphasis was also placed on providing a vision of those coordination structures employed at the field level in lieu and/or in addition to the cluster mechanism.

To guide their analysis, the team used a matrix, disaggregated by source (agency, community, location, functional role, etc.), where specific information and evidence were either entered within one of the 18 question categories or in additional columns that were added as necessary (DRR being one example). The team also periodically reviewed the need for additional evidence against standard evaluation criteria specified by the TOR.

Data Gathering

The IA RTE used a mixed method approach of key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGD), document research, observation (coordination meetings and field observations), and workshops/debriefings once fieldwork had been completed to validate initial findings and recommendations. Additional KII and FGD during the final week the team in Myanmar were more oriented towards validating findings through triangulation using different sources and filling gaps in data.

1. *Orientation*: Preliminary research and orientation briefings in New York, Geneva and Bangkok,

2. *Key Informant Interviews:* The RTE team spent three weeks in Myanmar, interviewing over 120 key informants from UN agencies, government of Myanmar, INGOs, local NGOs, CBOs, private sector, and donor representatives. Before beginning the interviews, the objectives and approach of the IA RTE were explained. Interviews were conducted in accordance with "Chatham House" principles where details of interviews were not shared outside the team and no quotations or attributions appear in the report without the express written permission of the interviewee. Prior to the field visit to Bogalay Township, the team used the following standard line of questioning for KII, using probing questions to obtain additional detail:

a. Length and nature of experience of the interviewee in Myanmar, along with a description of their own role in the humanitarian response to cyclone Nargis.
b. Identification of the key events or milestones relevant to the humanitarian response and a brief explanation of how they came about and what impact they had.
c. Things that should have been done differently.
d. Description and examples of beneficiary accountability systems that are in use or being planned by the agency.
e. Coordination mechanisms they have been involved with, an assessment (including a ranking) of their usefulness and causal factors, recommendations for improvement.
f. How the interviewee felt how this IA RTE could be most useful in moving forward.
g. Any important questions not asked.

3. *Observation:* Members of the team participated in nine cluster meetings and spent 8 days traveling through different parts of Bogalay Township where they had an opportunity to observe the extent of the impact of the cyclone and the state of recovery of affected communities.

4. *Focus Group Discussions:* A total of 17 focus group discussions were held in 10 villages in Bogalay Township (see itinerary map in annex). The majority of these focus groups were separated according to gender, except in two communities where FGD were held with separate groups/committees that had been set up at different times by UNDP and CARE to participate in microfinance and distribution activities respectively. The team also held discussions with village authorities and religious leaders. Given the time constraints, the team had the option for the field visits of either making relatively short visits to each of the affected townships, or spending over a week visiting one township. Acting on the advice of the in-country Advisory Group for the IA RTE, the team opted to spend eight days in one of the townships (Bogalay) to better understand how communities in less- and more-affected areas had been impacted by the cyclone and the status of their recovery. Following the field visit, two validation workshops of initial findings were held in Yangon with NGOs, one for international NGOs in English and a second one for national NGOs in Myanmar language. These workshops, along with additional KII with agency staff and document research helped in understanding the similarities and differences between Bogalay and other affected townships in the Delta.

Usually in such time-limited activities, unless preparatory discussions have taken place with communities (preferably someone with whom there is a pre-existing trust relationship) evaluation teams often need to spend considerable time explaining the difference between a needs assessment (easily the most frequent reason for a visit by foreigners) and an evaluation – along with the disheartening news that the evaluation team has nothing to offer in terms of assistance. In the Myanmar context, however, the IA RTE's team's work was aided considerably by the open and constructive nature of the discussions with communities.

During all 17 FGD with communities, without exception, it was enough to explain the objectives and approach of the IA RTE and clarify that the team could offer nothing in the way of assistance. Moreover, even though this seemed to be the first time that communities visited by the IA RTE team had been split into male and female focus groups, but they willingly divided into groups with the desired outcome, with both men and women entering directly into frank and informative conversations.

Due to time constraints, the IA RTE team was presented with the option of spending short periods in each of the affected townships, or allocating time to look more in-depth within a single township.

The advice from the in-country Advisory Group was to choose the latter option, given the markedly different impacts and corresponding needs in different parts of each township. The team therefore spent some eight days visiting different parts of Bogalay township (see map of the team's itinerary in Annex #3). With the benefit of hindsight, this proved to be the correct choice since the degree of devastation and nature of needs did indeed vary significantly in different zones, something which was not apparent at the "hub". During subsequent workshops, document review and KIIs, the IA RTE team was later able to validate that most of the main findings were applicable to other affected townships.

Most of the FGD (14 out of 17) were divided by gender, although in two villages separate FGD were held with committees that had been set up by CARE and UNDP in support of their respective project activities. One of the gender-based FGD was in Kyain Chaung, where a "model village" had been constructed by a private company and housing allocated on a needs basis. All the women in this particular FGD were widows. Numbers in each FGD ranged from four to approximately 35, but mostly consisted of 6 – 12 individuals. While the team contacted village and military authorities upon their arrival in each village, authorities did not participate or observe the FGD.

Religious leaders (Head Monks) either observed or participated in FGD in three villages. The team saw no indication that their presence limited discussions and indeed, as they had all played significant roles during the initial response, their contributions were usually quite relevant. The introductory portion of the FGD included acquiring an understanding of what "sub-groups" were represented within each focus group (e.g. which members of the group were farmers, fishermen, etc.). A standard line of questioning was used in FGDs, using probing questions where appropriate and taking care to avoid compromising the dignity of community members, especially in the most-affected areas where many had lost close relatives and friends.

- Description of personal experiences before, during and after cyclone Nargis struck.
- Damage loss assessment in the community (material and human).
- Overall impact of the cyclone on livelihoods, family life, etc.
- Description of assistance received – when first received, quantities, frequency, from which agency(ies), assessment/distribution methodologies, involvement in planning/implementing/monitoring distributions, feedback/complaints systems, usefulness of assistance.
- Ranking of priority needs looking ahead over the next few months.
- What would happen in the event of another cyclone?
- Since other communities, for example in Bangladesh, are frequently hit by severe cyclones, what would be three questions you would ask them if they were here with us in the room?
- Any other issues of importance that didn't emerge during the discussion.

Following the field visit, two workshops were held in Yangon – one for international NGOs and a separate workshop for national NGOs (in Myanmar language) – to validate initial findings and fill key information gaps. Separate debriefing/validation sessions were then held for the Cluster Heads (focusing on cluster-related issues), the UN Country Team and the IASC in Yangon. These were followed by debriefings for the regional IASC in Bangkok, in Geneva and New York for OCHA staff and for the IASC.

Apart from ensuring a broad coverage of stakeholders (including "non-traditional" actors), triangulation was primarily done through development and testing of hypotheses after the return of the IA RTE team from the field visit to Bogalay. Much of the final week in-country was used by the

team to test these hypotheses through a combination of document research, KIIs, workshops with NGOs and debriefings for the UN Country Team. Subsequent triangulation/validation was done through means of additional document research and feedback on an initial draft report.

Constraints and Limitations

One aspect the IA RTE team was asked to investigate was the impact of visa and other restrictions on movements of international staff, and it was anticipated that some mention of this would appear in this section as a constraint on the IA RTE team's movements. In the event, however, this was not really a constraint. The two international members of the IA RTE team received their visas and travel permits within a matter of days and, once in Bogalay Township, the IA RTE team was afforded the freedom to choose their own itinerary, and speak with communities without the presence of authorities.

International agency staff working in the delta confirmed that the IA RTE team's experience in the Delta was fairly typical, demonstrating how humanitarian space has opened up. This appears only to apply to the delta region since agency staff confirmed that pre-Nargis restrictions on movements remain in place for other parts of Myanmar. Indeed, some international staff who had not visited the Delta since the TCG had been established initially expressed disbelief at what the IA RTE team had been able to do.

While the work of the IA RTE team was facilitated by the lack of restrictions on movement, the IA RTE was subject to a number of constraints and limitations, including:

- Time constraints – almost by definition, IA RTEs need to balance rapid feedback with a need for sufficient time to understand and analyze a complex context. As mentioned above, one such "trade-off" in achieving such a balance was that the team only visited one of the affected townships. In any event, the IA RTE team was able to check on similarities and differences with the other affected townships during the two validation workshops with INGOs and national NGOs.

- Only one of the four team members had substantial prior evaluation experience. Although this created some challenges, it was felt that the diversity of skills and experience in the team (management of humanitarian operations, health, education, conflict resolution, evaluation, private sector, etc.) helped to ensure that key issues were effectively captured, perhaps most notably from "non-traditional" actors such as the private sector.

- The IA RTE is based upon the response in Myanmar and is mainly targeted at UN agency and INGO staff in the country. While there are almost certainly some "transferable" lessons relevant to the global level humanitarian reform process, the results are intended to be useful first and foremost for international humanitarian agency staff in Myanmar.

- This IA RTE targeted international actors and attempted to frame their contribution within an overall response. However, because the national response to cyclone Nargis was relatively substantial, this is difficult to gauge with any degree of accuracy given the scope and design of this IA RTE.

- Apart from time constraints mentioned above, there were two other obstacles to document research. Firstly, although in most cases staff from international agencies provided internal documents requested by the IA RTE team to enhance the evidence base, there were some

instances where staff felt that they lacked the necessary authority to share documents. Secondly, although the IA RTE team left Myanmar with an extensive selection of documents, the team had anticipated being able to draw on the online library[14] to fill any gaps. Unfortunately, the website suffered a "catastrophic crash" just before the team left Myanmar and was only restored some two weeks later. This meant that the time originally allocated to additional data mining was somewhat compressed, although the team was able to obtain many key documents from other sources.

IA RTE Team Composition

The IA RTE Team consisted of four consultants, two male internationals, one male national, and one female national consultant.

Robert Turner, Team leader for this IA RTE, has over a decade of experience in humanitarian operations, planning and coordination, most of it in emergency and immediate post-emergency settings. Working for the International Rescue Committee in Burundi, Kosovo and Macedonia, Mr. Turner designed and managed multi-sectoral programmes, including in shelter, water and sanitation, community development, health and camp management. Mr. Turner also has significant experience with the United Nations, specifically the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and most recently the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In this capacity, he has been involved in planning and coordinating large-scale humanitarian and recovery operations, including in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Rwanda, as well as short-term missions in several other countries, including the tsunami response in Aceh. In Sudan, his latest field posting, Mr. Turner was responsible for planning and coordinating operations related to the return and reintegration of some four million internally displaced. He is currently an independent consultant based in Washington, D.C.

Jock M. Baker, Senior Evaluator for the IA RTE, took a leave of absence from his current function as CARE International's Programme Quality & Accountability Coordinator. Mr. Baker is a member of the IA RTE Global Reference Group and has led or participated in RTEs for CARE in Chad, Darfur and Iraq. Other external assignments undertaken since Mr. Baker joined CARE in 2001 include participation in an OECD/DAC Peer Review of WFP's evaluation function, editor and contributing author for the 2004 edition of the Sphere Handbook and Asian Development Bank consultancies in Sri Lanka. Prior to joining CARE, Mr. Baker worked for two years as an independent consultant on humanitarian and post-conflict issues following a career spanning over fifteen years with the United Nations including assignments UNHCR, WFP, OCHA and UNDP. During his time with the UN, Mr. Baker spent 6 years in sub-Saharan Africa and 8 years in the Asia/Pacific region (including a review of UNHCR Myanmar's returnee program). Mr. Baker holds a BSc in Biological Sciences from the University of Edinburgh and an MSc in Economics from the London School of Economics & Political Science.

Dr. Zaw Myo Oo, national consultant (male), trained a medical doctor and then business studies in Thailand. He is currently a private businessman, and does periodic short-term assignments, including with UNICEF in Myanmar. Both he and his family members were amongst the large numbers of national first-responders following cyclone Nargis.

Naing Soe Aye, national consultant (female), took time out from pursuing her PhD at the University of the Philippines where her graduate studies focus on conflict resolution. Prior to commencing studies overseas, she trained and worked in the education field in different areas of Myanmar

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[14] http://myanmar.humanitarianinfo.org/Pages/home.aspx

Annex 2:   Interview list

Date	Name	M/F	Org	Title	Org Type	Location
24-Sep	Rashid Khalikov	M	OCHA	Director, OCHA New York	UN	New York
24-Sep	Ivan Lupis	M	OCHA	Desk Officer	UN	New York
24-Sep	Ben Negus	M	OCHA	Consultant	UN	New York
25-Sep	David Kaatrud	M	OCHA	Director, Coordination and Response Division	UN	New York
26-Sep	Andrei Kazakov	M	UNHCR	Emerg TL (Yangon- 1st month)	UN	Geneva
26-Sep	Pia Paguio	F	UNHCR	Emerg TL (Yangon: months 2-3)	UN	Geneva
1-Oct	Sebastian Rhodes Stampa	M	OCHA	Civil Military Affairs Officer	UN	Bangkok
3-Oct	Markus Werne	M	OCHA	Deputy Regional Director	UN	Bangkok
1-Oct	Gwi-Yeop Son	F	UNDP	Resident Coordinator	UN	Bangkok
1-Oct	Barbara Orlandini	F	UNDP		UN	Bangkok
2-Oct	Greg Duly	M	SC-UK	Regional Director	NGO	Bangkok
2-Oct	Nescha Teckle	F	UNDP	Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery Team	UN	Bangkok
2-Oct	Richard Horsey	M	OCHA	Senior Advisor	UN	Bangkok
3-Oct	Guiseppe de Vincentis	M	UNHCR	Deputy Regional Representative	UN	Bangkok
3-Oct	Kyoko Yonezu	F	UNHCR	Senior Programme Officer	UN	Bangkok
3-Oct	Craig Williams	M	OCHA	Information Management Officer	UN	Bangkok
5-Oct	Daniel Baker	M	UNFPA	Humanitarian Coordinator, *a.i.*	UN	Yangon
5-Oct	Chris Kaye	M	WFP	Country Director	UN	Yangon
6-Oct	Sarah Gordon-Gibson	F	WFP	Deputy Country Director	UN	Yangon
6-Oct	Thierry Delbreuve	M	OCHA	Head of Office	UN	Yangon
6-Oct	Representative	M	Private Sector	Chairman	Prv	Yangon
6-Oct	Representative	M	Private Sector	Director Relief Operations	Prv	Yangon
6-Oct	Representative	M	Private Sector	Project Director	Prv	Yangon
6-Oct	Food Cluster meeting					Yangon
6-Oct	UN Country Team					Yangon
7-Oct	Health Cluster					Yangon
7-Oct	Paul Sender	M	Merlin	Country Director	NGO	Yangon
7-Oct	Edwin Salvador	M	WHO	Health Cluster Coordinator	UN	Yangon
7-Oct	Panna Erasumus	F	Merlin	Consultant	NGO	Yangon
7-Oct	Advisory Group meeting					Yangon
7-Oct	Kerren Hedlund	F	ICVA	NGO Liaison Officer	NGO	Yangon
7-Oct	Asis Das	M	MSF-H	Medical Coordinator	NGO	Yangon
8-Oct	U Myint	M	none	Retired Economist	Indiv	Yangon
8-Oct	Lianne Kuppens	F	OCHA	Cluster Coordinator	UN	Yangon
8-Oct	Katya Meineke	F	none	Researcher	Indiv	Yangon
8-Oct	Liz Pender	F	UNFPA	Gender Advisor	UN	Yangon
8-Oct	Sanaka Samarasinha	M	UNDP	Deputy Resident Representative	UN	Yangon
8-Oct	IASC meeting					Yangon

8-Oct	Julie Belanger	F	RC/HC office	Response Coordination Officer	UN	Yangon
9-Oct	Cluster Leads meeting					Yangon
9-Oct	Ingeborg Moa	F	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	UN	Yangon
9-Oct	Dan Collison	M	SC-UK	Emergency Programme Director	NGO	Yangon
9-Oct	Guy Cave	M	SC-UK	Director of Programmes	NGO	Yangon
9-Oct	Information Management Meeting					Yangon
9-Oct	Rene Suter (FG & ind)	M	FAO	Agriculture Cluster Lead	UN	Yangon
9-Oct	Prasad Sevekari (FG)	M	UNICEF	WASH Cluster Lead	UN	Yangon
9-Oct	Aye Thwin (FG)	M	UNICEF	Nutrition Cluster Lead	UN	Yangon
9-Oct	Hannah Thompson (FG)	F	SC-UK	PCW Cluster Co-Lead	NGO	Yangon
9-Oct	William Affif (FG)	M	WFP	Food Cluster Lead	UN	Yangon
9-Oct	Shirley Long (FG)	F	SC-UK	Education Cluster Co-Lead	NGO	Yangon
9-Oct	IA Accountability Network	M& F			NGO	Yangon
9-Oct	Prof Dr Tha Hla Shwe	M	MRCS	President	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	Dr. Hla Pe	M	MRCS	Hon Secretary	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	Dr. Tun Myint	M	MRCS	EC (OM)	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	Col Khin Maung Hla (Ret)	M	MRCS	Executive Director	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	U Maung Maung Khin	M	MRCS	Head of Disaster Mgmt Division	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	Bridget Gardner	F	IFRC	Head of Delegation	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	Elisabeth Hughes	F	IFRC	Operations Manager	RC	Yangon
9-Oct	Shihab Uddin	M	Action Aid	Program Coordinator	NGO	Yangon
9-Oct	Caroline Hotham	F	OXFAM	Cyclone Response Program Mgr	GNO	Yangon
10-Oct	Adelina Kamal	F	ASEAN	Head of Office	Regional	Yangon
10-Oct	Kyaw Thu	M	GOM	Deputy Foreign Minister	Govt	Yangon
10-Oct	Christophe Reltien (FG)	M	ECHO	Head of Office	Donor	Yangon
10-Oct	Stacey Ballou (FG)	F	OFDA		Donor	Yangon
10-Oct	Matthew Maguire (FG)	M	DFID	Cyclone Recovery Coordinator	Donor	Yangon
10-Oct	Silvia Facchinello	F	EC	Programme Officer for Myanmar	Donor	Yangon
10-Oct	Marianne Jago (FG)	F	AUSAID	Humanitarian Assistance Officer	Donor	Yangon
10-Oct	Elizabeth Mariscos	F	MIMU	Information Management Officer	UN	Yangon
10-Oct	Antonio Massella	M	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	UN	Yangon
10-Oct	Agriculture & Livelihoods Cluster meeting					Bogele
10-Oct	General Coordination Meeting					Bogele
10-Oct	Maung Sein	M	NCV	Founder & Head	LNGO	Bogele
10-Oct	Bryan Berenguer	M	GAA	Program Manager	INGO	Bogele
10-Oct	Tenzin Thinley	M	UNDP	Early Recovery Manager (International)	UN	Bogele
10-Oct	U Ye Myint Tein	M	UNDP	Early Recovery Manager (National)	UN	Bogele

10-Oct	Staff	M&F	ACF	Various	NGO	Bogele
10-Oct	Staff	M&F	Solidarites	Various	NGO	Bogele
17-Oct	Staff	M&F	MSF Suisse	Various	NGO	Bogalay
10-Oct	Petra Weissova	F	Green Care	Project Coordinator	NGO	Yangon-based
11-Oct	Thida Aung	F	World Vision	WASH Coordinator	NGO	Bogele
12-Oct	U Khin Maung Than	M	CDA	Program Manager	LNGO	Kandon Kani
13-Oct	Dr. Aye Naing	M	MOH	Station Medical Officer	Govt	Kandon Kani
13-Oct	Ko Kyaw Kyaw Oo	M	NCV	Team Leader	LNGO	Kandon Kani
13-Oct	Ko Soe Win Naing	M	NCV	Team Member	LNGO	Kandon Kani
13-Oct	Ma Yu Yu Aung	F	NCV	Team Member	LNGO	Kandon Kani
13-Oct	Dr. Aye Chan Maung	M	MSF Suisse	Medical Doctor	NGO	Thayaw Chaung
13-Oct	Hla Myat Mon	M	MSF Suisse	Nurse	NGO	Thayaw Chaung
13-Oct	Aung Khine	F	MSF Suisse	Counsellor	NGO	Thayaw Chaung
14-Oct	U Htun Aung Khaing	M	Govt	Village Chairman	Govt	Kyain Chaung Gwi
14-Oct	Nathalie Salles	F	MSF Suisse	Team Leader	NGO	Padegaw
14-Oct	Eric Dieudonne	M	MSF Suisse	Logisitics Officer	NGO	Padegaw
15-Oct	Desma Maine	F	MSF Suisse	Team Leader	NGO	Set San
15-Oct	Staff	M&F	CARE	Various	NGO	Set San
16-Oct	Win Myint	F	IOM	Field Coordinator	IO	Bogalay
16-Oct	Wai Wai New	F	Pact Myanmar	Team Leader	LNGO	Bogalay
17-Oct	Haymanot Assefa	M	WFP	Head of Sub Office	UN	Bogalay
17-Oct	Ti Wai Khaung	M	WFP	Programme Assistant	UN	Bogalay
17-Oct	Moe Swe	M	WFP	M&E Assistant	UN	Bogalay
17-Oct	Kyaw Tint Maung	M	Loka Ahlinn	Field Manager	LNGO	Bogalay
17-Oct	Su Mon Htay	F	UNHCR	Field Assistant	UN	Bogalay
17-Oct	Aye Naing	M	UNHCR	Field Assistant	UN	Bogalay
17-Oct	Frederic Batt	M	Solidarites	Logistician	NGO	Bogele
17-Oct	Josephine Masikini	F	MSF	Health Coordinator	NGO	Bogalay
17-Oct	Jerod Delved	M	ACF	Food Aid Coordinator	NGO	Bogalay
17-Oct	Tun Tun Naing	M	Paungku	Facilitator	LNGO	Bogalay
17-Oct	Inter-Cluster meeting					Bogalay
20-Oct	Nay Win Maung	M	Myanmar Egress	Sectretary-General	LNGO	Yangon
20-Oct	David Evans	M	Habitat	Acting Head of Agency	UN	Yangon
20-Oct	Mariko Sato	F	Habitat	Coordinator	UN	Yangon
20-Oct	Advisory Group meeting					Yangon
20-Oct	Marc Rapoport	M	UNHCR	Senior Repatriation Officer	UN	Yangon
21-Oct	INGO Validation Workshop					Yangon

Date	Name	Sex	Organization	Title	Category	Location
21-Oct	LNGO Validation Workshop					Yangon
21-Oct	Robert Chua	M	Singapore Embassy	Ambassador	Donor	Yangon
21-Oct	Vanessa Chan	F	Singapore Embassy	Deputy Chief of Mission	Donor	Yangon
21-Oct	Bishow Parajuli	M	UNDP	Resident Coordinator	UN	Yangon
21-Oct	Monique Fienberg	F	UNDP	Early Recovery Advisor	UN	Yangon
22-Oct	Tore Rose	M	UNDP	PONREPP	UN	Yangon
22-Oct	Jens Nyland	M	UNDP	PONREPP	UN	Yangon
22-Oct	Camila Vega	F	UNDP	PONREPP	UN	Yangon
22-Oct	Teis Chrisensen	M	IOM	Project Coordinator	IO	Yangon
22-Oct	Susanne Pedersen	F	HC Office	Senior Protection Officer	UN	Yangon
23-Oct	Cluster Leads Debrief					Yangon
23-Oct	UNCT Debrief					Yangon
23-Oct	Donors Debrief					Yangon
23-Oct	IASC Debrief					Yangon
24-Oct	Regional IASC Debrief					Bangkok
24-Oct	Tony Craig	M	WFP	Regional Emergency Advisor	UN	Bangkok
24-Oct	Eliane Provo Kluit	F	OCHA	Regional Disaster Response Advisor	UN	Bangkok
29-Oct	Andrew Kirkwood	M	SC-UK	Country Director	NGO	Yangon
2-Nov	Arjun Katoch	M	OCHA	Chief, FCSS	UN	Geneva
3-Nov	Kasidis Rochanakor	M	OCHA	Director, OCHA Geneva	UN	Geneva

Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Introduction

In recent years, efforts have been increasingly directed towards improving the humanitarian response through learning and accountability. The Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IA RTE) – endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group in March 2007 as a one year pilot, and extended for an additional year until the beginning of 2009 – has proven one important tool through which such analysis may be conducted.

In accordance with the IASC mandate, an IA RTE on the response to Cyclone Nargis was proposed and has received the consent and support of the UN Country Team and humanitarian community in Myanmar. A preparatory mission was subsequently deployed to engage actors in Yangon and Bangkok in discussions to inform the development of this Terms of Reference (ToR).

Background

Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2 and 3 May 2008, making landfall in the Ayeyarwady Division and passing into Yangon Division before hitting the former capital, Yangon. With a wind speed of up to 200 km/h the damage was the most severe in the Delta region, where the effects of the extreme winds were compounded by a sizable storm surge. Some 2.4 million people are believed to have been affected by the cyclone, of a total 4.7 million people living in the affected Townships. Official figures put the number dead or missing at more than 130,000.[15] Cyclone Nargis was the worst natural disaster in the history of Myanmar, and possibly the most devastating cyclone to hit Asia since the cyclone that struck Bangladesh in 1991.[16]

International relief efforts began just after the storm hit. The people of Myanmar and the Myanmar Red Cross Society immediately responded with assistance. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) deployed five assessment teams[17], as did the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), with the support of the ICRC[18], while the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Yangon assessed damage in the city. A number of NGOs, including Care, Save the Children and Merlin, had existing operations in the country and utilized their positioning to rapidly scale up and initiate provision of humanitarian assistance in the most affected areas, as well as Yangon. Additionally, the cluster coordination mechanism was activated within a week.

A UN-NGO Flash Appeal for US $187 million was issued for Myanmar on 9 May, six days after the cyclone, and was 96% funded vis-à-vis that original target before the 10 July revision. The latter document draws upon information collected through needs assessments and operations to address the complex mix of humanitarian and early recovery needs in a year-long response plan that appeals

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[15] *OCHA Situation Report No. 33*, 19 June 2008
[16] *Myanmar Revised Appeal: Cyclone Nargis Response Plan 2008 Consolidated Appeal*, 10 July 2008. p. 1.
[17] Yangon, Pathien and Bago.
[18] Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Bago East, Bago West, Mon and Kayin.

for $481.8 million. While nearly 50% has been funded, few donors targeted early recovery projects.[19]

On 25 May, A Tripartite Core Group (TCG), comprised of high-level representatives of the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the UN, was established at a donor conference in Yangon to oversee the coordination of relief assistance. Subsequently, the interagency Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) process commenced, which resulted in a common assessment of humanitarian needs (Village Tract Assessment/VTA) and damage components (Damage and Loss Assessment/DaLA) that was supported by the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the UN.

Purpose
The humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis was unique in constraints and approach. Characterized by uncertainty due to limits on access and communications, distinctive approaches were employed for both coordination and operations. The response to date has been notable in the regional solidarity shown by member states of ASEAN, and other neighbors. ASEAN was also a key stakeholder which played a "bridging" role between Myanmar and the international community.[20] This IA RTE affords us the opportunity to reflect collectively as a humanitarian community upon the systems in place, taking into consideration the individual capacities of agencies on the ground, as well as their unique strengths and challenges. Further, non UN actors have expressed a desire to see their efforts increasingly recognized and reflected in interagency initiatives. The proposed IA RTE presents an opportunity to describe the operational and strategic support needs of the humanitarian system as affected by all four components of the humanitarian reform, and to reflect upon the role of non UN actors. The real-time nature of the study would allow for improvement of those interactions *while* the relief and rehabilitation efforts are ongoing.

Through an IA RTE, negotiations for and the management of a humanitarian operation will be assessed, and feedback provided to both field and headquarters on a real-time basis. The IA RTE will assess key challenges and needs on the ground, as well as accountability, brining in an external perspective, analytical capacity and knowledge at a key point in the response. It will serve as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the response in terms of meeting target beneficiary needs, including the variant needs associated with gender and age; the coordination and negotiation process, and; particular remote management mechanisms.

The evaluation is intended to review current operations and provide real time feedback on the factors and determinants of improved provision of aid and accountability to affected communities; to serve as an input to the planning of recovery and rehabilitation efforts; to provide real time feedback on the effectiveness and relevance of international agencies efforts to facilitate the humanitarian response; and to explore and suggest measures that will help progress towards organizational accountability. Envisaged are findings and recommendations which will inform and improve ongoing decision-making, and provide preliminary feedback on results to date while at the same time gaining lessons learned experiences for future activities.

Stakeholder Involvement
The evaluation team will engage beneficiary populations as well as staff from UN agencies, international NGOs, national NGOs, government, and donor organizations. The team will

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[19] Summary note of 8 August 2008 meeting of World Bank, UNDP, OCHA and DOCO.
[20] *Revised Appeal: Cyclone Nargis Response Plan 2008 Consolidated Appeal*, 10 July 2008. p. 1.

acknowledge the significant workload already borne by in country staff and endeavor to ensure that any staff resource allocations to the evaluations are minimized.

Interagency technical and policy support will be provided through the IA RTE Interest Group and operational support through UN agencies and INGOs on the ground in Myanmar.

An IA RTE Reference Group in Myanmar, comprised of representatives from the humanitarian community (i.e. UN, INGO, NGO) will assist in guiding the team while in Myanmar and facilitate in-country participation. The evaluation team will meet with the in-country advisory group upon arrival in country. This forum will serve as an opportunity for parties to be briefed on emerging issues in country, and those specific to the evaluation. The evaluation team will immediately inform the reference group of any serious issues regarding the integrity or effectiveness of the programme that they come across in their research. The reference group will have no authority to direct the evaluation or to edit the report, but the evaluation team should take their views into account, and provide sufficient explanation should they select an alternate approach.

The team will report its findings to the UNCT and humanitarian community (via the IASC) in Myanmar and Bangkok, prior to leaving the region. Presentations in Geneva and New York will follow within two weeks of the consultants' return from the field mission.

Draft reports will be submitted within two weeks of the consultants' return from the field mission, upon which the UNCT and IA RTE Interest Group, will be afforded 7 days to comment. The document will subsequently be disseminated to a wider audience for comment.

Specific areas and questions to be addressed will include the following:

Accountability
At its core, the evaluation will put forth an assessment of the effectiveness and outcome to date of the humanitarian response, identifying its success rate in delivering against stated objectives and indicators, as well as how the obstacles unique to this response were addressed. Emphasis will be placed on eliciting beneficiary views on the overall response, their level of engagement, and the relevance of the assistance provided vis à vis needs as perceived and/or articulated by the recipient populations. Further, those efforts are being undertaken to address accountability to beneficiary communities and stakeholders will be identified.

Specific questions to be addressed may include:

- What is being done to maximize community engagement? Are the needs being addressed those which have been identified as priority by beneficiary communities?
- What has been the effectiveness and outcome to date of the humanitarian response? How successful has it been in delivering against stated objectives/indicators (as per cluster work plans at the global and the country level)?
- How might the quality of assessment of needs, prioritization and planning inter- and intra-sectorally be characterized?
- Were funding flows sufficient in both quantity and timeliness to allow humanitarian actors to operate effectively? Were lessons regarding consultation and accountability in funding allocations learnt from previous processes?
- What is the perception on the effectiveness of the coordination mechanism by outside actors, namely its effectiveness in addressing needs, level of engagement of outside actors,

and whether it is something that can be built upon and sustained once the emergency phase concludes?

- What efforts are being undertaken to address accountability to the beneficiary community?

Predictability

How the international community has been at strategic planning in this humanitarian context – both within and external to – the cluster system, for initial response and early recovery programming will be a focus of the evaluation, as well as the efforts undertaken to help build national capacities to harness response to the humanitarian crisis. Further, a view will be afforded as to how and what extent local organizations been involved in the response, and whether it likely to reflect a strengthening over time of civil society. Emphasis will be placed on what mechanisms are being employed, or created, to ensure sustainability/connectedness of operations upon withdrawal/departure of international staff. Further, an assessment of how effectively the early recovery planning and implementation has been integrated into the humanitarian effort will be put forth.

Specific questions to be addressed may include:

- How effective was the cluster coordination mechanism in facilitating mobilization and setting the direction of the response? For those clusters that have recently, or are in the process of deactivation or hand over, is there a smooth transition?
- How has the coordination structure helped to build national capacities to harness response to the humanitarian crisis, both at the Yangon and field levels?
- What information is being collected by the clusters and how is it being collected (i.e. what tools are being employed to collect and manage information, and by whom)? How effective where information flows within and among the various local and regional actors, including the private sector?
- How has the international community been at strategic planning in this humanitarian context – both within and external to – the cluster system?
- Are there examples of unusual collaboration and/or creative partnerships at the local, national and international level? How are ASEAN and the TCG facilitating the humanitarian/early recovery endeavor?
- How have local organizations been involved in the response? Is it likely to reflect a strengthening over time of civil society? What mechanisms are in place, or are in the process of being put into place, to ensure sustainability/connectedness of operations upon withdrawal/departure of international staff?
- In the transition to early recovery, how have early recovery plans been integrated into the humanitarian response?
- What has the been the affect of the restrictions on recruitment of and deployment of international staff on operations, and what have been/are the strategic implications of the rapid scale up?

Coordination & Partnership

The evaluation will look at the coordination mechanisms employed during this response at the field, country, regional and global level, highlighting the major accomplishments and shortcomings. In addition to the overall operational effectiveness of the cluster approach (including the role of the Global Clusters) in facilitating and supporting the joint humanitarian response at country level, and on allowing appropriate delivery of humanitarian assistance. Emphasis will also be placed on

providing a vision of those coordination structures employed at the field level in lieu and/or in addition to the cluster mechanism.

Specific questions to be addressed may include:

- How are communications and messaging being managed by the humanitarian community? Is there a unified voice?
- How might the clusters and technical working groups be rationalized to allow for more effective time management?
- What is the quality of partnerships, particularly the involvement of INGOs, NGOs, donors, and the government, in planning, prioritizing, mobilizing resources and identifying needs?
- What is the role of the central cluster and regional entities, especially when they are not sitting in the affected area? What is the role at the local level and how are they linked?

Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out through analyses of various sources of information including desk reviews; field visits; interviews with key stakeholders (such UN, I/NGOs, donors, beneficiary communities and government) and through cross-validation of data. Briefing workshops in Yangon and Bangkok will serve as a mechanism to both feed back findings on a real-time basis, and further validate information. While maintaining independence, the evaluation will seek the views of all parties.

Compliance with United Nations Evaluation Group standards and ALNAP quality pro forma is expected. The two documents are available from the website of the OCHA Evaluation and Studies Unit (http://ochaonline.un.org/ess).

Management Arrangements

The study will be managed by OCHA's Evaluation and Studies Section (ESS), Policy Development and Studies Branch (PDSB), who will assign an evaluation manager to oversee the conduct of the evaluation. His/her responsibilities are as follows:

- Provide necessary administrative, coordination and logistical support to the team;
- Facilitate the team's access to specific information or expertise necessary to perform the assessment;
- Monitor and assess the quality of the evaluation and its process;
- Ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed;
- Ensure sufficient engagement by UNCT on initial findings prior to dissemination;
- When appropriate, recommend approval of final report;
- Disseminate final report;
- Help organize and design the final learning workshops/presentations; and
- Facilitate management response to the final report and subsequent follow up.
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He/she, working through OCHA and in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs in Myanmar, will provide and/or coordinate logistical support to the evaluation team, assist in gathering all relevant background information, set up relevant appointments, and coordinate/ organize field visits for the team. Further, he/she with the assistance of actors in Myanmar will endeavor to prepare communities in the field in an effort to ensure their understanding of the study objectives.

Duration of Evaluation and Tentative Work Plan

Description	Duration
Desk Review	0.5 week
Meetings UN headquarters and Regional Office for Asia Pacific	1 week
Yangon and Ayeywaddy Delta region (team splits) to engage in information collection through engagement of humanitarian actors and beneficiary populations	3 weeks
Presentation of findings to UNCT in Myanmar, followed by humanitarian community in Yangon, Bangkok and New York	1.5 weeks
Preparation of draft reports	1 week
Preparation of final reports	1 week
Approximate Total	*8 weeks*

Competency and Expertise Requirements

The evaluation will employ the services of a team of consultants embodying the following experience:

- Proven senior-level experience and ability to provide strategic recommendations to key stakeholders;
- Good knowledge of strategic and operational management of humanitarian operations, preferably in south east Asia; the ability to bring on board national consultants(s) from Myanmar / Thailand would be an asset;
- Good knowledge of humanitarian system and its reforms, including of UN agencies, IFRC, NGOs, and local government disaster response structures and systems;
- Demonstrable experience in conducting evaluations of humanitarian programmes and the capacity to work collaboratively with multiple stakeholders and on a team;
- Strong analytical skills and ability to clearly synthesize and present findings, draw practical conclusions and to prepare well-written reports in a timely manner;
- Strong workshop facilitation skills;
- Excellent writing and presentation skills in English; and
- Immediate availability for the period indicated.

Reporting Requirements and Deliverables

- **Inception report** of no more than ten pages outlining methodology to be employed and indicating clarity of understanding of the questions and issues to be addressed, context in which the evaluation will be undertaken, and political sensitivities;
- A **series of presentations of findings** to UNCT and humanitarian community in Yangon, Bangkok, New York and Geneva;
- A series of **short evaluation briefing reports** of no more than 2500 words each targeted towards specific user communities, such as UNCT, UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs, which present findings and recommendations relevant to the specific user community. These reports shall serve as stand alone documents, the information from which may also be included in the final report, but will allow for users to easily access information most relevant to their operations; and
- A **final evaluation report** containing elements specified in the document on standards for evaluation (pp. 17 – 23) developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (available at http://ochaonline.un.org/esu). The report shall contain a short executive summary of no

more than 2,000 words and a main text of no more than 15,000 words, both inclusive of clear and concise recommendations. Annexes should include a list of all individuals interviewed, a bibliography, a description of method(s) employed, a summary of survey results (if applicable), and any other relevant materials.

The evaluation team is solely responsible for the final products. While maintaining independence, the team will adhere to professional standards and language, particularly that which may relate to the protection of staff and operations. Additionally, agencies at the country level and the IA RTE IG will be consulted prior to the dissemination of any products emanating from the evaluation.

Annex 4: Inception Report

1. Objective and scope of the evaluation

1.1   Objective:
In recent years, efforts have been increasingly directed towards improving humanitarian response through learning and accountability. The Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IA RTE) – endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group in March 2007 as a one year pilot, and extended for an additional year until the beginning of 2009 – has proven one important tool through which such analysis may be conducted. In accordance with the IASC mandate, an IA RTE on the response to Cyclone Nargis was proposed and has received the consent and support of the UN Country Team and humanitarian community in Myanmar.

The humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis was unique in constraints and approach. Characterized by uncertainty due to limits on access and communications, distinctive approaches were employed for both coordination and operations. The response to date has been notable in the regional solidarity shown by member states of ASEAN, and other neighbors. ASEAN was also a key stakeholder which played a "bridging" role between Myanmar and the international community.[21]

In a report to the IASC Working Group in March 2008, it was stated that "IA RTEs provide a unique framework for inter agency system-wide evaluation by reviewing the overall direction and coordination of an emergency response rather than only agency-specific aspects of it." In this regard, the value-added for this exercise is primarily directed towards those working towards a common end inside Myanmar and should not be seen as an evaluation of agency specific programmes or as a replacement for an agency's own learning and accountability efforts.

This IA RTE affords us the opportunity to reflect collectively as a humanitarian community upon the systems in place, taking into consideration the individual capacities of agencies on the ground, as well as their unique strengths and challenges. Further, non UN actors have expressed a desire to see their efforts increasingly recognized and reflected in interagency initiatives. The IA RTE presents an opportunity to describe the operational and strategic support needs of the humanitarian system as affected by all four components of the humanitarian reform, and to reflect upon the role of non-UN actors. The real-time nature of the study allows for improvement of those interactions *while* the relief and rehabilitation efforts are ongoing.

Through this IA RTE, negotiations for and the management of a humanitarian operation will be assessed, and feedback provided to both field and headquarters on a real-time basis. The IA RTE will assess key challenges and needs on the ground, as well as accountability, brining in an external perspective, analytical capacity and knowledge at this point in the response.

The evaluation is intended to review current operations and provide real time feedback on the factors and determinants of improved provision of aid and accountability to affected communities; to serve as an input to the planning of recovery and rehabilitation efforts; to provide real time feedback on the effectiveness and relevance of international agencies efforts to facilitate the humanitarian response; and to explore and suggest measures that will help progress towards organizational accountability. Findings and recommendations will inform and improve ongoing

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[21] *Revised Appeal: Cyclone Nargis Response Plan 2008 Consolidated Appeal*, 10 July 2008. p. 1.

decision-making, and provide preliminary feedback on results to date, while at the same time gaining lessons learned experiences for future activities.

1.2 Scope:
The evaluation will consider the following specific areas which contribute towards achievement of this goal:

Accountability
At its core, the evaluation will put forth an assessment of the effectiveness and outcome to date of the humanitarian response, identifying its success rate in delivering against stated objectives and indicators, as well as how the obstacles unique to this response were addressed. Emphasis will be placed on eliciting beneficiary views on the overall response, their level of engagement, and the relevance of the assistance provided vis à vis needs as perceived and/or articulated by the recipient populations. Further, those efforts are being undertaken to address accountability to beneficiary communities and stakeholders will be identified.

Predictability
How the international community has been at strategic planning in this humanitarian context – both within and external to – the cluster system, for initial response and early recovery programming will be a focus of the evaluation, as well as the efforts undertaken to help build national capacities to harness response to the humanitarian crisis. Further, a view will be afforded as to how and to what extent local organizations been involved in the response, and whether it is likely to reflect a strengthening over time of civil society. Emphasis will be placed on what mechanisms are being employed, or created, to ensure sustainability/connectedness of operations upon withdrawal/departure of international staff. Further, an assessment of how effectively the early recovery planning and implementation has been integrated into the humanitarian effort will be put forth.

Coordination & Partnership
The evaluation will look at the coordination mechanisms employed during this response at the field, country, regional and global level, highlighting the major accomplishments and shortcomings. In addition to the overall operational effectiveness of the cluster approach (including the role of the Global Clusters) in facilitating and supporting the joint humanitarian response at country level, and on allowing appropriate delivery of humanitarian assistance. Emphasis will also be placed on providing a vision of those coordination structures employed at the field level in lieu and/or in addition to the cluster mechanism.

2. Methodology
The evaluation will provide detailed analysis, assessment and recommendations based on the specific areas identified in scope of the evaluation described above.

2.1 Methodological approach
The overall methodology will be based on both inductive and deductive approaches using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a carefully selected range of sources as indicated below.

2.2 Data collection tools
The review will employ the normal range of social science research methods employed in real-time evaluation, namely:

- A review of relevant documents, both public and internal;
- Focus group meetings with affected populations;
- Semi-structured and structured interviews, both in person and by telephone, with a range of stakeholders The following tentative list is suggested:

2.3   Possible Interlocutors:

- UN Organizations and leadership: RC, HC a.i., OCHA, WFP, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO etc.
- International NGOs: WVI, SC, Merlin, MSF-H, Care, Oxfam, IRC, IDE etc.
- National NGOs: TBD
- Government of Myanmar
- Donor Governments: Singapore, USA, UK, China etc.
- Regional Organizations: ASEAN
- Beneficiaries: Focus groups and key informant interviews (KIIs) in affected areas

2.4   Constraints and limitations

i) Travel within Myanmar, particularly in the delta region, is extremely difficult and will limit the number of locations to be visited.

ii) The terms of reference and the situation in Myanmar is very complex. The RTE is looking only at the efforts of the international community but will attempt to place them within the broader relief context.

iii) Because of the timing of the evaluation many of the key participants in the relief effort have left the region.

iv) RTEs are conducted quickly and feedback provided in a timely way. Under these conditions it is not possible to go into a great amount of depth and develop substantial evidence base.

v) The inter-agency nature of this RTE provides an opportunity for a broader review of relief and recovery issues is not intended to replace more detailed organization specific learning and accountability efforts.

3. Issues to be studied

Table 1: Detailed Enquiry Areas/Lead Questions and identification of potential Interlocutors and Sources for data-gathering

Key Issue for evaluation	Lead Questions/Detailed Enquiry areas	Source/Technique for gathering info.
1. Accountability	▪ What is being done to maximize community engagement? Are the needs being addressed those which have been identified as priority by beneficiary communities? ▪ What has been the effectiveness and outcome to date of the humanitarian response? How successful has it been in delivering against stated objectives/indicators (as per cluster work plans at the global and the country level)?	Key informant interviews (KII) with operational UN agencies and NGOs. Focus Group (FG) discussions with beneficiaries. Document review of cluster planning, KII with cluster leads and participants. Review of assessment reports and planning documents. KII with cluster leads and senior

Key Issue for evaluation	Lead Questions/Detailed Enquiry areas	Source/Technique for gathering info.
	▪ How might the quality of assessment of needs, prioritization and planning inter- and intra-sectorally be characterized? ▪ Were funding flows sufficient in both quantity and timeliness to allow humanitarian actors to operate effectively? Were lessons regarding consultation and accountability in funding allocations learnt from previous processes? ▪ What is the perception on the effectiveness of the coordination mechanism by outside actors, namely its effectiveness in addressing needs, level of engagement of outside actors, and whether it is something that can be built upon and sustained once the emergency phase concludes? ▪ What efforts are being undertaken to address accountability to the beneficiary community?	coordination staff. Review of FTS and other data. KII with operational UN agencies and NGOs in the appeal. Document review. KII with stakeholders (donors, government, regional entities). Review organization and cluster accountability plans. KII with operational organizations. FG with beneficiaries.
2. Predictability	▪ How effective was the cluster coordination mechanism in facilitating mobilization and setting the direction of the response? For those clusters that have recently, or are in the process of deactivation or hand over, is there a smooth transition? ▪ How has the coordination structure helped to build national capacities to harness response to the humanitarian crisis, both at the Yangon and field levels? ▪ What information is being collected by the clusters and how is it being collected (i.e. what tools are being employed to collect and manage information, and by whom)? How effective where information flows within and among the various local and regional actors, including the private sector? ▪ How has the international community been at strategic planning in this humanitarian context – both within and external to – the cluster system?	KII with cluster leads and participants and donors. UN and NGO national staff. Government. Document review of cluster outputs. Cluster leads. Website (and website use). Review planning documents. Cluster leads, donors, operational organizations.

Key Issue for evaluation	Lead Questions/Detailed Enquiry areas	Source/Technique for gathering info.
	▪ Are there examples of unusual collaboration and/or creative partnerships at the local, national and international level? How are ASEAN and the TCG facilitating the humanitarian/early recovery endeavor?	TCG members, donors, private sector, operational organizations.
	▪ How have local organizations been involved in the response? Is it likely to reflect a strengthening over time of civil society? What mechanisms are in place, or are in the process of being put into place, to ensure sustainability/connectedness of operations upon withdrawal/departure of international staff?	National NGOs, FG with beneficiaries, national staff of UN and NGOs.
	▪ In the transition to early recovery, how have early recovery plans been integrated into the humanitarian response?	Cluster leads, UNDP, donors.
	▪ What has the been the effect of the restrictions on recruitment of and deployment of international staff on operations, and what have been/are the strategic implications of the rapid scale up?	Operational organizations.
3. Coordination and Partnerships	▪ How are communications and messaging being managed by the humanitarian community? Is there a unified voice?	PI staff, senior coordinators, donors, FG beneficiaries.
	▪ How might the clusters and technical working groups be rationalized to allow for more effective time management?	Cluster leads and participants.
	▪ What is the quality of partnerships, particularly the involvement of INGOs, NGOs, donors, and the government, in planning, prioritizing, mobilizing resources and identifying needs?	Cluster leads, coordinators, NGO and local NGO managers.
	▪ What is the role of the central cluster and regional entities, especially when they are not sitting in the affected area? What is the role at the local level and how are they linked?	Regional coordinators, cluster leads, hub coordinators.

4. Timetable

Date	Activity
Sept 17 - 28	Consultant orientation, initial document review & finalization of TOR
Sept 28 - Oct 3	Travel to Bangkok. Interviews with regional offices.
Oct 4 -9	Interviews in Yangon and completion of inception report
Oct 10 - 20	Interviews and focus groups in affected areas
Oct 21 – 23	Final interviews and workshops in Yangon. Debrief/verification meetings with UNCT and IASC.
Oct 24	Debriefing in Bangkok
Nov 1.	Fact checking of draft zero report
Nov 7/8	Debriefings Geneva and New York
Nov.7	Draft report for comment
14 November	Final report submitted

Annex 5:   Current Clusters and Technical Working Groups

Health (WHO and Merlin)
Early Recovery/health systems (PONREPP);
SRH and HIV/AIDS;
Mental Health and Psychosocial support;
Malaria and Dengue and other Vector Borne Diseases.

Shelter (Habitat)
Disaster Preparedness and Response Education;
PONREPP.

WASH (UNICEF)
Dry Season Water Security;
Drilling Working Group;
PONREPP.

Protection of Children and Women (UNICEF and Save the Children)
Child Protection in Emergencies;
Women's Protection;
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support;
PONREPP

Agriculture (FAO)
Fisheries and Aquaculture;
Livestock and Animal Health;
Part of two PONREPP WGs (Livelihood and DRR).

Nutrition (UNICEF)
Therapeutic and Supplementary Feeding Programme;
Infant Feeding in Emergencies;
Nutrition Surveillance;
Part of health PONREPP WG.

Early Recovery (RC Office)
DRR;
Non-Agriculture Livelihoods;
Environment.

Food Assistance (WFP)

Education (UNICEF and Save the Children)

Telecommunications (WFP)

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In addition to the key references cited above, a variety of cluster meeting minutes, internal agency reports and press releases were consulted during the course of this IA RTE.