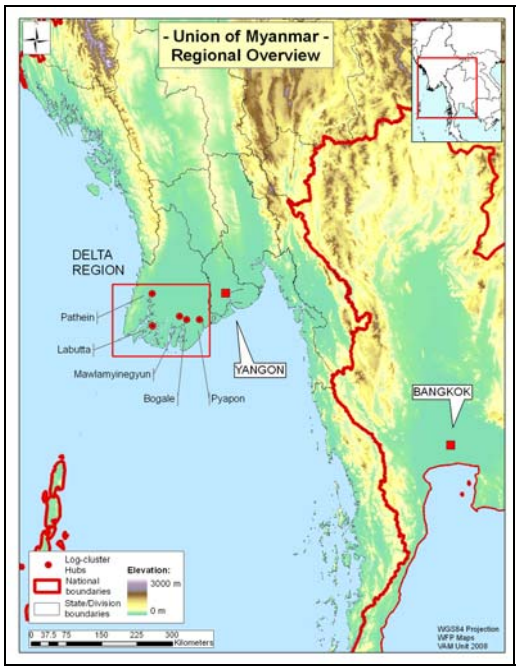
LOGISTICS CLUSTER MYANMAR
Cyclone Nargis Emergency Response
10th May – 10th August 2008
End of Mission Report

References:

A. Special Operation (SO) 10751.0 Logistics Augmentation in support of the Humanitarian Community in Myanmar
B. Logistics Cluster Timeline
C. Final JST Distribution Charts

INTRODUCTION

Cyclone Nargis made landfall in Myanmar on May 2nd and 3rd, crossing the Ayeyarwady Delta area with winds of up to 200 km per hour and causing widespread destruction and loss of life. According to the PONJA report, 84,537 people have been confirmed dead, and 53,836 missing. It is estimated that 1.5 million people were severely affected by the devastating cyclone.



Area of operations for the Logistics Cluster Nargis Cyclone Emergency Response

Nargis was the worst natural disaster in the history of Myanmar, and the deadliest tropical cyclone worldwide since 1991 in Bangladesh. The catastrophe was further aggravated by a combination of poor or non-existent infrastructure and limited communications networks, both severely damaged by the cyclone and the subsequent flooding.

In the face of this humanitarian disaster, on May 6th, the Emergency Relief Coordinator endorsed the cluster approach for humanitarian relief operations in Myanmar. The Logistics Cluster, headed by WFP in its capacity as Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster lead, was formally activated and a Special Operation SO 10751.0, (ref. A) for a period of three months was created . The goal of the SO was to ensure an uninterrupted supply chain of life saving relief items to the affected areas by setting up and operating common logistics services, and provide coordination and information management for the logistics response.

Arial view of damage to the village of Set San

Offices were set up immediately in Bangkok and Yangon, followed later by a presence in the five hubs of Labutta, Bogale, Pyapon, Pathein and Mawlamyingyun. The Logistics Cluster established air cargo facilitation, common transport services, bases for forward operations (operational hubs), temporary storage facilities, logistics information management, and meetings and coordination for all organizations participating in the emergency response.

In accordance with the SO, the Logistics Cluster ceased operations on August 10th. However, following a request from OCHA on behalf of the humanitarian community, WFP aviation will continue to provide reduced helicopter operations and two staff members seconded by RedR Australia will remain in the hubs to support ongoing logistics requirements.

Sections:

Each section contains lessons learned from the Logistics Cluster Nargis Cyclone response. Some lessons are context specific while others can be applied effectively to future Logistics Cluster missions.

1. START-UP

Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar on May 2nd, 2008. On May 6th, the Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell, based in WFP Rome, deployed an Interagency Logistics Response Team (LRT) to Bangkok. On the 8th, the WFP regional logistics officer and a logistician seconded by THW were deployed to Yangon. Logistics Cluster meetings began immediately. By 20th May, 11 international staff were deployed to Bangkok and Yangon, including the Regional Logistics Officer, the Head of ALITE, 4 Logistics Officers, one Air Transportation Officer, one Air Movement Officer, an Information Officer, and a Telecommunications Officer. The Labutta hub was operational by May 13th. Geographical Information System (GIS) assistance was provided by UNJLC in Rome. Given the restrictions on staff visas over the beginning phase of the response, much of the initial operation was run out of Bangkok in order to ensure that aid could be consolidated and transported into Myanmar from Thailand, and to give a solid second base of operations for logistics activities.

The scale of the catastrophe, especially in the Ayeyarwady region, left much of the population isolated and in dire need of food, clean water, and shelter. The key role of the Logistics Cluster was to assure the delivery of humanitarian aid to those requiring assistance. As of June 19th, the Logistics Cluster had signed contracts for three barges with a capacity of 1,700 mt to carry aid to the affected areas. On May 21st, contracts were signed that secured 30 trucks to provide a dedicated interagency fleet, and the Logistics Cluster SOP was finalized and posted on the Logs Cluster website for organizations wishing to use the common transport services. The airbridge officially opened on May 24th and three airplanes were deployed to carry aid from Bangkok into Myanmar.

River between the Logistics Hubs of Bogale and Mawlamyinegyun

2. AIR CARGO FACILITATION

A staging area at Don Muang International Airport in Bangkok was established at the start of the Nargis emergency response as a humanitarian facility for the collection and consolidation of relief cargo prior to onward movement to Yangon by Air Bridge. The goal was to be able to receive flights arriving from around the world, facilitate clearance, provide temporary storage, and when necessary have cargo repackaged into suitable quantities for air movement. Arrangements were also established to accept goods purchased locally in Thailand for transport to Myanmar.

The 20,000 m² facility, a gift-in-kind from the Thai government, was formally opened on May 24th by the UN Secretary General, the Thai Prime Minister, the ASEAN Secretary General, and the Regional Director of WFP, and was a valuable asset to the Nargis relief mission.

DMK warehouse as of July 5, 2008

The DMK-Yangon airbridge began with three aircraft (one Antonov-12 and two Ilyushin-76's) One Ilyushin 76 was redeployed on June 17th, and the operation continued with two aircraft, each flying approximately two rotations per day. **4,005 mt** of cargo was brought into Yangon via the airbridge over 230 rotations.

Antonov 12 loading NFI's at Bangkok airport

By the start of July, the amount of cargo still awaiting transport from Bangkok by air resulted in the airbridge reaching its carrying capacity for the remainder of the operation, and a decision was made to bring all non-prioritized cargo into Yangon by sea. Containers were secured on a number of sailings and the first shipment left on July 20th. In all, 170 containers totalling **534 mt** were moved by sea. The Logistics Cluster continued to facilitate air services including handling, clearance and offloading, up until its end date of August 10th. In all, 31 organizations used the airbridge over the course of the operation.

For the three months of its activation, the Logistics Cluster was the interagency facilitator for the entry of relief goods destined for the Nargis emergency response. In mid-July, the Logistics Cluster collated forms and information for a guidance bulletin to assist humanitarian organizations with their own FOC registration in order to ensure a smooth transition.

3. HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

By June 2nd, a helicopter operation was established to support the broader humanitarian community in the delivery of relief cargo to hard-to-access areas in the Delta region, as well as transporting medical and veterinary teams to assist the local population. The operation began with ten helicopters (5 Mi-8-MTV, 3 Mi-8-T and two Puma's).

Helicopter landing on the road outside Bogale

The helicopters were also used to support the TRI PARTITE CORE GROUP (a cooperative effort between the Myanmar Government, ASEAN and UN agencies) for the Village Tract assessment which took place over a week in the Delta. These assessments identified many villages still in need of assistance and resulted in precise coordinates for remote villages and calls forward for food and NFI to these areas.

The helicopters were based out of Yangon airport, from where they departed to reach Labutta, Bogale and Pathein. Out of these three locations, the helicopters completed their tasked rotations to remote villages around these areas. A fuel management system was put in place as of July 23rd to increase the number of rotations each helicopter can fly in day, with fuel taken to the hubs in a bladder and the remainder returned to Yangon at the end of the day. This allowed for a substantial increase in cargo distributions.

Sling delivery to the village of Set San

The first sling operation was carried out on June 18th with a Puma helicopter to carry a water purification unit for CARE, and ground crews were trained so that sling missions could continue with Mi8s after the redeployment of the Pumas. A total of 200 nets were made available in-country, sufficient to meet all demands for sling deliveries.

From the start of the operation, the helicopters also accepted passengers to destinations on the day's manifest for cargo delivery to help give relief workers greater access to the affected area. As the roads became increasingly inaccessible due to heavy rains, resulting in a substantial increase in requests for staff movement to the field, one helicopter a day was dedicated to passenger transport, with time allowed for staff to complete business on the ground before returning to Yangon.

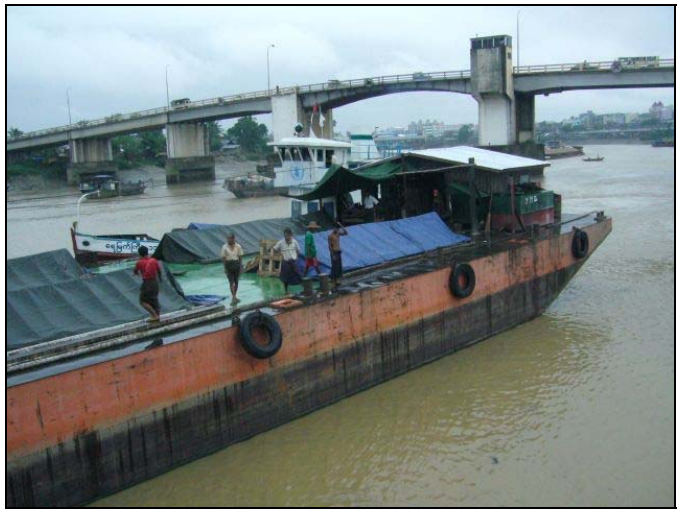
As of June 30th, five of the ten helicopters (3 Mi8 MTV and 2 Pumas) were demobilized following a decline in demand once assessment missions were completed and the most urgent needs were attended to. The operation continued with five helicopters (3 Mi8-T and 2 Mi8 MTV). This still gave the aid community significant capacity in the Irrawady Delta. A system of prioritization was established for all air operations, and performed within the Cluster by a UNJLC Senior Logistics Officer, to ensure that the most urgent relief items reached the villages as soon as possible.

The helicopter operations are planned to continue for an additional three months with a reduced fleet, to ensure MEDEVAC and passenger requirements and some cargo delivery.

Between June 2nd and August 10th, the helicopters distributed food and relief items for **70** days to **156** remote locations in the Delta area. A total of **918** rotations were made to these locations, carrying **912 mt** of food and non-food items (including shelter, medical and hygiene materials, food, family kits and water purification units).

4. COMMON TRANSPORT SERVICES

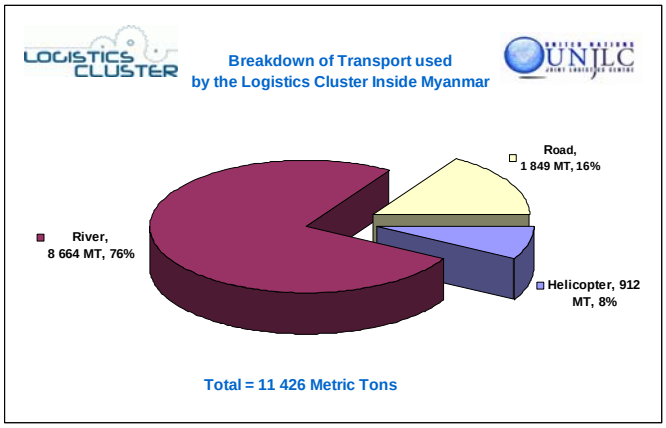
Common Transport Services for the Nargis Cyclone Emergency Response were provided by the Logistics Cluster in order to maximize capacity and efficiently respond to the needs of partners in the field. The Cluster initially contracted a fleet of 33 trucks. As of June 23rd, this was reduced from 33 to 15 with the option of renting more on a day-to-day basis when additional capacity was required.



Logistics Cluster 800 mt barge at Yangon jetty #2.

To increase capacity and bypass any difficulties arising from deteriorating road conditions in the Delta over the rainy season, a fleet of barges and boats was also contracted to deliver relief assistance via the country's many waterways. The majority of all cargo movement within Myanmar was carried out by these means. The initial fleet of four barges and three boats (total capacity = 3,900 mt) was reduced slightly as of June 23rd to three barges with pushers and four boats for a sustained capacity of 3,500 mt, which was maintained until the end of the common transport services on August 10th.

A dedicated interagency warehouse in Yangon of 3,050 m² was maintained for the length of the operation to receive goods arriving from Bangkok for onward movement through Myanmar.



Logistics Cluster transport use in Myanmar

As per the SOPs presented and made available to the cluster partners on the Logistic Cluster web page, the use of the cluster transport assets was organized through the Cargo Movement Request (CMR) system. From the start of the operation, cargo through the common transport services was moved based on the submission of CMR's and the priorities established by the IASC CT.

A total of **10,405 mt** of food and non-food items were delivered by road and boat through Myanmar over the three month operation. 30 organizations used the common transport services in Myanmar.

5. PRIORITIZATION

A system of prioritization was established for all Logistics Cluster transport, most notably the airbridge and helicopter operations. The process was performed by a UNJLC prioritization officer, and took place in accordance with priorities expressed by the IASC country team (shelter, food, health, nutrition and WASH, and later agriculture in the form of seeds), results of the PONJA assessment (during which sample villages expressed a need for plastic sheeting, water containers and access to medical care), and the maximization of assets (combining volume with weight to increase what can be carried). Consignments with packaging problems were re-boxed or palletized before entering the pipeline in order to avoid potential bottlenecks.

6. LOGISTICS HUBS

Five hubs were established by the Logistics Cluster in the Ayeyarwady Division to provide forward locations for temporary storage prior to distribution, and bases for transportation to onward destinations by means of road, waterways or helicopter. The hubs were set up in Pyapon, Bogale, Labutta, Mawlamyinegyun, and Pathein. Logistics Cluster meetings and coordination was established in all hubs. The Logistics Cluster common services did not move cargo from the hubs to final destinations.

In Pyapon, Bogale and Labutta, MSU's were established for interagency warehousing and all appropriate renovations took place to ensure cargo was protected from the ongoing rains. (Pyapon – 2,440 m², Bogale – 1,680 m², Labutta – 1,680 m²) In Pathein and Mawlamyinegyun, space was negotiated in existing MAPT warehouses and renovations completed when required (Pathein – 1,600 m², Mawlamyinegyun – 3,726 m²).

Interagency warehousing in Bogale

The majority of helicopter rotations took place out of Labutta (three Landing Zones) and Bogale (one Landing Zones). Dedicated interagency jetties were established at all the hubs.

Ice Jetty in Pyapon

Organizations requiring additional storage for the ongoing relief operation were given the opportunity to request MSU loans from the Logistics Cluster. 22 MSU's were made available for an indefinite period, and a warehouse management and installation workshop were organized in the Bogale to ensure a smooth transition after the Logistics Cluster withdrawal.

User groups were established in Yangon and the hubs to enable coordination and cost sharing between organizations using the facilities to ensure a smooth transition after the departure of the Logistics Cluster. Two Logistics Officers seconded by RedR will remain in the hubs for a period after August 10th to assist with the ongoing relief operation.

7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Information Management within the Logistics Cluster Nargis Cyclone Emergency Response Operation was supported by UNJLC and consisted of three focus areas:

- reporting and information dissemination;
- management of databases, files and mailing lists; and
- information exchange with external organizations.

In the area of reporting and information dissemination, the Logistics Cluster produced key products to communicate essential information to relief organizations and donors participating in the emergency response. Over the course of the operation, 63 sitreps were disseminated to extensive mailing lists and published on the website in addition to Logistics Cluster minutes. Bulletins and snapshots were also produced focusing on individual parts of Logs Cluster operations. The aim of the publications was to provide timely information and an analysis of the logistics situation in Myanmar, and to draw attention to logistics bottlenecks and future planning. These products have received wide attention and recognition from all actors in the relief operation including donors, government bodies and users.

The website (www.logscluster.org/mm08a) was set up and updated in close cooperation with the UNJLC Core Unit in Rome. It contains sections reflective of all key activities in Myanmar. The coordination centre was the most popular section of the website, with 10,778l hits. Supply chain information attracted 6,099 viewers, air operations 4,670 and maps 4,594. As of the end of July, the site had **49,900** visits from **19,000** different users.

The consolidated sitrep, combining reports from the field hubs, Bangkok and Myanmar, was first published on 9 May from Bangkok, continuing daily through June 27th and bi-weekly thereafter. It contained factual information in a bullet-point lay-out and was sent out to over 400 humanitarian workers each time. These sitreps were discontinued as of 5 August as the Logistics Cluster prepared to end its operations.

Damaged house in Bogale

Snapshots and bulletins were published focusing on key areas of activities including the airbridge, helicopter operations, sling operations, common transport services, and the individual logistics hubs. Daily flights updates kept users informed of both airbridge and helicopter operations. All updated information, including helicopter passenger booking procedures and forms, suppliers and contractor's lists, shipping plans and warehouse stock information, was disseminated to the greater humanitarian community by mailing list and readily available on the website.

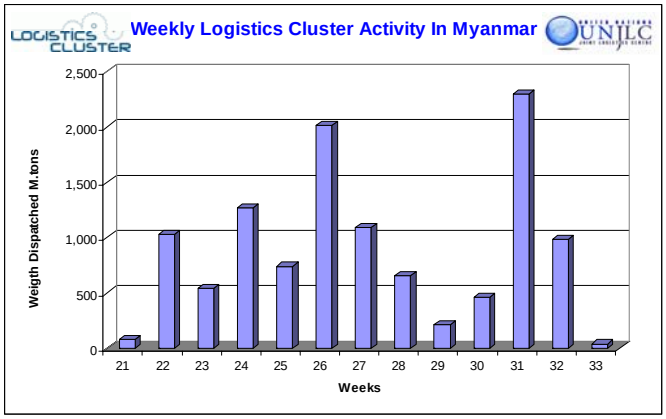
The dissemination of information began right at the start of the operation in line with the creation of the website, which was online by 8 May. CMR procedures and forms were posted immediately for use by

the humanitarian community. Reporting got underway in the first week of the Nargis Cyclone response, and the Information Management (IM) unit in the field kept in close contact with Rome for all updates and changes to posted information. The mailing list was technically maintained in Rome.

One new aspect to information management during the Nargis Cyclone response was active information feeding based on the logistics themes and type of document to the HIC/OCHA Cluster website. All information published on the Logistics Cluster was automatically fed to the Humanitarian Website by using RSS (Really Simple Syndication), allowing more actors to get the latest news and information from the Logs Cluster

8. JOINT SUPPLY TRACKER

As established by the Interagency Transport and Logistics Standard Operating Procedures, UNJLC supported the Logistics Cluster with Supply Tracking and Prioritization over the emergency phase of the relief operation. During the Nargis Cyclone response, the JST was used to gather and consolidate humanitarian supply chain and distribution information on what was moved through the common services, including both food and non food items (NFI). This information was used to provide an overview of the logistics response and a basis for needs-based planning, assist in identifying gaps in coverage, provide the basis of evidence for current and continuing funding for relief efforts, and give a more accurate assessment of logistics requirements (specifically sea, road and air assets and warehouse capacity).



Weekly Logistics Cluster Activity in Myanmar

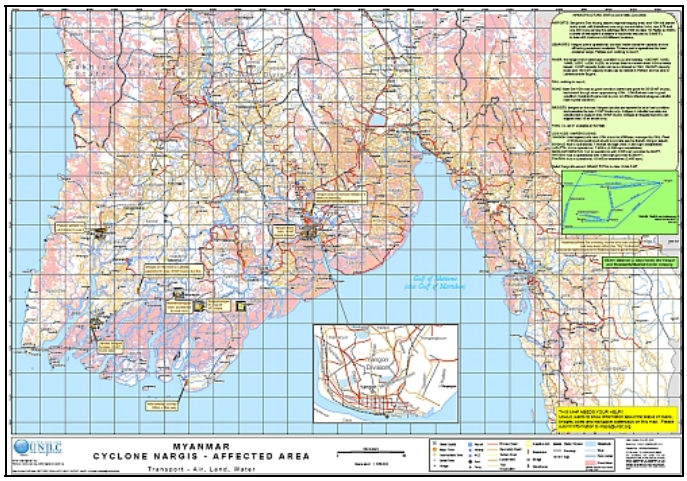
Data was collected through Logistics Cluster Cargo Movement Requests to give an overview of what was being distributed and where.

The team supporting the JST project in the field – both for CMR coordination and for supply chain data – consisted of two CMR Tracking Officers (one in Bangkok and one in Yangon), and a JST assistant.

9. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS SERVICES

Mapping for the Nargis Cyclone emergency response was successfully provided by the UNJLC GIS unit in Rome with contributions from the field and the GIS network community.

Maps created for the operation included: Southern Myanmar – General Logistics and Planning Map; Affected Area – Transport: Air, Land, Sea; a map of Asia (Region from Dubai to Bangkok); Bogale Township; Labutta Township; Mawlamyinegyun Township; Pathein Township; Pyapon Township; Yangon Area; Ngapudaw Township; and simple maps of Travel Time and Distances and Logistics Hubs. UNLC maps are widely recognized by the Logistics community and frequent downloads were made from the field. 4,594 people visited the map centre o n the website.



Myanmar Cyclone Nargis – Affected Area Map

10. PARTNERSHIPS

As in previous operations, the Logistics Cluster received extensive support from partner organizations in terms of staff requirements. Seconded staff were provided by UNICEF (1), the Technisches Hilfswerk (2), OXFAM (1), Merlin (1), UNHCR (1), SRSA (3), CARE (1) DFID (2), RedR (2) and UNJLC (4) for 18 personnel. TNT, UPS and Agility also provided support staff for the operation.

11. INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION/FUNDING

The SO was 68% funded, with 33,903,194 USD received. Funds were received from: Aus Aid, CIDA, Denmark, ECHO, Finland, Irish Aid, the Netherlands, Norway, US friends of WFP, CERF, DFID and OFDA. The Logistics Cluster also received non cash support from donors and users (primarily DFID and SRSA).

Support on Administration, Finance and HR was provided by WFP Rome. Admin/finance assistance was also provided by WFP in all bases of the operation and was essential to the smooth functioning of the operation.

A total of 53 international staff was deployed for the Nargis Cyclone SO.

12. EXIT STRATEGY

The Logistics Cluster Myanmar operation lasted three months and, with the exception of certain activities in the hubs, focused on short-term activities. An operational exit strategy consisted of two key elements. The first element was to identify, and where possible transfer, installations and information as well as legacy documents to appropriate parties. The main focus was:

- Ensuring an effective transfer of the established warehouse facilities and infrastructure in the hubs to the organizations continuing the operation, and informing organizations of all local transport and labor contractors locally available in order to ensure a smooth transition and the lowest available rates. Workshops were held in Yangon and in the hubs to assemble current users and establish coordination on these matters.
- Establishing loans of additional MSU's for organizations needing further storage for continued operations and providing warehouse management and installation training to these users.
- Collating forms and information for a guidance bulletin to assist humanitarian organizations with their own Free of Charge registration so they could bring cargo into Yangon without the help of the Logistics Cluster umbrella.
- The Logistics Cluster has begun the process of building a concrete jetty in Labutta to provide a long-term asset to the humanitarian community. A site has been allocated and the agreement will be formalized by August 10th. The project will take place in collaboration with UNICEF.

The second element was to conduct an information campaign about the Logistics Cluster exit strategy (to ensure all stakeholders were appropriately informed).

- Exit strategy personally briefed by Logistics Cluster head of coordination and/or senior logistics officer at all Cluster meetings in Yangon.
- Updates provided at bi-weekly meetings in Yangon and at hub level.
- Bulletin, sitreps, website and e-mails updated to reflect key timings in exit strategy.

13. CONCLUSION

The Special Operation 10075.0 Logistic Augmentation in Support of the Humanitarian Community in Myanmar which ran from May 10th until August 10th achieved its 5 main objects. They were the following:

1. Air cargo facilitation
2. Set and operation of common warehouse facilities in Bangkok and Yangon.
3. Set of a common transport network within Myanmar by the hiring and running a fleet of truck, boats, and barges.
4. Setting up of 5 logistics hubs in the affected regions.
5. Information management support by UNJLC.

The overall operation was a success, with **39** organizations using the common logistics services (including the airbridge and transport within Myanmar) and a total of **15,856 mt** of cargo moved.