

Food Cluster Meeting Minutes -- 19 May 2008, 11am

Participants:

AMDA, ADRA, AMI, AZG, BAJ, CESVI, DFID, ECHO, LATET, MRCS/IFRC, Malteser, MSF-CH, Save the Children, UNDP, WFP

- WFP expects response from Ministry of Social Welfare COB May 19 on the Food Cluster Response Plan delineating CP allocations and caseload in townships in Ayeyarwady. The indication WFP has so far is that the plan will be approved by the government. As soon as the approval is obtained, WFP will inform the Cooperating Partners, and proceed to signing Field Level Agreements (FLAs).
- More detailed distribution plan delineating geographical coverage and caseload for Cooperating Partners is being finalized.
 - For Bogale, Kyaiklat, Maubin and Pyapon, a meeting with Cooperating Partners took place on May 18.
 - For Ngapdaw, Wakema, Labutta, Pathein, Myaungmya, meeting with Cooperating Partners will take place immediately after the Food Cluster meeting today at WFP.
 - For Pyapon and Bogale, WFP will meet Cooperating Partners locally at 6:00pm on 19 May and 20 May respectively to finalize the distribution plan.
- WFP procured 6,000 tons of rice and approximately 1,000 tons of pulses at Pathein. These commodities will be primarily for the operations in Bogale and Labutta, to be shipped from supplier outside Yangon , and will be plugged in to the operations of Cooperating Partners in the project areas.
- WFP plans to finalize FLAs based on the above-mentioned meetings by 21 May. Coordination and proper targeting in order to avoid unintended impacts are one of the aims of having FLAs. After the FLAs are signed, Cooperating Partner assigned for the area will be the chief coordinator and liaison with WFP in terms of food distribution in the area. WFP plans to have FLAs operational by this weekend 23-24 May.
- WFP requested Cluster members to provide data on Non-WFP food distribution that members have carried out since the cyclone. Format for the data submission was introduced. Organizations confirmed food distribution from non-WFP source are; Action Aid, , AZG, CESVI , MRCS/IFRC, UNDP, WV,. WV and UNDP provided the information during the meeting. The others agreed to provide the data at the earliest occasion.
- Food supply to complete the planned Food Basket is not ready. Cluster agreed to undertake food distribution with the available commodities. Distribution with complete food basket will take place as soon as the supply is available.

- It was re-confirmed that WFP plans no food distribution in Yangon area.
- Needs for market survey to monitor the impact of cash transfer was raised by a cluster member. WFP suggested that it can introduce a simple market survey it has been conducting in other areas of operation within the country and share with partners for them to monitor and report from their respective areas.
- The following highlights/key messages were agreed to by the Cluster group:

Importation/Source of food to support the planned 750,000 beneficiaries for 6 month.

- The Cluster requires 65,615 mt of food commodities for the 6-months Emergency Response Operation. Myanmar being a rice and pulses exporting country, the government had been reluctant to approve import of rice to the country prior to the cyclone, though importation of oil, in short supply in normal times, will not be a problem.
- As it is imperative to import rice to cater the planned beneficiaries without negatively impacting the domestic market, WFP officially requested the government on 8 May with regard to the importation of relief food commodities. No response was received as of today.

Expected response after 6-month Emergency Operation.

- Given the extent of devastation in the cyclone affected area, it is likely that the villages in the Ayeyarwady will not fully regain their livelihood by the time the planned Emergency Response Operation ends. The planting of rice has to be prepared within 3-4 weeks before the monsoon starts. The efforts involved in preparing planting for the harvest is massive and complicated. As the affected area is the granary of the county, the implication is that food security in the county in particular in the cyclone affected area will be a continuing issue of concern.

Logistical Constraints, a cross-sectoral/cluster concern;

Once the pipeline picks up and all other deliveries also start, strains on logistics (roads/trucking/boats/warehouses, etc.) will be concern.

Access of International Staff to the affect areas. (Cross-Sectoral)

- **AOB**
A Cluster member pointed out that cash program has been a sensitive issue with the government of Myanmar and it is advisable for Food Cluster to have an open dialogue with the government on its planned cash transfer projects.