

DETAILED NATIONAL REPORT

Title : National Report of MYANMAR, Relief and Resettlement Department  
(Focal Point) Prepared for the IDNDR Mid-Term Review and the 1994  
World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

Chapter: 1. OVERVIEW AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To reduce and prevent the loss of human lives and public properties, Relief and Resettlement Dept. is giving priority to <sup>conduct</sup> Disaster Management Courses in states and Divisions to educate and disseminate disaster knowledge and experiences for the public. Within the Decade, from 1990 to 1994, up to now, 11- Courses were conducted in 9- States and Divisions.

Also in the field of natural disaster reduction activities, Relief and Resettlement Dept. has been co-ordinating and co-operating with the other respective Departments.

For the reduction of fire hazards and mitigation activity, the Dept. of Human Settlement &- Housing Development has established low cost building materials development unit to develop non-flammable building materials with indigenous raw materials.

The Dept. of Health has also formulated a plan of actions for flood preparedness and response by the Sources of WHO.

To undertake action for monitoring, prediction and warning systems progress of cyclone and flood, the Dept. of Meteorology and Hydrology actively participate in the project of WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclone; funded by WMO ( World Meteorology Organization ).

ESCAP- Roving Seminar on Comprehensive Flood loss Prevention and Management, 30-31 March, 1993 was held in Yangon, Myanmar, sponsored by the Dept. of Met. & Hydro.

Apart from, the Relief & Resettlement Dept. celebrated the observation of International /Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, fall on 13 Oct '1993 in Yangon.

## II. RISK ASSESSMENT

### -HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Fire hazard is the most threatening one in Myanmar, especially in Upper region. This region is situated in Dry Zone and less rainfall area. Most of the houses are constructed by the local raw materials such as bamboo, mangrove and thatch. So these conditions are added to outbreak fire hazard and the most outbreaking fire hazards are due to the negligence of the local populace.

The second most hazard is the cyclonic storm because of having a long coastal line, especially Rakhine State; western part of the Myanmar is continuously located with the Bay of Bengal and so this region is regarded as cyclone vulnerable area.

The next threatening one is flood disaster. According to the heavy rainfall country, in rainy season ( May to October ), the lower parts of Myanmar some times suffer flood disaster; swelling of Ayeyarwady, Bago and Thanlwin Rivers when heavy incessant rain falls.

Earthquake, drought and famine were negligible compared to mentioned above disasters.

### - VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

The population of Myanmar has nearly 43.13 million. With the population increasing, Slums and homeless families were booming in some townships and that factor is going to become crowded residences and unplanned development of town plan. Hence, the Government has systematically established new towns in accordance with the townplan and so this measure will be supporting to reduce fire hazards, endangered to the public.

## III. MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

Relief & Resettlement Dept. has been co-ordinating and co-operating with Health Dept., Meteorology & Hydrology Dept., Fire Service Dept., Human Settlement & Housing /Housing /Development Dept., Irrigation Dept. and Myanmar Red Cross Society in the field of conducting Disaster Management Courses, natural disaster preparedness and preventive measures.

Previously, the Human Settlement & Housing Development Dept. has been involved in post-disaster activities such as providing rehabilitation plans, resettlement and redevelopment schemes for those areas stricken by disaster such as fire, flood and storm. In doing so, mitigation of the disasters in future was tried to be achieved through physical planning. Some of the examples are Myeik and Meiktila fires.

Recently, the emphasis has been changed to pre-disaster management and disaster mitigation. After it has been identified that the main causes of fire out-break are due to unplanned development and use of inflammable building materials, the Department has undertaken the task of physical planning to prevent losses to potential disasters and has also established low cost building materials development unit to develop nonflammable building materials with indigenous raw materials.

The Human Settlement & Housing Development Dept. has established low cost non-flammable building material unit, much more progress will be achieved if international assistance in technology is available.

Apart from that there is in lack of mapping for risk management. International aid is therefore needed to establish GIS application system for identification of potential risk areas.

As long-term prevention and preparedness plan for cyclone & storm surge, (8) high-mounds Embankments ) which consist of refuge shelters and drinking water ponds were constructed in Pauktaw, Myebon and Minbya Townships in the Rakhine State - Cyclone prone area. During the Cyclone season ( April, May, June, October, November ), local populace can take refuge in these high-mounds and shelters in case of emergency to avoid storm surge, strong wind, up to the cyclonic storm.

Forecasting and warning system of cyclone and flood are carried out by the Meteorology & Hydrology Department. Department of Health has been formulating a plan of actions for flood preparedness, by the Health Sector Emergency Preparedness, Response in Monyo Township at Pegu Division and funding sources is WHO ( World Health Organization.)

The Relief & Resettlement Dept. has been conducting State and Division level Disaster Management Courses ( Short-term ) for the public education, and awareness on Natural Disaster Reduction with the co-operation of other departments concerned such as Dept. of Met. & Hydro., Dept. of Health, Dept. of Irrigation, Myanmar Red Cross society, People Police Force and Fire Services Dept. These courses are, in fact, the training for trainers and therefore they have to organize and conduct the sub-trainings in their regions so that the people may become familiar with and understand natural disaster preparedness and preventive measures.

Given lecturing subjects by Relief & Resettlement Dept. in these courses are as follow;

1. The Aims of conducting Disaster Management Course and Disaster Definition.
2. History of Disasters in Myanmar.

3. Disaster Administration
4. Counter Disaster Plan
5. Functions of Relief and Resettlement

Other departments concerned has also given lectures of their respective sectors. Within the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, (11) courses were conducted in (9) States and Divisions from 1990-1994 up to now and much more courses will be continued onward.

Land-use planning, Water and Forest Management activities has been implementing and planning by the other respective Ministries.

#### IV. WARNING

Being a WMO/ESCAP Panel member country, Dept. of Meteorology & Hydrology is participating in WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones Project funded by WMO ( World Meteorological Organization ). Participating countries are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Srilanka and Thailand.

Dept. of Met. & Hydro. is responsible for the forecasting and warning system of cyclone and flood. Hence, broad dissemination of warnings are made through the mass media such as Television, Radio, Wireless and newspapers.

#### V. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Myanmar is fully aware of the importance of international co-operation in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness activities, research, training and exchange of experiences. Hence, Myanmar always avails it self of the opportunity to send its officials to training Courses, seminars, and workshops in foreign countries funded by UNICEF and JICA ( Japan International Cooperation Agency ) etc.

On the otherhand, Regional seminars and workshops are accepted to observe with the cooperation and sponsorship of international and regional organizations - ESCAP, WMO, UNDP.

Apart from that on behalf the Myanmar Government, Relief & Resettlement Dept. is making donations in relief goods or in cash for the disaster victims of other countries and also contribution annual fund for UNDR0 and UNHCR.

VI. OVERALL EVALUATION AND FUTURE PROGRAMME OF IDNDR ACTIVITIES.

Unlike other countries in the world, Myanmar seldom or rarely occurred very major disasters causing vast amount of human life.

Mentioned above, in the report, the disaster causing large amount of loss and damage of State & public properties is fire hazard and most frequent fire hazards are evaluated due to the negligence of people; man-induced disaster. Natural disasters such as cyclone, flood and earthquake are lesser frequency than the fire hazard but impact and loss of state and public properties were immense; casualties are negligible.

Although we believe that the natural disasters are unpredictable, we are giving priority to undertake activities for Natural Disaster Reduction.

In doing so, we have based on the resources of man, money, materials and disaster experiences of our country. But we have the lacks of material resources and technology. eg. Lack of training aids equipments for public educating trainings and for seminars, workshops and modern telecommunication system will be needed to develop.

OUR GOALS

- To reduce the loss of lifes due to disasters;
- To reduce the loss and damage of State and public properties due to disasters;
- To reduce the impacts of natural disasters by the means of broad dissemination: Knowledge, information and motivation.