

# Integrating Environment Perspectives into Recovery:

## Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

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Post-conflict and disaster Management Branch, United Nations  
Environment Programme

# Environment and Recovery

Environmental Needs Assessment (ENA) is a critical part of Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) as it helps the recovery process to:

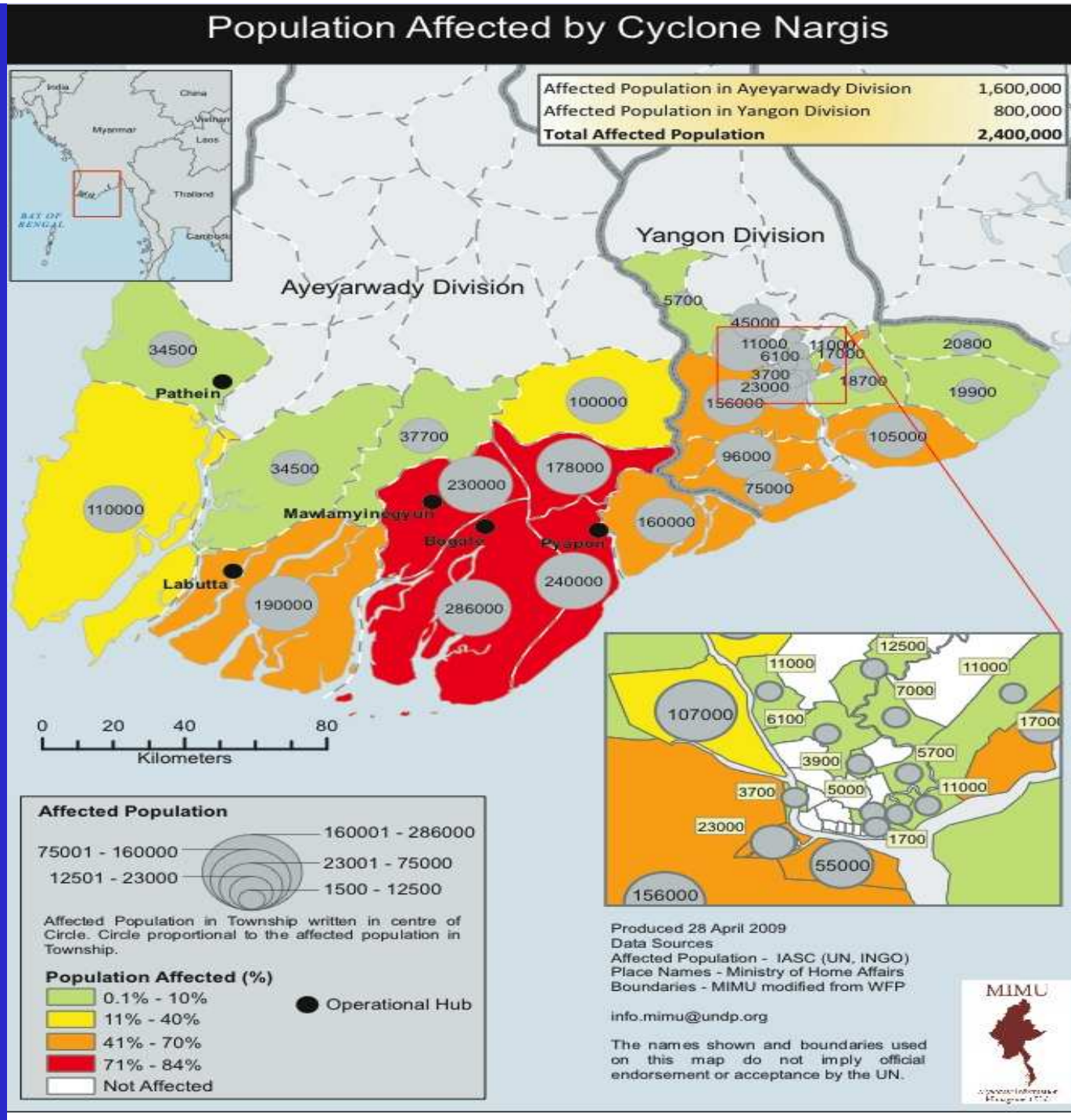
- ✓ Adopt a strategic and holistic approach;
- ✓ Identify long-term needs and priorities for affected communities;
- ✓ Restore livelihoods;
- ✓ Address cross-cutting issues such as protection for vulnerable groups and environment.

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# Nargis Impacts

- 140,000 killed
- 450,000 homes destroyed
- 4,000 schools damaged or destroyed
- 75% of health facilities destroyed



# What were the major environmental impacts of Cyclone Nargis?

- ❖ Damaged 35,000 ha of natural and planted mangroves and other trees;
- ❖ Pollution of surface and groundwater sources - 43% of ponds damaged;
- ❖ Salination and erosion of agricultural lands - 63% of paddy flooded by storm surge;
- ❖ Impact on fisheries by winds & storm surge;
- ❖ Sedimentation of rivers;
- ❖ Waste generation - debris from shelters, jetties

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# Why were the environmental impacts of Cyclone Nargis so significant for recovery?

The environment and natural resources underpin the livelihoods of the people in Myanmar:

- ✓ Agriculture - paddy rice and other cash crops;
- ✓ Subsistence home gardens;
- ✓ Fisheries - commercial and subsistence;
- ✓ Forest resources - timber, fuel, food & incomes;
- ✓ Secondary Natural resources-based industries such as fish processing, etc;
- ✓ Salt production.

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# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

## Challenges: (1) Integration of environment into the recovery process

- ✓ Government plans are sectoral;
- ✓ International community responses focus on mandate and strengths of agencies;
- ✓ Cluster system encourages fragmentation;
- ✓ Difficulties in coordinating Government and international responses;
- ✓ Environment as cross-cutting issue tends to fall through the cracks.

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# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

Challenges: (2) Fostering synergies between environment and sustainable livelihoods

- ✓ Environment is often seen as a single issue, e.g. mangroves or biodiversity;
- ✓ Need for alternatives to exploitation of natural resources, such as renewable energy;
- ✓ Balance conservation and income objectives;
- ✓ Lack of awareness of sustainable development;
- ✓ Role of Government to ensure sustainability.

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# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

## Challenges: Funding Environment initiatives

- ✓ Most funding in early stages is for basic needs - food, water, shelter;
- ✓ Environment not seen as a “productive” sector that contributes to livelihoods;
- ✓ Government plans focus on restoring production - agriculture, forestry, fisheries.

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# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

## Best Practices: (1) Government Responses

### Government plans for recovery and reconstruction:

- ✓ Emphasis on "Building Back Better";
- ✓ Plans are sectoral - only some mention environment ;
- ✓ Emphasis on Government actions.

### Myanmar Action Plan for disaster risk reduction (MAPDRR):

- ✓ Learns from Nargis experiences;
- ✓ Addresses all natural hazards;
- ✓ Has a national focus
- ✓ Environment is recognized as a cross-cutting issue and is integrated into DRR plans.



# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

Best Practices: (2) Environment and PONREPP

International Response - "Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP):

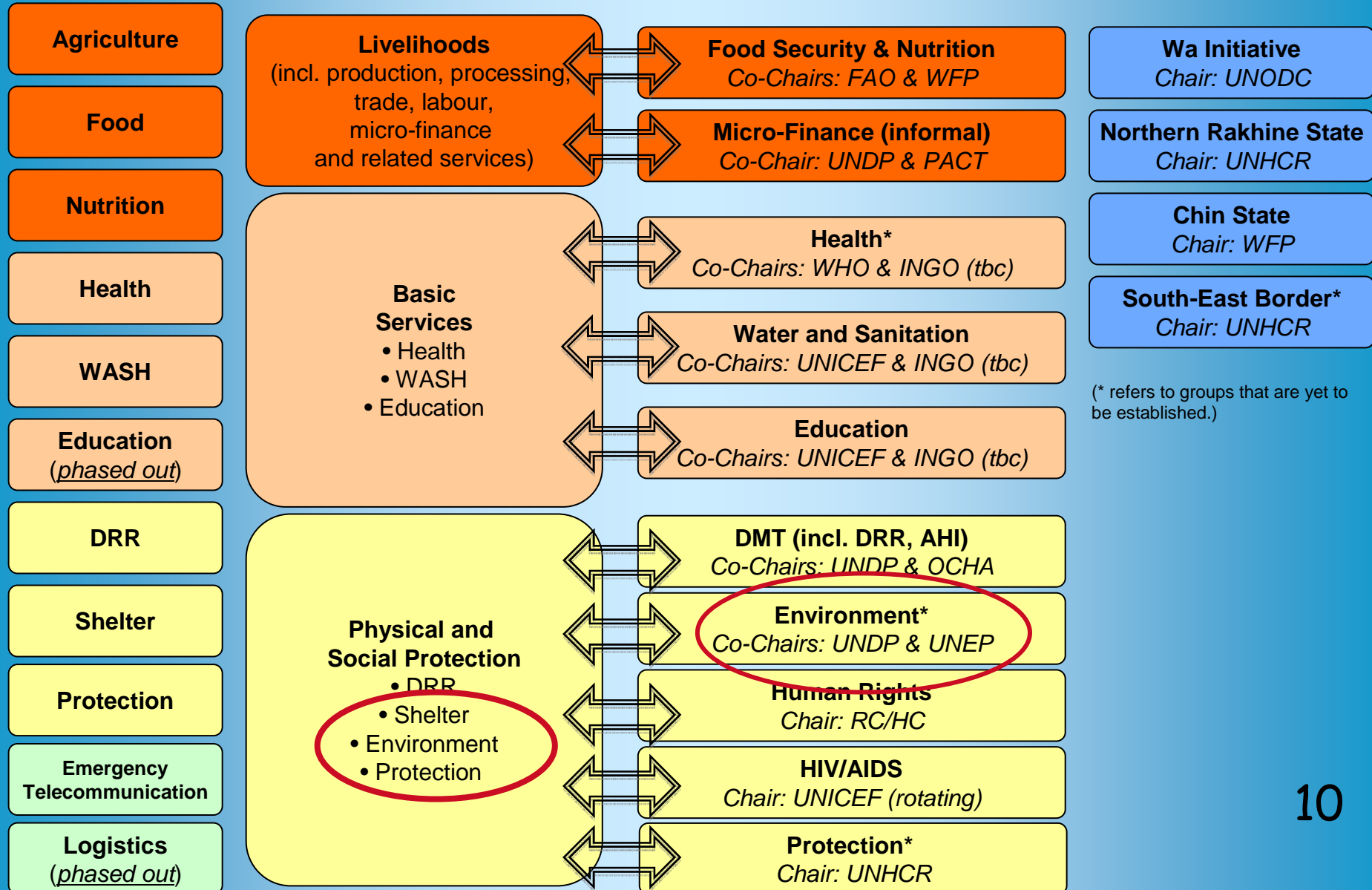
- ✓ Emphasis on "Productive, Healthy and Protected lives" for communities;
- ✓ Environment integrated into livelihoods, shelter, water and DRR;
- ✓ Revised working groups to replace clusters recognize environment as a cross-cutting issue:

**Clusters (Delta)  
Phasing Out**

**PONREPP Recovery Groups  
(Delta)  
Phasing In**

**Thematic Groups  
(nation-wide)  
Future**

**Geographic  
Coordination  
Future**



# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

Best Practices: (3) Proposed project for Environment, Livelihoods, & DRR:

Goal: promote sustainable livelihoods and DRR in the Nargis-affected areas through:

- ✓ Component One: community-based environment and natural resource management for sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction in the Nargis-affected areas;
- ✓ Component Two: An enabling framework of laws, policies, and strengthened institutions at national and local administration levels;
- ✓ Component Three: strengthened information & monitoring systems.



# Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

## Thank You

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