Integrating Environment Perspectives into Recovery:
Experiences from Cyclone Nargis

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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.
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
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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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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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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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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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.
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Best Practices: (2) Environment and 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:
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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.
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Thank You