

# Press Release

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## **ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force Meet on Post-Nargis Relief and Recovery Efforts in Myanmar**

*Bangkok, 17 January 2009*

The ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar held its fifth meeting in Bangkok today to review efforts in emergency relief, recovery and preparedness plans to help the people of Myanmar affected by Cyclone Nargis build back their lives.

Secretary-General of ASEAN and Chairman of the Task Force, Dr Surin Pitsuwan said, "The cyclone-affected people should not be forgotten. Eight months on, after Cyclone Nargis first struck Myanmar, our task remain as important as ever, helping the Nargis survivors recover and build back better their lives and communities. As we move to the early recovery stage, it is up to us how we want to fill the humanitarian space with more support and assistance."

The Task Force reviewed the progress and achievements under the ASEAN-led mechanism, including those made by the Yangon-based Tripartite Core Group (TCG), which was formed by the Task Force at the end of May 2008. One of the most recent outputs of the TCG was the first Periodic Review<sup>[1]</sup>, which was published online ([www.asean.org/CN.htm](http://www.asean.org/CN.htm)) in late December 2008. This humanitarian needs assessment showed that relief assistance still needs to be continued even though recovery efforts have commenced.

The TCG recently finalised a three-year recovery plan called the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan or PONREPP. The plan outlines the framework for the international community's assistance to the cyclone-affected people from January 2009 through December 2011, and takes a people-centred approach of promoting productive, healthy and protected lives.

Another report that will be launched soon is the Social Impacts Monitoring, which assesses the recovery efforts at the village level, and monitors the evolution of the socio-economic and social impacts of Nargis and the aid efforts. The report will be available at [www.asean.org/CN.htm](http://www.asean.org/CN.htm) by the end of January 2009.

At the meeting, Deputy Foreign Minister of Myanmar and Chairman of TCG, U Kyaw Thu, also updated the Task Force on the progress of its community-based recovery programme being implemented by ASEAN volunteers and NGO partners. He said, "ASEAN has played a critical role in providing the political umbrella under the ASEAN-led mechanism as well as in the success of the Tripartite Core Group." Mr U Kyaw Thu also conveyed the views of the international community which had stressed that the work of the TCG should continue beyond July 2009, the timeline given by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

The continuation of the ASEAN-led mechanism beyond July 2009 will be brought to the attention of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers when they meet in Hua Hin on 27 February 2009 prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit. Dr Surin said, "ASEAN's involvement in the post-Nargis response has added substance to the ASEAN Charter. It has also brought ASEAN closer to the people. We should now see how we can use the experiences and lessons learnt, and transform these lessons learnt into tools and practices to be applied in other parts of the ASEAN region."

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**Notes:**

<sup>[1]</sup> Periodic Review is an assessment of humanitarian needs and early recovery requirements at household level through the timely monitoring of community-focused indicators; to monitor the progress of households and community recovery using information from the monitoring indicators; and to guide strategic decision making amongst all relevant stakeholders using the generated data.

The ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis was established by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers of ASEAN on 19 May 2008. The Task Force consists of senior-level representatives from the ten ASEAN countries. Under this ASEAN-led mechanism, a Yangon-based Tripartite Core Group comprising representatives from the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the United Nations was set up on 31 May 2008. The Task Force also has an Advisory Group consisting of representatives from neighbouring countries to Myanmar, the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the INGOs, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.