



Myanmar Red Cross Society



MRCSS Preparedness for Response: 2020 monsoon season with COVID-19



HCT meeting, 29 May 2020

Prof. Dr. Htin Zaw Soe

Secretary General, Myanmar Red Cross Society



Background information

- Myanmar is one of the most disaster-prone countries with thousands of people affected by natural hazards every year such as cyclones and storms, floods, drought, lightning strikes, fire, and riverbank erosion, among others and also manmade disaster . During the dry season, the dry zone is affected by low rainfall, intense heat, degraded soil conditions, and water shortage. During the cyclone and monsoon season, frequent episodes of flooding, landslides, storm surges and strong winds adversely affect people and their livelihoods, often leading to displacement.
- The country is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the dry season from October to May and the cyclone and monsoon season from April to November with relatively moderate to high likelihood for medium to large-scale natural disasters to occur.
- The cyclone season is usually divided into three (3) phases: 1) Pre-monsoon/cyclone period in the months of mid-April to mid-May; 2) Monsoon period from mid-May to end of September; and 3) Post-monsoon/cyclone period in the months of October and November.

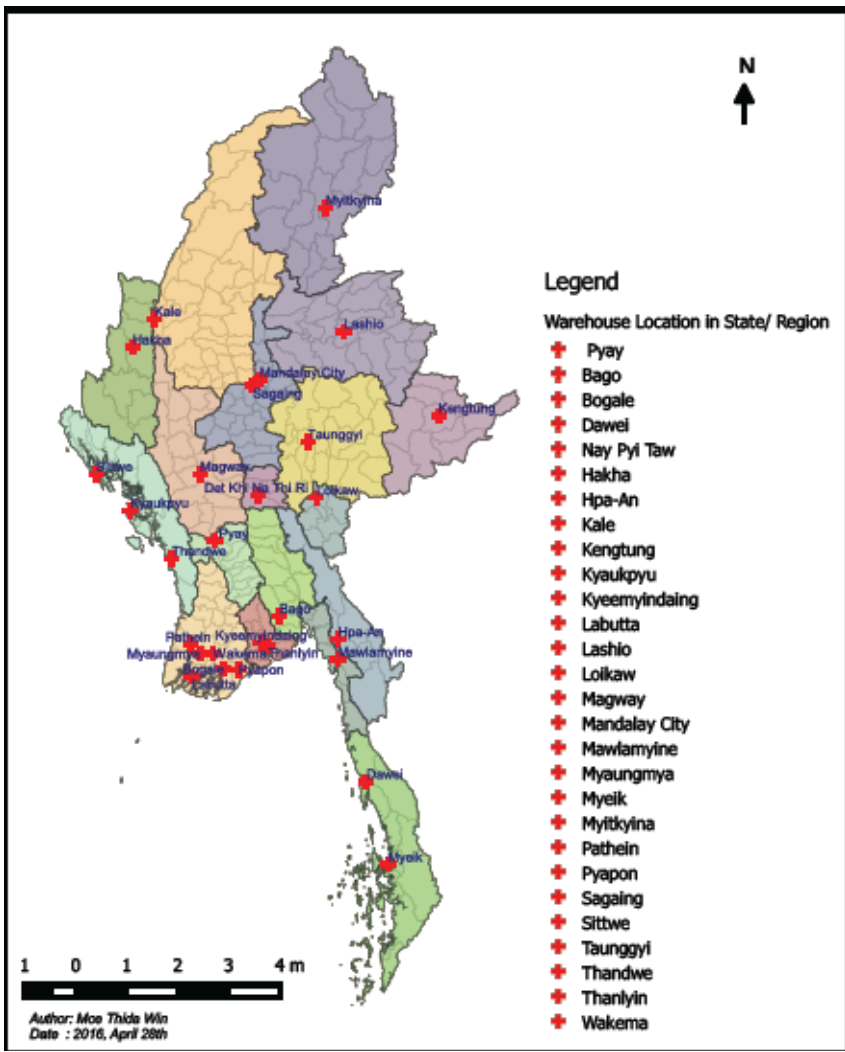


Response preparedness

- MRCS - Auxiliary by law to the national authority for humanitarian response, working closely with DDM, DMH and relevant ministries
- MRCS response plan includes small-scale and large-scale disaster with SOPs, equipped Emergency Operation Centre, contingency plan floods and earthquake
- MRCS Emergency Management Fund (fast released funds for the disaster with specific trigger points)
- 44,000 Red Cross Volunteers (RCVs) throughout 330 branches; MRCS current operations cover all 17 townships in Rakhine
- Nationwide 1,827 Emergency Response Team members (ERT), 290 Epidemic Control for Volunteers (ECV) and other specialty (Public Health, PSS, WASH in emergencies, cash transfer, DANA/MANA, FA) and currently 571 staff and 4,000 RCVs involved to COVID-19 operations with EOC activated in March 2020.



Warehouses and Logistics



- 28 warehouses across the country with prepositioned stocks
- Total volume of warehouses: 16,569m3 to cover 22,500 HH
- 774 trained logistics volunteers or ERTs
- Monitoring constantly the current supply chain gaps in case of large impact



COVID-19 operational aspects analysed in March (drought period) and April (monsoon period) preparedness:

- **Safety RCVs and staff:** Do's and Don'ts refreshed, personal protective items distributed (masks, disinfectants, and other safety equipment)
- **Modify operations:** hand washing stations, physical distancing in queues, transport and distributions, investing in IT hardware and software for remote working
- **Investing in cash readiness plus substituting material goods for cash** where possible and engage a financial service provider (pre-agreement ready)





Red Cross & Red Crescent tools tested in TC Amphan

for activation of monsoon preparedness and small-scale response

1. Activation of Early Warning Action funding window:

- Deployment of staff and volunteers through EOC for EW actions at most likely affected areas
- Safety of staff and volunteers under COVID-19: PSS support
- Movement of prepositioned stocks from other regions' warehouses to warehouses in most likely areas to be affected

2. Small-scale response for affected HH (271 in Bago, Sagaing, Ayeyarwady)

3. GO Platform online: real time information available <https://go.ifrc.org/>





MRCS capacity

1. **RCVs trained in March-May:** Epidemic Control Volunteers, Cash Transfer, Refresher logistics, Do's and Don'ts guidelines follow up RCVs at branch level
2. **DO's and DON'Ts for RCVs:** several short videos produced (finalizing and distributed through USBs to branches)
3. **PSS hotline for RCVs and MRCS staff:** under development COVID-19 ops
4. **Logistics gaps identified:** prepositioning stocks especially to hard-to-reach areas e.g. Rakhine, Chin States
5. **SOPs to be finalized before July:** MRCS SOP for evacuation under COVID-19 and SOP for shelter under COVID-19 with physical distancing and safety in operations (RCVs and targeted population) proactively: finance under revised MRCS Response Plan COVID-19 (to identify funding/donor)
6. **EOC operational and direct contact to DDM, DMH and branches**



Challenges

- Budget Gap for Preposition Stock for Preparedness
- Limited transportation due logistical challenges
- Procurement with limited transportation
- Social distancing
- PPE for volunteers and staff
- Limited evacuation sites and facilities



Way forward

- Incorporating COVID-19 in disaster preparedness and response – analysis of COVID-19 and monsoon season
- Sending guidelines on the Disaster Response and Preparedness on COVID -19 and share with state & region
- Update Response Plan of States and Regions considering COVID-19 situation
- Monitor/get early warning information timely from DMH (related to current system in the Bay of Bengal) and update the early warning and early actions by State and Regions at EOC Daily Briefing for COVID-19 Response
- Stock inventory and coordinate to replenish
- Emergency Management Fund support required, process and update to transfer the EMF (Needs to prioritize Rakhine, Chin and Ayeyarwady for May)
- Online CTP Orientation Training for supporting officers



THANK YOU



Any additional questions or collaboration, please contact:

htinzawsoe@redcross.org.mm