

Myanmar Red Cross Society  
Yangon



# Disaster Management Review

Final Report

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## Executive Summary

The Myanmar Red Cross Society has, over the last 12 months, undertaken a massive response and then recovery operation in the areas of the country severely affected by Cyclone Nargis. While this work will continue for another two years or more, and with needs in the delta region still far from covered, the National Society wanted to see where they were positioned as well as learn from these experiences to take an enhanced role in disaster management activities in the national arena. This review attempts to highlight some areas internally and externally where they can consider working to have such an effective input.

The great strength of the MRCS at community level is its volunteers, but in reality the number of volunteers is limited - as in every RC Society. This report acknowledges the work they are doing and does not propose to increase the amount of work by, and expectations upon, the volunteers, but to propose a more coherent and integrated approach to working with them, so the resources are used more efficiently and with a better overall impact. Conversely, interesting programming and more inclusion of the volunteers should have a direct impact on staff and volunteer retention and general community support for the MRCS.

The Disaster Management activities need to be brought together under a single "DM Programme" with leadership from the central DM Department, which identifies an over-riding common goal - for example: "Building Safer Communities" - and brings together a group of inter-related projects contributing towards this goal. The programme should have a long-term vision and be able to secure sustainable support over this period, and should share standardised monitoring and reporting with clear examples of impacts achieved. It will require partnerships with the government of the Union of Myanmar, with donors within and outside the Red Cross Movement and a wide spread of other national and international partners. Future support should be considered as DM programme support rather than project-based.

Training plays a significant role in MRCS's activities at present. A large amount of resources, financial and human, are put into training activities, and it is felt this work could be better coordinated and revised to ensure there is some real added value coming from the inputs made. It often appeared to be 'training for the sake of training' and the long-term impact was not considered. This will require some HQ-led rationalisation of the curricula as well as the identification of numbers, and later individuals, to whom training can be targeted, to ensure a long-term resource remains available to the Society.

Later in the report there are several areas where 'new' activities are suggested. These are areas where it is felt the MRCS could have a significant impact at the community level across the country - school & community-based DM activities, early warning programmes etc - but should not be seen as totally new areas of intervention. The CBHFA (community-based health and first aid) work, already the main focus of many of the volunteers, can (and should) be seen as complementary to the DM work, and with some revision of training curricula and follow-up support the wider messages and activities can be delivered by the same volunteers with the same degree of commitment. This implies a better level of programme planning and integration between departments at HQ, but it is eminently possible, and to a degree, has begun already.

This study has been undertaken in the midst of a large-scale recovery operation which in itself has not been the focus of the review. However, a number of good lessons have been identified from the Cyclone Nargis work - for example: the reporting, the hub structure, improved warehouse procedures, multiple skills for volunteers - and these are lessons which need to be documented and used elsewhere. The size of the country and the nature of the localised hazards faced within it do mean that not all project areas



will be relevant to all Branches and communities, but each will have the possibility of tailoring activities locally to be able to contribute in its own way towards the overall goal. Therefore, many of the lessons learned from the delta post-Cyclone Nargis can be shared and replicated elsewhere.

The MRCS's relationship with the authorities of the country are good but could certainly be enhanced through new and more engaged interaction with the relevant ministries. Most notably one recommendation is to forge a close relationship with the Ministry of Social Welfare - the Ministry responsible for disaster management - and to take a more proactive role in DM affairs on the policy and operational levels; being seen as a responsible, well-supported and efficient partner in preparedness and response work. This will be a shift from the mostly health-focussed activities at present, but could provide real added value to the responsible authorities.

The recommendations presented later list a number of areas and actions which the MRCS can take to begin this process. A lot comes down to advocacy, positioning the Society for where it can have a real impact and to contribute efforts it is good at; others highlight internal issues which can be addressed and discussed; and some are on programming issues. External support from the International Federation at its different levels, from partner NSs, from national and international partners, will be required to help the MRCS move this forward.

The authors hope that the comments and suggestions presented here will support and help guide the MRCS in its future DM work, and feel that most of the expectations of the Terms of Reference have been met. Although clearly mentioned as work still to be done, this mission did unfortunately not manage to review the actual training curricula and documentation in any detail.

Finally, the work to take these recommendations forward rests largely with the DMD staff at HQ, but impacts heavily on those at Branch levels and on the volunteers. There is, ultimately, work to be done at all levels. It is therefore strongly recommended that, when approved by the Executive Board, that this review is translated into the local language and disseminated to the Branches to aid with their engagement in the work ahead.





## Introduction

1. This review was carried out in Myanmar in the second half of March 2009. However, its roots go back more than 18 months when it was accepted that a forward-looking study of the structures and systems being used in the Myanmar Red Cross Society's disaster management activities would help align the Society's efforts to the developing needs around the country. It was never intended to assess or evaluate any of the operational inputs or ongoing programming in any depth, neither from the Cyclone Nargis response nor from any previous operations.
2. Following the massive damage done when Cyclone Nargis hit the Ayeyerwady delta area and Yangon overnight of 02-03 May 2008, the priorities of the MRCS and the International Federation obviously changed dramatically. A large scale relief and recovery operation was organised with the MRCS taking an active and leading role in the operations in the delta area, and these programmes continue. The review was postponed until March 2009.
3. The very nature of undertaking the review even at this time, when most of the focus, staff involvement and available funding remains heavily concentrated on the follow-up programming for the Cyclone Nargis recovery work, obviously detracts from and complicates the understanding of what is a 'normal' situation, both at HQ and local levels. The available literature and planning, the complementary roles of the various partners, the 64 (or so) other agencies and NGOs involved, the cluster approach, the technical working groups and so on, are probably all a temporary situation for the coming year or two only.
4. Following the government's move to the new city of Naypyidaw, several hours outside Yangon, the MRCS has announced it will also move part of its HQ from Yangon to the new capital in early May 2009; the operations divisions will remain in Yangon.
5. 'Decentralisation' is also a word commonly used in the MRCS context, but again exactly what this means and what direct implications it may have on DMD (and others) needs some clarification and dissemination.
6. Therefore, for the purposes of this review neither of these changes has really been considered, but any follow-up action coming from the recommendations later may have to be revised in view of structural or geographical changes in force in the months ahead.
7. The focus of this study has been - as much as possible in this context - on the structure and systems in place 'pre-Nargis', as originally anticipated. These are being considered as the foundation of the basic DM Division. Onto these some of the experiences and good practices developed through the Cyclone Nargis response operation over the last nine months can certainly be added.
8. The study has attempted to draw on these recent experiences to help develop recommendations to the Society for their future response planning, risk reduction and preparedness work, not least as programme funding could be available now via the Appeal to help make some significant impact while additional skills are available, but also recognising that the current levels of activities and staffing are not permanent.
9. The consultants wish to thank the MRCS and the International Federation's delegation in Yangon for their assistance in planning and supporting this review mission, and on their willingness to commit their knowledge, time and energy to the exercise.



## Methodology

10. The review was carried out by two external consultants - one national and one international. Field visits were undertaken to two areas of the country - the national consultant travelled to Rakhine State, on the western coast of the country; the international consultant travelled to the delta area in Ayeyarwady Division directly affected by Cyclone Nargis.
11. As this report is intended to have a national perspective, other methodologies were used to ensure some direct inputs to the process by representatives from other States & Divisions and at various levels of the MRCS structure. In particular a one-day workshop was held in Yangon on 19 March 2009 at which 14 representatives from four Divisions and one State were present (see Annex 1), in addition to MRCS HQ and Executive Committee representatives from Yangon. This was an animated and interactive session with relevant inputs from all participants, and good to have an engagement between staff and volunteers from all levels of the Society.
12. Workshop discussions and working sessions explored what the MRCS is currently doing in DRR work, and what more it could do; what went well in recent response operations, what opportunities were missed, and what could be improved in the future.
13. During the Workshop a SWOC (as 'Challenges' rather than 'Threats' was used) analysis was done, which proved to be both very participatory from all concerned as well as supporting many of the findings coming from other sources. Four groups were formed, each with representatives from HQ and Branches, and each group had one of the following contextual situations to consider when completing the SWOC:
  - "MRCS in the Country Context" (see para 34);
  - "Administrative Structure & Organisational Network" (see para 41);
  - "Volunteer Mobilisation and Management" (see para 49); and
  - "Resource Mobilisation" (see para 56).The groups' written responses are shown under the relevant paragraphs below.  
*[NB: the entries in the SWOC charts are shown as written by the participants and not edited for this report!]*
14. A meeting was held with representatives of the French Red Cross delegation in Yangon, who are working with the MRCS on DRR activities in several Branches (see para 68).
15. External meetings were held with several partners, each of which is involved in some DM activities in Myanmar, in conjunction with the MRCS: the government's Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, and the Department for Relief and Resettlement; local NGO Mingalar Myanmar; international agencies - OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP and ADPC.
16. In all cases the partners' comments about the MRCS were positive, but feeling they were overstretched and under-resourced for what they (the MRCS) were expected to deliver. Interestingly, most international Agencies described MRCS as their first choice of national implementing partner, despite these resource limitations, and an offer from UNICEF was again made to support improved warehouse staff trainings.
17. Documentary reviews & analysis and numerous direct interviews were also undertaken with MRCS staff and IFRC delegates.



18. A debriefing session with the Executive Committee was carried out prior to completion of the review exercise, to provide specific feedback and responses to the Committee members on some of the comments and general recommendations.
19. The report was then finalised after circulation to the MRCS Executive Committee, DM Division and the Delegation of the International Federation in Yangon. Comments and corrections received have been integrated into the Final Report where relevant.

## National Context

20. The Union of Myanmar covers an area of 676,577 sq km, bordering India and Bangladesh to the north-west, Tibet and China to the north-east, Laos to the east, and Thailand to the east and south-east. The Himalayan mountain range begins in northern Kachin State; the country's extensive coastline, 1,930 kms in length, faces west to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. The central rice-producing heartland of the country is surrounded by mountains and ranges of hills, from which three major rivers - the Ayeyarwady being the largest - flow southwards towards the sea.
21. The country's population of around 56 million people is divided into eight main nationalities, further split into numerous sub-groups. About 11% of the population lives in and around the capital, Yangon; across the country around 70% of the population is involved in agriculture.
22. Administratively, Myanmar is divided into seventeen States or Divisions; below these there are 65 Districts and then 325 Townships. Each Township is the administrative centre for a number of villages. The MRCS has a Branch structure in 198 Townships across the country.
23. The country is exposed to a range of natural disaster hazards:
  - **Cyclones:** the coastal areas of Rakhine State are those most commonly affected by cyclones from the Bay of Bengal, during the annual tropical storm seasons (April/May and October-December).
  - **Tsunamis:** the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami affected parts of Myanmar's coastline and caused around 60 deaths, with many hundreds of families made homeless. Over recent centuries there has been a recorded tsunami strike on average every 25 years or so.
  - **Storm Surges and Flooding:** most coastal areas are threatened by lesser tropical storms and storm surges. Other parts of the country are exposed to flooding from excessive monsoon rainfall and high river levels.
  - **Earthquakes and landslides:** several parts of the country are susceptible to earthquakes, with landslides also being common in the northern hill areas; the last major landslide was in Thanintharyi Division in 1997, following heavy rains;
  - **Fires:** before Cyclone Nargis, fire was seen as the most devastating hazard. It remains the main threat in some States, usually caused by the practices of storing fuel or cooking close to, or inside, houses which are made of combustible materials.
  - Other hazards include **heatwaves, drought and localised storms.**

Due to the frequency of cyclones in this area, the disaster management strategies in place in Rakhine are better developed than in other parts of the country. The unexpected track of Cyclone Nargis across the Ayeyarwady Delta area, which had not experienced a similar cyclone for many decades, highlighted the lack of preparedness measures in place in other parts of the country.



24. The last time (prior to Cyclone Nargis) a national disaster was declared was in 1968 when the cyclone which devastated Sittwe (Rakhine State) killed 1,037 people. The last major cyclone to hit Rakhine State, in 2007, resulted in one death and 50,000 people being relocated ahead of the storm, thanks to well-developed early warning, preparedness and mitigation processes developed in the meantime by a number of agencies and the local authorities together. However, it is felt that further work still needs to be done on public awareness, even here.
25. In view of the water-related hazards, water safety awareness and lifesaving activities could make a significant impact at times of disaster.

## Myanmar Red Cross in the Country Context

26. The MRCS is 'auxiliary to the government' and is in a position to offer a strong support role, but exactly what this role is, or what 'auxiliary' means in the Myanmar context, is still the subject of some debate - as elsewhere. It would appear that the government's expectation is that the MRCS will provide volunteers at times of disaster response, to work primarily on community health activities under the direction of the Township medical officers (see para 28). However MRCS can do much more than this and should be strongly advocating with the government and formalising the areas of intervention where they can make a significant difference in a wider DM role.
27. At a central level the government has created a national Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee (NDPCC), reporting to the prime minister, as the focal point for disaster preparedness, response and coordination. Operationally, there is a central NDPCC management committee with ten sub-committees; members at these two highest levels currently are the government ministries or departments. The MRCS could, however, advocate with its ministerial contacts to become a member of this National Committee.
28. This structure is similarly replicated at State/Division, District and then Township levels. The MRCS is a member of the sub-committee for Health at national, State/Division and District levels.
29. At Township level, the MRCS is a member of the sub-committees for Health, Search & Rescue, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, Mitigation & Establishment of Emergency Shelter, and Assessment of Losses.
30. The Chairman of the Township Branch level is always the Township Medical Officer (and an employee of the MoH). Other government officials also sit on the local Committee. The day-to-day manager of the Township Branch is a volunteer and known as the "2 I/C" or "G2".
31. This relationship with the Ministry of Health at all levels perhaps limits the potential wider opportunities for Branch activity planning towards disaster risk reduction activities in general, because of its close focus on specific health-related issues, such as first aid. In view of the suggestions elsewhere to foster enhanced integration of programme activities and to use the volunteers' availabilities for a more cohesive but wider approach, the development of additional skills and capacities within the volunteer base is needed - as well as a broader range of Branch level activities.
32. In theory a National Disaster Plan exists, though it is not in evidence, and it remains unclear what role - if any - is specifically allocated to the MRCS within this national plan. The day-to-day national disaster preparedness and planning work is handled by the Department of Relief and Resettlement (whose director-general is a vice-president of the MRCS). This is a department of



the Ministry of Social Welfare and most other 'response and preparedness' activity partners also come under this Ministry.

33. The MRCS is considered (according to external interviewees) to be an important support to the government departments, though this is, it seems, more by default and capacity rather than formal agreement. In turn this perhaps detracts from the MRCS's ability to focus on any specific areas of intervention which may be a better option in terms of its ongoing commitments to training and preparedness. At the same time, MRCS is seen to have more potential in CBDRM activities than the UN Agencies or other NGOs, but is correspondingly considered to be 'undermanned' and 'not visible enough'.

34. Other issues coming from the Workshop's SWOC Analysis mentioned in para 13 above, are as follows:

**Focus: MRCS in the Country Context**

<p><b>Strengths:</b>          Volunteers and Branches at all levels across country          Red Cross Laws and policies in force          MRCS Mission and Vision          Auxiliary force in the country          MRCS is recognised the State          Annual implementation plans          39,000 registered volunteers          Cooperation with partners &amp; social organisations          Can mobilise support in emergencies</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b>          Low data collection and communication levels          Not total nationwide coverage          No paid staff at State and Division level          Limited donor base          Little support from local entrepreneurs or businessmen          Insufficient income generation at Branch level          Need more IEC materials and tools          Insufficient warehousing capacity</p>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b>          Cooperation with UN organisations and NGOs          Financial support for disaster response from international and national donors          Portfolio of properties          Assistance from RC Movement partners          Ability to undertake independent relief activities</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b>          Technical skills needed          Financial support needed at lower levels of MRCS          Little or no budget or assistance from international levels          Needs better cooperation with UN agencies and NGOs</p>

## Organizational Context

35. The Myanmar Red Cross Society currently has its HQ in central Yangon (see para 4 above) and is represented in all States and Divisions down to Township level. It is the only organisation with such national coverage at all levels. There are approximately 39,000 registered volunteers in the Society, working at 198 Township Branches (although there are said to be volunteers in all of Myanmar's 325 Townships). Of these registered volunteers, approximately 30% are considered 'active'.

36. At State/Division Branch level, there is a Red Cross Supervisory Committee, and the chairman of the MRCS is the State or Divisional Medical Officer, an employee of the Ministry of Health. It is a similar structure at District and Township level.

37. Following a 2001 structural review the MRCS HQ in Yangon had five divisions with their own structures and activities - Disaster Management, Health, Training, Communications, Finance and Administration. Decision-making falls to the volunteer President and Executive Committee; there is also a newly-created salaried post of Chief Coordinator. After Cyclone Nargis, the Training Unit was moved and now falls under the authority of the Health Division.

38. The Disaster Management Division (DMD) is one of the original divisions mentioned above. Prior to Cyclone Nargis it consisted of seven staff at HQ with none at Branch level. With the retirement of the previous Head of Division shortly after Cyclone Nargis hit, his replacement came from the



government's Department of Relief and Resettlement. The DMD was then restructured to incorporate part of the Logistics Unit, and now numbers 19 people: below the Head of Division, there are now two teams - Programme (seven people) and Logistics (10 people) - each managed by a Deputy Head; there is also a 'shared' administrative and finance assistant.

39. However, about half of this team is funded by the Cyclone Nargis operation, and when that ends in 2-3 years their positions will also cease, so the DMD staff numbers will probably revert to around nine or ten people.
40. To respond to the operational needs of the Cyclone Nargis programme, nine field 'hubs' were set up by the MRCS in the affected delta area. The idea was to speed up operations approval processes and to plan and react closer to the affected populations. The hubs are run by a manager with numerous support staff - these are mostly outsiders recruited in for the duration of the operation.
41. In some cases the hubs work closely with the local Township Branch, in others less closely, although the actual fieldwork is still carried out by the Branch volunteers. This structure has eased and speeded up decision making. It is, however, seen as a temporary situation and will be disbanded following the closure of the recovery operation.
42. Additional comments on the administrative structure of the MRCS, as fed back from the SWOC Analysis, included the following:

**Focus: Administrative Structure & Organisational Network**

<p><b>Strengths:</b>          Oldest agency          Seven Fundamental Principles          Strong volunteer base          Three objectives of MRCS' Mission and Vision          Present at all levels in the country          Organised into Executive Committee and Divisions          Implements widely with plans and projects</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b>          Executive Committee members change often          Some volunteers have insufficient time or interest          Coordination between Divisions and projects          Not every Township has volunteers and no paid staff at all levels          Non-RC organisations do not participate enough          No guidelines and rules for cooperation with partners          Monitoring and Evaluation is very weak at every level          Not yet self-reliant          Not enough DM staff at HQ</p>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b>          State recognised organisation          MRCS activities are supported and backed-up by the authorities          Guided by related Ministries          PNS/IFRC/ICRC interested to support          Public-focused organisation</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b>          Auxiliary force for the country          Donor dependent          Assistance from other organisations          Trained and skilled staff and volunteers move to other organisations</p>

43. The MRCS has a written Disaster Management Policy dating from July 2005. It is perhaps appropriate at this time to review its wording and coverage, and to update or rewrite it as necessary to include the scope for what the National Society aims to do in its disaster management work (for example: role(s) as agreed with the government, issues of quality, accountability, adherence to SPHERE guidelines, integration with other programme areas, and similar). Other DM-related policy or strategy documents should also be reviewed at the same time.
44. The DM Policy states (Clause 10) that each Township should have its own disaster management plan. It has not been possible to determine during this review how many of these really exist, and/or if they do if they are considered realistic and achievable. Certainly some Township level risk mapping is being started, in collaboration with the Township General Administration Department, but probably more on local initiatives than as a coordinated request from MRCS HQ.



## Branches and Volunteers

45. Just as the hazards vary from one State or Division to another, so too do the capacities of the MRCS Branches. The HQ considers five of the 17 State or Division Branches to be 'strong', with others at various lower levels. This is based on their effectiveness in handling the prevailing local needs, numbers of volunteers, ability to raise local support, relationships with the local authorities, capacities to respond as required, and so on. Only two of the State Branches have paid staff; other staff members are all volunteers.
46. There are 39,000 registered volunteers in the MRCS, managed through the 198 Townships where the Society has an active Township Branch. Members and volunteers (seen as the same thing) fall into one of three categories:
- School members (those still in education) make up approximately 25% of the total; their activities are centred on community health education & dissemination, and basic first aid training;
  - Life members are the general adult volunteers;
  - Brigade members are those who partake in the "uniformed activities".
47. All joining members are expected to follow a Basic First Aid training course within the first six months. Further training appears to be rather ad-hoc and the level of activities varies widely, and the MRCS does have some challenges in some places in retaining its volunteers.
48. There is also an open question around payments to some volunteers and not others, and certain 'bad feelings' this causes. With many demands on the Society to deliver activities through its volunteers, many of them have been expected or asked to commit considerable amounts of their time, particularly in the Cyclone Nargis operation. This issue needs some clarification and communication.
49. Other issues coming out of the SWOC Analysis, specifically around the volunteer question, are shown here:

### **Focus: Volunteer Mobilisation and Management**

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer Policy</li> <li>RCV Registration System</li> <li>Uniform Regulations</li> <li>Volunteers' Supporting Guidelines</li> <li>Recognition and Insurance</li> <li>Over 14,000 volunteers trained for emergencies</li> <li>325 Township RC Brigades</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited insurance for volunteers at Township level</li> <li>Over 100 Townships do not have registered volunteers</li> <li>RC knowledge amongst volunteers not strong</li> <li>Duties and responsibilities of RC Brigade volunteers</li> <li>Limited numbers of skilled RC leaders at Branch level</li> <li>Problems with retaining good volunteers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition and appreciation by Authorities</li> <li>More media coverage</li> <li>Improving community awareness</li> <li>Community willingness to work with MRCS</li> <li>High-level authorities' willingness to strengthen MRCS</li> </ul>	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition with other humanitarian organisations</li> <li>Sustainability of funding support from donors</li> <li>Understanding of the auxiliary role amongst volunteers and authorities</li> <li>No uniforms provided</li> <li>No regular volunteer appreciation and recognition</li> </ul>

50. There is no standard volunteer profile across the country - in some States/Divisions school members and <25s are in the majority; in other States/Divisions it may be older adults; and elsewhere young primary school-aged children and older adults. Volunteer management and retention remain challenges to the MRCS, although work is ongoing to address some of these.
51. In the follow-up to Cyclone Nargis, many volunteers have gained new skills and experiences which they are continuing to use for effective interventions at community level. These still, though, tend to be responsive rather than preparatory skills, and still heavily focussed towards health-



related issues. It is important that all volunteers' skills are expanded beyond just health interventions and knowledge, and that lessons and experiences learnt from the Cyclone Nargis programmes are shared more widely across the MRCS volunteer base.

52. To support this there could be some good opportunities in the Cyclone Nargis response programming for volunteers from other areas to visit and learn some practical skills 'on-the-job' in an ongoing operation - e.g. distribution techniques; assessment work. This would take some planning and organisation, and some financial commitment, but it could be very motivating and a useful exercise in overall capacity building. Appropriate volunteer selection will be critical to ensure the greatest benefits. The transitional strategy currently under development needs to define the process and consolidate the best practices, and these can be reflected in the next MRCS Strategic Plan.
53. There are many and varied demands on the MRCS volunteers, often with the Society and volunteers being considered to be the 'implementer of first choice'. Interviewees from other Agencies viewed the MRCS volunteers as good and committed, and that in most cases programmes and activities were well delivered. It is important to understand the level of capacity available, especially at local Branch level, and to only accept outside commitments based upon the known abilities to deliver. Other concerns have ranged from the MRCS 'being under-manned' (based on expectations from outside), to being 'unable to deliver some contracted project inputs because of too many demands'. Others have said the MRCS should improve its own visibility to improve its access to communities.
54. As mentioned elsewhere, the government's expectations at present seem to be that the MRCS can provide volunteers in times of need to concentrate on disease prevention and health promotion activities, under the supervision of Township medical officers. The MRCS volunteers should be able to do considerably more than this and this change in perception will involve considerable advocacy work from the MRCS to the government at various levels, as well as a broadening of the skills of the volunteers.
55. Resources - human and financial - are limited, particularly at Branch levels of the Society, leading to problems with enough materials, support for activities and programming limitations.
56. Additional comments from the SWOC Analysis done at the Workshop are reproduced here:

**Focus: Resource Mobilisation**

<p><b>Strengths:</b>          Annual programmes supported by Federation and PNS (Danish RC and French RC)          Some funding from other donors (UNICEF, UNHCR)          Income generating activities          Printing press, kit shop, rental fees          39,000 registered volunteers available (25% trained)          20 RC ambulances across country          Financial regulations developed and in use          Warehouses</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b>          No asset record in most Branch offices (all levels)          Weak income generating activities at Branch levels          Seasonal fund-raising activities          90% of Townships don't have offices/communications or paid staff          Not enough warehouses in country          Township Committees not interested in fund-raising or income generation          MRCS volunteer staff (State, Division and Township) have outside responsibilities          Need to restructure State/Division, District and Township Branches          Lack of cooperation and coordination between paid project staff and project volunteers</p>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b>          PNSs more interested due to Cyclone Nargis operation          Some PNS want to support bilaterally          More job opportunities after Cyclone Nargis operation          Contribution of new office building in Naypyidaw          Business and private donations to HQ</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b>          Not enough outside assistance          Many other competing organisations</p>



57. An earlier MRCS DM Review was undertaken in 2006/07 with the following objectives:
- To review and revise the implementation of plans and projects for the previous year
  - To realise the actual status and conditions for the States and Division regarding their DM work, and the identified gaps
  - To learn from the strengths and weaknesses of the DM activities and to revise the programmes accordingly for the future
  - To review and analyse the results for a better programme delivery.

The following points were the main recommendations to come out of that review:

- To increase the quality of DART members, their training and the materials used
- To increase DART multiplier training
- To upgrade and develop the communications network
- To create Branch focal persons/points
- To prepare a monitoring and evaluation plan
- To upgrade coordination with the government of Myanmar and other NGOs
- To develop a PSP programme (stress, conflict, search and rescue)
- To develop an early warning plan down to local level
- To provide incentives for MRCS members
- To have more survival kits and communications materials available
- To improve the warehouse staff skills, and create some jobs
- To look at warehouse maintenance and logistics procedures
- More equipment and skills needed to deal with mud and landslides
- More survival kits and life jackets needed for volunteers
- To continue working on the MRCS contingency plan and to promote it in coordination with government departments and NGOs
- Disaster preparedness programmes needed to counter the effects of climate change

It is interesting - but perhaps not coincidental - to note that many of these points are still included in the list of recommendations later in this 2009 Review.

## Reporting and Communications

58. Contacts between Branch and HQ are neither regular nor particularly straightforward, due in part to limited communications networks in the country. While State and Division level offices (and the hubs mentioned in paras 40/41 above) have telephone systems, the Township branches mostly do not, so communicating with them becomes harder and they often have to rely on other systems available within the communities (in some cases messages between Branches and communities/volunteers are transmitted by messenger).
59. A GSM-based phone system called 'CDMA' is now available in Myanmar and is what is in place in the hub offices, as well as increasingly in the communities on a commercial basis. Consideration needs to be given regarding permanent installations of such technology in the MRCS's lower level offices in the more disaster-prone areas (as a first step), and ultimately across the rest of the Branch network.
60. A Branch level reporting format (of six pages) has been developed to ensure standardised feedback from District Branches to HQ, and blank copies have been widely distributed down to Township level. Questions are clear and cover all aspects of the Branch membership and activities. The idea is that on a regular basis these are filled and returned to HQ thus enabling a better understanding of volunteer numbers, activities, needs, stocks, responses and so on.



61. The hubs in the Cyclone Nargis operation have developed a regular and standard reporting system which works. However, it appears that the compliance by the other Branches to fill and return these forms varies widely, and this mechanism should be strongly encouraged – even enforced – by the Executive Committee. Receiving regular data in this way would assist in the development of the volunteer database, amongst other things.

## Training

62. Much time and effort has been committed over recent years into training – mainly in basic first aid and at all RC levels – and while this is appreciated by the volunteers at the time, there is a strong sense that it ends up largely being training for the sake of training, or for the sake of numbers, rather than for real quality and long-term NS capacity enhancement.
63. There appears to be little or no real strategy for capitalising on this considerable investment. For example, one respondent suggested that in recent years up to 10,000 people had been trained in CBFA, but many of these people could apparently not be found or mobilised again.
64. Training needs more quality control, especially regarding the trainers' skills, cost effectiveness and community mobilization techniques. Previously the MRCS involved a lot of multiplier First Aid training managed by the Training Division and Volunteers Department, and now the DMD has also started First Aid training. However after the training they have been unable to continue community activities due to decreasing interest, poor planning and/or no funding.
65. Therefore some standardisation of content and approach is required, with the development of a revised, integrated curriculum for community-based health and disaster preparedness activities. Discussions are already beginning on this.
66. Some consideration needs to be given to ensure the right calibre of trainee is selected for the various courses – particularly here the CBDRM and DART courses – to ensure the investment is worthwhile and available to the MRCS over the longer term.
67. At a recent UN and NGO workshop about CBDRM in Myanmar, the partners indicated a desire to make use of the existing MRCS materials already translated into the Myanmar language. This offers a good profile to the MRCS and should be followed up with the partners.

## Current and Future Programming

68. The French RC is working with the MRCS in nine locations on Branch level risk reduction strategies and local hazard mapping. In addition, and to support these activities, additional inputs are being made to Branch capacity building work.
69. In one area of the Cyclone Nargis operation, CBFA<sup>1</sup> volunteers started to mobilize people and make community action plans for clean-up campaigns, health education sessions and latrine construction. During the community mobilization they use community mapping and livelihood seasonal calendars in their planning. Other disaster mapping at community levels will be undertaken in order to reduce stress ahead of the coming monsoon season. Some of these experiences can clearly contribute to a more joined-up approach elsewhere in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> CBFA has been renamed since January 2009 and is now known as CBHFA – Community Based Health and First Aid – to better reflect what the approach aims to do.



70. Early Warning activities could be introduced, particularly but not exclusively in the coastal areas, to augment and support the warnings available via the authorities. A list of possible areas of intervention is shown in Table 2 on page 20, and these would be in coordination with the other work and messaging designed for delivery through the school (para 71) and the communities in general (para 72).
71. It is felt that a considerable impact could be made by the MRCS in its DRR work by designing activities which could be delivered through schools - to the students, the parents and/or the teachers. This would involve working with the Ministry of Education to design and approve a curriculum module, and in conjunction with other agencies already engaged in this approach, to ensure that the modules are delivered in the classroom. Some examples of topics which could be covered are listed in Table 2 on page 21 and a suggested Framework for delivery is listed as Annex 4 on page 35.
72. Further coordinated work also needs to be undertaken on the subject of hazard mapping and planning, now being undertaken by several agencies around the country. MRCS Branches also need to have completed their own local plans - as suggested in the existing DM Policy document. In turn the CBDRR needs identified through this process at MRCS Branch level will have to be brought together to ensure communities are involved and engaged in activities, in conjunction with some of the schools-based activities mentioned above. Some examples of topics which could be covered are listed in Table 2 on page 21 and a suggested Framework for delivery is listed as Annex 3 on page 34.
73. In 2003, a CBDP pilot project was designed by the DM Division for four villages in two Townships in the Ayayerwady Division. Its intention was to strengthen the MRCS's community based approach and to ensure better linkages between the CBFA and CBDP interventions, as well as to give a better grounding to volunteers in areas such as assessment techniques and the role of the RC Volunteers in disaster preparedness and response. Although the project was considered successful (and apparently continues in the original four villages), the MRCS financial support ended in 2006 as funding was no longer available. Also see Table 1.
74. Some consideration or preparedness planning needs to go into the 'unknown' - the Contingency Plan. There are various such plans underway: the government has one, the MRCS has one and the IASC has one, all in various forms of development. The MRCS should advocate now for the roles it is comfortable with undertaking in a national and/or local context, to ensure these roles are correctly identified in the various plans. This would assist in formalising its 'auxiliary role' and avoid MRCS being presented with a decision beyond their capacities at a time when the national Plan (or IASC's) is finalised.
75. In the same context, consideration needs to be given on a MRCS role in non-natural disasters, for example a large population movement (IDPs or refugees), for some reason.

## Water and Sanitation

76. As a response to Cyclone Nargis several PNSs supplied WatSan ERUs and WatSan kits. These were deployed to the delta area at the time after practical training sessions with local staff and volunteers in Yangon. Since their handover, they have been modularised into smaller units and have been redeployed to Branch level to assist in other emergency situations. The ICRC also



handed over five treatment units and drilling equipment which is being used by the WatSan Unit. Chemicals and other consumables are locally available in Yangon (in limited quantities).

77. The trained MRCS staff and some of the equipment have been called upon several times in recent months to assist with emergency water/sanitation interventions with other agencies elsewhere in Myanmar, and MRCS is already considered a major resource in WatSan interventions in the country.
78. There has been ongoing capacity building work and there are now about 50 staff and volunteers able to run the units, from both Yangon and the delta areas. Austrian RC has indicated long-term support to continue this training work. Manuals for the use, maintenance and storage of the equipment are available and have been translated into the local language.
79. While the MRCS is keen and committed to continue its work with WatSan in the future, the Unit currently falls under the Public Health in Emergencies Unit of the Health Division. Once again closer integration of the planning and activities between Divisions will be required to ensure the water units and other resources are used effectively in disaster response situations. Initial discussions on joint planning and training are already underway.

## Cyclone Shelters

80. Following Cyclone Nargis, there are plans by a number of donors and agencies to construct coastal cyclone shelters; UNDP plans 22 buildings and the Red Cross is planning four - and probably others are being planned due to the availability of emergency funding.

*One community, in the village of Panne Gone in the delta area, constructed its own 'appropriate technology' cyclone shelter, using coconut tree trunks and bamboo, and able to accommodate 300 people. Assessed by engineers as "highly resistant and completely appropriate", it cost approximately US\$ 500 compared with the US\$ 300,000 for the agency-planned structures.*

81. A number of the following recommendations for MRCS relate to this - if indeed there is a significant number of shelters being built it is important that there is a coordinated approach and a real management programme constructed by the partners, and the MRCS could be influential in this both via its advocacy at governmental levels and in its preparedness activities at the community levels. For additional comment on this programme, please see Table 2 below.

## Programme Proposals

82. Table 1 below aims to show the current programme activities (with comments indicated) alongside proposed changes for the period ahead (with additional details noted). Note that this reflects an overall Programme Approach with subsidiary Activities included, which should be seen as inter-linked and complementary rather than as a list of separate projects. The final column relates to the specific recommendation number shown towards the end of this report, which further indicates the suggested timelines for implementation.
83. Table 2 outlines suggestions for additional or new programme areas to be explored, based on some of the preceding observations. Again, a note is given for the corresponding recommendation.



**Table 1 : Current Programming and Amendments**

<u>MRCS's Existing DM Programming</u>		<u>Amendments Proposed to Existing DM Programming</u>	Related Recom'd'n Number(s)
<b>Response Preparedness</b>			
<b>DART ToT and DART multiplier trainings:</b>	<p>The MRCS highlights its 'DART' (Disaster Assessment and Response Teams) training and suggests it has 440+ trained DART members/volunteers at the HQ and Branches across the country. (A January 2009 resource mapping exercise only identified 79 DART members.)</p> <p>However, when called upon to head to the delta after Cyclone Nargis, only a handful were actually found and mobilised and the team leaders were drawn from the HQ, weakening an already-stretched management team there.</p> <p>It also appears that, after the initial training round, there is no follow-up or refresher training of the DART members and important skills are not kept up to date.</p>	<p>A specific selection of a number of DART team leaders, and a specialised training course for that role, needs to be developed and implemented. Regular refresher trainings should take place. There should be an updated database listing the skilled and trained staff and volunteers.</p>	14
		<p>The focus for this network of DART volunteers should be maintained on a limited number of high quality well-trained individuals, maybe four or five at each State or Division level (or more in higher-risk Branches), selected from those currently on the roster. These people should be mature, stable and committed volunteers (and HQ staff) and likely to remain available to the MRCS for a good number of years. After their initial training, there should be a commitment to provide them with annual refresher/upgrading inputs, to ensure skills are kept current and to ensure ongoing commitment from the individuals.</p>	13 15, 39
		<p>The curriculum for the initial training rounds and for the refresher courses should be harmonised with those of the Federation for the Asia Region, and DANA knowledge and facilitating skills should be incorporated.</p>	16
		<p>The availability and skills of this DART network need to be better disseminated in government circles and seen as a national resource.</p>	4
		<p>It remains unclear why this is called DART, when for all intents and purposes this is exactly the same concept as the Federation-wide NDRT (National Disaster Response Team) - and although this may make little practical difference, it may make some sense for the MRCS to change the name (from DART to NDRT) to ensure there are commonalities in approach, understanding and acceptance across the region.</p>	17
<b>DP stock prepositioning:</b>	<p>The warehousing part of the overall logistics activities reports to the Head of the DMD - the transport, procurement and fleet management do not. There are small (one room) warehouses at district level, with 19 across the country and one larger central warehouse in Yangon. The intention is to hold an emergency stock of household or family kits for distribution in times of emergency response. The actual stock levels and warehouse capacity vary, however, from MRCS Branch to Branch. Only two of the warehouse staff are salaried; the others are volunteers.</p> <p>The government also holds strategic stocks of +/- 1,000 similar kits per State or Division, or approximately 25,000 nationally.</p> <p>A Logistics Capacity Survey focussing on warehouse capacity is being carried out concurrently to this study.</p>	<p>There appears to be no well-structured system in place for strategic stocking, stock reporting on numbers of family kits distributed, or on replenishment methods. There needs to be improved systems and procedures for documentation, transport, levels of authority (and sanctions), and general logistics procedures.</p>	24
		<p>Training of warehouse staff has long been recognised as being necessary but has still to be carried out in full though it was begun in 2008. UNICEF has apparently offered to support this training as an additional input to other programming they are doing with the MRCS, and this opportunity should be confirmed and comprehensive warehouse management training should be carried out.</p>	23, 43, 44, 45
		<p>The component parts of the two types of family kit (MRCS and government) are not the same, and some rationalisation between the two would be useful.</p>	25
		<p>Subject to the Logistics Capacity Survey recommendations, consideration should be given to locations of existing warehouse space as well as enhanced warehousing capacity in strategic high-risk locations, such as along the Rakhine State coast. All warehousing facilities should be repaired/improved as necessary, and warehouse management training delivered.</p>	22



**Table 1 (continued)**

<u>MRCS's Existing DM Programming</u>		<u>Amendments Proposed to Existing DM Programming</u>	Related Recom'd'n Number(s)
<b>Response Preparedness</b>			
<b>Recovery</b>	<p>MRCS is currently heavily involved in recovery work after Cyclone Nargis, covering a range of programme areas including PSP, public health promotion, livelihoods inputs, shelter rehabilitation, WatSan and other areas of intervention.</p> <p>It is likely that the Society will take similar roles in subsequent recovery operations, and skills and experiences being developed now need to be retained and enhanced.</p> <p>The design of the 'hub' structure needs to be evaluated and implemented in future operations as necessary, and shared regionally as appropriate.</p>	<p>While recovery work will always be required post-disaster, it is important to 'mainstream' DRR thinking into all recovery plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'building back better'</li> <li>• 'safer communities'</li> <li>• enhanced alerts and early warning systems</li> <li>• a better and wider understanding of the SPHERE guidelines</li> <li>• ensuring close community participation in planning</li> <li>• enhanced coordination and linkages with other stakeholders at all times</li> <li>• maximising the use of available resources</li> <li>• addressing secondary hazards and vulnerabilities and capacities</li> </ul> <p>This will again require a good level of integration between the various divisional programme plans for a more efficient input, and generally a better overall understanding &amp; knowledge of DM.</p>	Paras 95, 97, 98
<b>Contingency Plan</b>	MRCS Contingency Plan still under development	This work should continue, and MRCS should define its own capacities & interests to ensure they are well reflected in the IASC's Contingency Plan for Myanmar and the Standing Order of the government. It should also cover man-made situations (eg: possible population movements) and be compatible with the CBDM Manual. MRCS should advocate for a clear position for itself within these plans.	8
<b>Restoring Family Links</b>	Currently managed by the Communications Division, although usually considered to be a Disaster Response programme.	Consider moving this responsibility to the DM Division	52
<b>Community Based Disaster Risk Management</b>			
<b>CBDRM TOT and CBDRM multipliers</b>	<p>A number of CBDRM ToT training courses has been held across the country since 2002, and a number of senior Branch and HQ staff have attended.</p> <p>Since late 2008 more ToT courses have been delivered to a further 294 people from 49 Townships. These trainers are meant to be delivering 'multiplier' trainings to 294 communities; 54 have been done so far.</p> <p>Communities have to request the MRCS training and to provide some funding towards the costs, although some courses are financially supported by the local authorities.</p>	<p>Course curriculum and teaching methodologies to be revised and updated to reflect and support overall programme objectives (training should not be stand-alone) for effective response and to enhance the communities' coping capacities. The training curricula and the manuals should be harmonised with those already developed by the International Federation.</p> <p>SOPs and Manuals to be translated into local language(s).</p> <p>Multiplier trainings still continuing, to be targeted @ six villages per Township. By-products of the training should be village and Township level VCA maps and exercises. New IEC materials should be developed.</p> <p>Additional training resources and funds are required to better support this activity. There should be an updated database listing the skilled and trained staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of the course and the later activities of the Village DM Committees is also required.</p>	18 19 20 21



**Table 1 (continued)**

<u>MRCS's Existing DM Programming</u>		<u>Amendments Proposed to Existing DM Programmes</u>	Related Recom'd'n Number(s)
<b>Coordination</b>			
<b>Government Relationships</b>	Currently responsible to the Ministry of Health	<p>Recommend development of a closer working relationship also with Ministry of Social Welfare (Department of Relief and Resettlement), which is responsible for emergency response interventions. Use this relationship for MRCS to advocate for a position on the NDPCC, as well as to determine a formal and agreed 'auxiliary' role for the Society. Encourage the integration of IDRL.</p> <p>In view of the other programme areas listed elsewhere, suggested new (or enhanced) links to be developed and maintained with the following (at central and Branch levels):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Meteorology and Hydrology</li> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Ministry of Forestry (for Climate Change activities)</li> <li>• Local Government, Police, Fire Department, Customs, Immigration, Telecoms Department etc</li> </ul>	<p>1, 2, 3</p> <p>5, 9, 41</p> <p>10</p>
<b>Non-Government Relationships</b>	Some contacts but rather ad-hoc; MRCS definitely not being included in invitation list for all relevant meetings	<p>Proactively build networks with other NGOs and international organisations working in DM/DRR fields, both in-country and regionally, and ensure inclusion (of MRCS) at all relevant meetings. In view of the programme areas listed elsewhere, suggested new (or enhanced) links to be developed and maintained with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP (and IASC)</li> <li>• ADPC</li> <li>• Non-Government Organisations working in similar programme areas</li> </ul>	<p>7</p> <p>Para 91</p>
<b>Quality and Accountability</b>	Currently weak reporting, and Monitoring and Evaluation procedures not being followed adequately	<p>MRCS should work on improving linkages with communities and with donors, not only in the areas above but also on questions of openness, quality of service delivery and accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve reporting skills, standardise the reporting formats, and ensure regular feedback</li> <li>• Improve compliance with Monitoring and Evaluation procedures</li> <li>• Ensure understanding of and adherence to SPHERE guidelines and standards</li> </ul>	<p>31</p> <p>32</p>



**Table 2 : New Programme Areas**

<u>Proposals for New DM Programming Areas for MRCS</u>		Related Recom'd'n Number(s)	
Response Preparedness			
	Current Situation & Gaps	Programme Ideas for MRCS	
<p><b>Early Warning System Support</b></p> <p>(mainly in coastal areas)</p>	<p>There exists a national system of early warning alerts from Yangon to the State and Divisions, operated by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology. This is able to provide up to 48 hours warning of approaching storms or cyclones, and the information is sent down to the department's staff at District and Township level, by radio or SMS (or telex or landline phone if available).</p> <p>Depending on local resources and capacities, this information is then used to inform the population to take appropriate action, often via community loudspeakers. Its effectiveness varies and relies on the relationships between the various government departments at District and Township level, as well as on the resources available to ensure maximum dissemination of the alert, and on pre-existing knowledge about what to do.</p>	<p>In conjunction with the existing national EWS as described, the MRCS could sensibly expand its role in the high-risk coastal areas by using volunteers to ensure the Early Warning messages are received, and then disseminated to, and understood by, the vulnerable communities. It should be easily manageable within existing volunteer numbers and community outreach work but would require the development of a specific EW training module to be incorporated into existing training programmes.</p> <p>Early Warning systems / procedures for the MRCS would need to include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarification of reporting lines</li> <li>2. Upgrading of communications facilities</li> <li>3. Hot lines between HQ / State / Division / Township levels</li> <li>4. Nominated focal persons for all levels and between DMH and the MRCS HQ</li> <li>5. Support from real-time Emergency Operations Centre</li> <li>6. Early warning system/signals/flags &amp; lamps/procedures at community level</li> <li>7. RCV - volunteer messengers</li> <li>8. Evacuation plans and Identification of temporary shelters and routes</li> <li>9. Emergency drills and practice</li> <li>10. Search and Rescue trainings</li> <li>11. Basic DM training</li> </ol> <p>In the Cyclone Nargis CBHFA programme there is already a proposal to develop and distribute IEC leaflets with health messages. It would seem appropriate to include some community disaster preparedness or risk reduction messages into the same materials to capitalise on the costs and distribution methods already planned.</p> <p>It may be necessary to develop closer contacts with the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology at national and local levels, and the Ministry of Social Welfare and its Department of Relief and Settlement.</p>	<p>27 Para 59</p> <p>41</p>
<p><b>Early Warning System Support</b></p> <p>in other areas (floods, fire, landslides etc)</p>	<p>Obviously for more localised emergencies there would be no national alert, and any response would be based on local resources and information.</p>	<p>MRCS responses to be targeted to local situation, but to be similar interventions to those listed above. This will require a wider degree of hazard mapping than currently exists.</p> <p>Communities to have increased knowledge of the risks, the mitigation options, the evacuation procedures, areas of safety.</p> <p>Improved contacts may need to be developed with local authorities, eg the Fire Department, Township Police, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Forestry.</p>	<p>41</p>



Table 2 (contd)

Community Based Disaster Risk Management			Related Recom'd'n Number(s)
	Current Situation & Gaps	Programme Ideas for MRCS	
Schools-focused Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives	<p>NGOs ActionAid, Mingalar Myanmar and Save the Children are already working with the Ministry of Education on appropriate community risk reduction messages to be inserted into school curricula.</p> <p>With many school-aged volunteers, and a Schools Programme, the MRCS is very well-placed to augment these activities through targeted messages to the students, teachers and parents.</p> <p>There could be more school student mobilisation for awareness of hazards and required mitigation and preparedness at school level (nor in the communities).</p> <p>It has already been recommended in a recent MRCS Branch Development Review that RCVs give community based training through Parent/Teacher committees at schools.</p>	<p>To support this joint approach, the MRCS could enhance this work both by advocating with the relevant authorities (particularly the MoE), and by ensuring a consistency of messages between the finalised curriculum and what the RCVs are promoting to the wider community.</p> <p>Activities in this field could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring link-ups with other NGOs regarding standardisation of messages</li> <li>• Ensuring school messages are the same as general community messages</li> <li>• Inclusion of PSP and communicable disease management messages, in coordination with the Health Division</li> <li>• Include more local teachers in MRCS-run CDBP training courses.</li> <li>• Encouraging more teachers and students to become RCVs</li> <li>• Preparedness work with the Parent/Teacher committees</li> <li>• By working with the school authorities to ensure suitable school buildings are designated "safe havens" at times of emergency</li> <li>• Involve the teachers and students in identifying risk factors and mitigation possibilities</li> <li>• Presentations in schools; game quizzes, posters, video film production, stories, cartoon, pamphlets and leaflets, all in the appropriate local language</li> <li>• Rewarding schools/villages who are the most active in DP etc.</li> </ul> <p>These DP messages would need to be area-specific in terms of likely hazards and should include concerns around climate change impact.</p>	<p>Para 69 + Annex 4</p>
Community based Disaster Risk Reduction	<p>Some localised VCA work is already happening in some MRCS Branches but it is not well structured</p> <p>MRCS CBDRR programme (supported by French RC) is working in nine locations in vulnerable coastal areas but has realised that Branch capacity is very limited, and has now included capacity building procedures into their programming;</p> <p>DM Policy suggests Township DM plans should be prepared but this need to be encouraged</p> <p>Not enough community mobilisation for awareness of hazards and required mitigation and preparedness at community level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP's CDBP mapping (in 19 townships (60 villages) across the country) needs to be shared with MRCS</li> <li>• Data collected by the FRC should be fed into a central MRCS database in the future</li> <li>• Township DM plans to feed into local DRR programme planning</li> <li>• Community mobilisation</li> <li>• Mitigation &amp; preparedness at community level, including DP planning</li> <li>• Simulation, drills and awareness campaigns to be carried out</li> <li>• Search and Rescue training and simulations; Water safety awareness raising; life-saving techniques</li> <li>• Ensure use of <u>trained</u> RCVs in DM activities.</li> </ul> <p>These DP messages would need to be area-specific in terms of likely hazards and should include concerns around climate change impact.</p>	<p>Para 70 + Annex 3</p>



**Table 2 (continued)**

Community Based Disaster Risk Management			Related Recom'd'n Number(s)
	Current Situation & Gaps	Programme Ideas for MRCS	
Cyclone Shelter Initiative	<p>See paragraphs 80 &amp; 81 also.</p> <p>It has not been possible to determine the degree of coordination, if any, between the various agencies and the government of Myanmar for this expensive intervention. It appears that the construction planning of the buildings is being finalised but the “software component” is not (yet) an inherent part of the programme.</p> <p>A similar Cyclone Preparedness Programme has been running in Bangladesh for several decades and it is effective not because of the presence of shelter buildings alone but because of the mechanisms established over several decades between the communities, the Red Crescent (both centrally and through its volunteer network), the local and national authorities, the national early warning system of the Meteorology Department, the media and numerous other players.</p>	<p>Such a national integrated programme may indeed be under development in Myanmar but it should be considered a prerequisite for an effective use of the capital investment (the shelters).</p> <p>The MRCS Township level volunteers in the coastal States and Divisions could play a similar important role to that played by the BDRCS in Bangladesh, but this needs to be formalised into the national plans.</p> <p>The MRCS could add value in a number of important ways to this programme, as follows: Centrally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong advocacy role towards the government to ensure a fully integrated programme - involving many partners - is developed and put in place.</li> </ul> <p>Via the volunteers at Branch level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early warning dissemination activities ahead of a cyclone</li> <li>• Volunteer training and mobilisation for community awareness and preparedness</li> <li>• Evacuation assistance to identified vulnerable community members</li> <li>• Provide First Aid and Psychological Support activities</li> <li>• Assist in Cyclone Shelter management activities</li> <li>• Search &amp; Rescue activities</li> <li>• Community activities based around the shelter building.</li> </ul>	<p>6, 42</p> <p>50</p> <p>Paras 78 &amp; 79</p>



## Conclusions & Recommendations

84. There are some basic issues which can be improved and updated within the MRCS relating to its disaster management portfolio. These would include clarification, with the authorities, of the role and expectations on the MRCS at times of disaster (a definition of its 'auxiliary' status); a revision of the DM Policy; development and follow-through of realistic and achievable annual DM planning cycles; further discussion with other divisions, particularly the Health Division, on improved integration of programme activities and trainings.
85. With the recovery work from Cyclone Nargis remaining the inevitable focus for many people in the MRCS over the coming couple of years, the activities and recommendations indicated are considered to be realistic and achievable within the current staffing limitations. There is not a lot of 'new' work or programming, but more an emphasis on using the existing resources a little differently and with some creativity.
86. The volunteers, for example, will not need to increase their commitment of time or increase their interactions with communities, but should be equipped and encouraged to deliver their services or messages differently. The messages need to be revised and more 'cross-departmental' - in effect more disaster preparedness and risk reduction messaging needs to go into current health trainings and outreach work.
87. Some of the later programming activities may call on some volunteers to learn new skills and have more practical responsibilities, but again these are both realistic and achievable without any real need for more resources.
88. There is also a number of more general points which have come out of the review which need to be mentioned at this point. They are not recommendations as such for the DMD to follow up, but more general points identified by, or expressed to, the consultants which also may need to be addressed in the planning process to ensure more efficient programme delivery. Additional comments have been inserted into the tables already (wherever possible), but those now following are not strictly programming issues, but do need consideration.

## **DMD Core Structure**

89. It is imperative to have a core group of skilled DM staff in the HQ to lead and direct the programmes, and to work with colleagues at the Branch levels. The current HQ structure, although increased to deal with the extra Cyclone Nargis work, is already over-stretched. However, when the Cyclone Nargis operation ends the DM set-up will probably revert to its original size, about half of the current number - an assessment of personnel needs to support ongoing programming work should be undertaken at that stage (early 2011) to assist the DMD in ensuring the right support is available.
90. At the same time DMD cannot work in isolation from other Divisions, but they too are over-stretched and without enough key staff. Cross-divisional programmes should, though, be more closely integrated and planned together.
91. Salary levels make it difficult to retain the best qualified and motivated staff; several people mentioned that secondary jobs were required to 'make ends meet'. While the implications of the MRCS's move from Yangon are still not known, there will undoubtedly be some staff turnover



issues in the future. These issues affect the Society as a whole, not just DMD, but could prove to be significant in the medium to long term.

92. The MRCS structure, especially at local Branch levels, is expected to provide many things to many people. The reality of the actual capacities at those levels is perhaps not clear enough but some Branches have greater skills available than others; where possible some of the programming work needs to be 'decentralised' to the Branches and DMD at HQ should lead the programme work but not necessarily do everything.
93. Some examples are given (in Annex 2) of the possible structure and responsibilities foreseen for the DMD, although at this stage numbers of people are not specified.

### General Considerations for Programme Development

94. In general, the MRCS's activities have a strong health focus throughout and it is felt the outlook could be broader. This is perhaps somewhat due to its strong relationship with the Ministry of Health at all levels, but if aiming for prevention rather than cure, the DM messages do need to be more strongly integrated. This will take a conscious approach by HQ divisions to ensure joint development and delivery of trainings and community messages. This could be effective, for example, via a joint programme committee at each level.
95. There needs to be some standardisation of the various exercises underway on hazard risk mapping, both within and outside the RC. The aim should be to make use of other materials and data gathered, to avoid duplication, and to ensure compatibility. Some initial work is already being done internally with support from the French Red Cross; other work is being done by several other Agencies; and this all need to be coordinated to avoid overlap and waste of resources.
96. MRCS DM plans should be developed with a broader programme focus and in closer consultation with other departments, to ensure a more coherent and efficient delivery of training and services, via the volunteers, to the communities. Actual Branch activities will still vary to cater for more localised needs and threats, and it will take time to deliver additional skills to volunteers, but the overall programme oversight will be provided from the DMD.
97. It is felt that the selection of training participants should be improved to capitalize on the high levels of investment which MRCS currently makes in training. The participants - whether they are school students, older volunteers or DART/NDRT members - should receive training to enhance their own skills but also to be a useable resource to the MRCS for the future, and it seems that this resource is not planned well enough. Consequently, the impact and value of the training is being lost.
98. A better selection of geographical programme areas would also be beneficial, with enhanced education programmes for volunteers in high risk areas recommended. Volunteers are attracted to interesting programme activities and good and relevant programmes therefore provide better volunteer retention possibilities.
99. MRCS is currently heavily involved in recovery work after Cyclone Nargis, covering a range of programme areas including PSP, public health promotion, livelihoods inputs, shelter rehabilitation, WatSan and other areas of intervention. It is likely that the Society will take similar roles in subsequent recovery operations, and skills and experiences being developed now need to be retained and enhanced.



100. The design of the 'hub' structure needs to be evaluated in the Myanmar context and implemented in future operations as necessary. Once done, such experience should be shared more widely within the RC Movement.
101. While the concept of 'building back better' remains a clear guiding principle, due to the widespread needs and the desire to restore people's lives equitably and quickly after Cyclone Nargis (plus numerous practical difficulties), this has not perhaps been at the forefront of the recent response work. The policy should, however, be highlighted in planning and intervention work in future recovery operations.
102. While recovery work will always be required post-disaster, it is important to 'mainstream' DRR thinking into all recovery plans, including:
  - § 'building back better'
  - § 'safer communities'
  - § enhanced alerts and early warning systems
  - § SPHERE guidelines should be better understood at all levels
  - § ensuring close community participation in planning
  - § enhanced coordination and linkages with other stakeholders at all times
  - § maximising the use of available resources
  - § addressing secondary hazards and vulnerabilities.



## Summary of Recommendations

For the initial six months, the recommendations have been grouped together under sectoral headings for clarity (rather than in any particular order of priority). For the subsequent time frames, many are continuations of earlier points made, and these are relisted as felt necessary.

**It is strongly recommended that, when this report is agreed and finalised, it is translated into the Myanmar language and disseminated to the Branches and Townships for their information and engagement in the future process.**

### Immediate effects (0-6 months)

The following points are issues which can be addressed over the next few months but they will not – clearly – all be finalised within this timeframe. Some lead onto others; this list indicates areas or processes which need to be started in the coming months and followed through until completion, in the months and years beyond.

### **Coordination, Advocacy & Linkages**

1. MRCS should develop formal contacts with the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) to ensure a close working partnership on DM affairs is well coordinated;
2. With the support of the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW), advocate with the government for a position for MRCS on the national Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee;
3. In conjunction with its government partners, the MRCS should determine the role(s) it can best play and agree the government's expectations of the MRCS in any national response plan; this would help formalise the understanding of its auxiliary status;
4. Ensure DART/NDRT's skills & capacities are known to the relevant government authorities, especially the Ministry of Social Welfare;
5. Establish formal agreement with Department of Meteorology & Hydrology (at national and local levels) regarding community level implementation of early warning programme;
6. Advocate with the government, other partners and the affected communities to ensure an integrated Cyclone Shelter response methodology is agreed and developed;
7. Enhance formal links with other DM/DRR non-governmental partners in the country;
8. In conjunction with the government and IASC, finalise contingency plans with clear manageable (and agreed) roles for MRCS within them;
9. MRCS could work with the MSW and use these ministerial links to advocate for the integration of the principles of the IDRL Guidelines<sup>2</sup> (international disaster response law) into national laws and policies regarding the management of international assistance;

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<sup>2</sup> IDRL offers guidelines that can be used for governments and countries to develop their national law on DM/international assistance during disaster. National Societies, using their special status, should advocate with their governments to adopt or include IDRL into the national law.



10. Increase and maintain contacts with local authorities at State & Division level;
11. Better integration of programming is needed within MRCS, particularly with the Health Division, to maximise use of resources;
12. A system should be developed to help volunteers from other areas to visit and learn some practical skills 'on-the-job' in the Cyclone Nargis response operation - e.g. distribution techniques; assessment work. Appropriate volunteer selection will be critical to ensure the greatest benefits.

### **DART Training**

13. Select the best DART/NDRT team members, maybe four or five per State/Division (at least) who should be seen as the core group of DART/NDRT members. They should be the ones who receive regular refresher trainings, and be deployed (nationally or regionally) as required;
14. Select potential DART/NDRT Team Leaders from the existing member list and develop targeted training for this leadership role;
15. Upgrade and refresh the DART/NDRT skills in general through enhanced training programmes, aimed at improving the skills on a regular basis rather than simply training new members;
16. Ensure the DART/NDRT training curriculum is in harmony with others in use in the Red Cross in the Asia region, and adapt as necessary; trained DART/NDRT members should be actively approached for inclusion in future regional RDRT deployments, for further exposure and experience;
17. Formally change the name of 'DART' to NDRT (National Disaster Response Team) to ensure regional understanding and acceptance.

### **CBDRM Training**

18. The CBDRM course curriculum and teaching methodologies needs to be revised to improve the quality of the trainings, which will ensure more effective programme delivery later;
19. The curriculum for the initial training rounds and for the refresher courses should be harmonised with those of the International Federation for the Asia Region, and DANA knowledge and facilitating skills should be incorporated.
20. Expand CBDRM trainings, in number and in geographical reach, through additional training staff and more funding;
21. Develop IEC materials with early warning/preparedness/risk reduction messages for a range of hazards/risks;

### **Logistics (warehouses)**

*DMD responsibility for Logistics is currently limited to the management of the central and regional warehouses, used primarily for storage of emergency family kits. Other logistics functions (procurement, fleet management and transport management etc) do not fall under DMD's remit. The following recommendations need to be read in conjunction with the recent*



*'Logistics Capacity Survey' undertaken for the MRCS which will provide a more comprehensive overview of the situation for the Society.*

*The Federation's Regional Logistics Unit in Kuala Lumpur should be contacted by the MRCS for any assistance required to help address these points.*

22. There are 20 existing warehouse facilities across the country. Thirteen of these are small (one room) with a capacity for 200-250 family kits; the others are slightly larger with a capacity of 350-500 kits. There have been proposals before this to upgrade the facilities and provide relevant skills training to the largely-volunteer warehouse managers, and this proposal is repeated here.
23. Explore with UNICEF their offer of financial support for additional warehouse staff training;
24. Standardized warehouse operating procedures, staff management matters (including levels of authority, sanctions etc), development and use of formal stock control and stock issuance systems, stock replenishment methods, reporting methods and compliance are all issues which need to be developed and put in place. Again, with some relevant experience and capacity regarding these issues built up via the recent Cyclone Nargis operation, these 'good' procedures already in use in some of the warehouses should be applied across the MRCS.
25. The family kits provided by the MRCS and the government are not compatible although often used in the same operations. The content of the two types should be standardized if possible. Replenishment of these kits is from the central level when required.
26. Procedures should be developed to ensure that, following assessment, relief material distribution should be within three days (or earlier) of the disaster.

### **HQ Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)**

27. A central "Emergency Operations Centre" would be beneficial to the coordination of any future emergency response operation. This would include a room with maps, communications systems, furniture and equipment pre-assigned for exclusive use of the 'Task Force' managing the disaster.<sup>3</sup>
28. An emergency group (or Task Force) made up of pre-assigned NHQ staff from different Divisions, with the ability to co-opt additional staff as required, should be put in place. Focal persons need to be identified at different levels, and they should have been pre-assigned with supplementary duty descriptions (eg: head of task force, deputy head, etc). SOPs would need to be clarified and well understood by all and this would be an integral part of the MRCS's contingency plans.
29. A communications network or system including a 'hot line' for response focal persons, and the ability to connect to all levels of the MRCS in the affected State/Division would be required. CDMA phones should be made available and pre-located at all at-risk Branches

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<sup>3</sup> See also para 4. Whether this EOC Room would be in Yangon or Naypyidaw would depend on operational realities of the MRCS at the time (though likely to be Yangon). It would need to take into account the necessary interactions with the relevant government authorities and other partners working on complementary disaster response programming.



30. There is an existing MRCS “emergency fund” but little seems to be known about its usage or regulations. DMD staff should be aware of when and how this can be accessed, and what its operating procedures are.

### Quality and Accountability

31. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation procedures should be improved to ensure better quality and accountability to beneficiaries and supporters;
32. The Executive Committee to encourage (or enforce) compliance on regular Branch to HQ reporting, using existing templates. Experience regarding regular reporting from the hub structures in the delta area could be built upon for other Branches to follow.

### Administrative Tasks

33. A Branch ranking exercise would be useful (capacity vs local hazards/risks);
34. Ensure compatibility between MRCS and Federation CBDRM Manuals;
35. All relevant SOPs and Manuals to be translated into local language(s) and available to all staff as necessary;
36. Create and maintain an updated database listing the skilled and trained staff and volunteers around the country;
37. Clarify the position on payment of ‘salaries’ to volunteers working for more than 15 days a month: there seems to be a lot of confusion about eligibility to these payments, and dissatisfaction because the rules are not known.

### Mid-term effects (7-18 months)

38. As mentioned above (para 43), the current DM Policy documents of MRCS should be reviewed and updated to reflect the Society’s agreed role with the government in disaster management activities;
39. Hold refresher training sessions for DART/NDRT teams (leaders and members) annually, prior to each cyclone season;
40. Develop approaches and models for DRM programme entry points into schools and communities, aiming at ‘building safer communities’;
41. Continue to develop interaction with Department of Meteorology & Hydrology (national and local levels) regarding implementation of early warning programme;
42. Continue to advocate with the government, other partners and the affected communities to ensure an integrated Cyclone Shelter Initiative is developed and put in place;
43. Carry out technical trainings for warehouse staff (ongoing);
44. Ensure warehouse & logistics procedures are updated (ongoing);
45. Ensure systematic DP stock replenishment process is put in place (ongoing);



46. Finalise MRCS Contingency Plan with EOC concept (if still unfinished) and ensure regular updating of procedures is in place;
47. Work closely with the Health Division to ensure integrated service delivery at the community level;
48. It is important that SPHERE standards are more widely known about and better understood at all levels, and used in future programme planning.

### **Long term effects (19+ months) with capacity**

49. Continue to develop interaction with Department of Meteorology & Hydrology (national and local levels) regarding implementation of the early warning programme;
50. Continue to advocate with the government, other partners and the affected communities to ensure an integrated Cyclone Shelter Initiative is developed and put in place;
51. Continue to work closely with the Health Department to ensure integrated service delivery at the community level;
52. It is worth considering transferring the responsibility for Restoring Family Links (RFL) from the Communications Division to DMD.



## Annexes

Annex 1 - lists those people met and interviewed as part of this review process.

Annex 2 - indicates a possible core structure for the MRCS once the Cyclone Nargis operation teams have disbanded.

Annex 3 - indicates a proposed CBDRM Framework and responsibilities.

Annex 4 - indicates a proposed SBDRM Framework and responsibilities.



## Annex 1: List of People Interviewed during Review Process

### Myanmar Red Cross Society:

Dr Tha Hla Shwe	President	U Maung Maung Khin	Head, Disaster Management Division
Dr Aung Khaw Htut	Chief Coordinator	U Hla Myint	Head of Logistics Division, DMD
Daw Aye Aye Thant	Deputy Head, DM Division	Dr Daw Kin Myo Myint	Deputy Head, Health Division
Daw Khin Khin Shein	Deputy Head, Training Unit	Dr Tun Myint	Executive Committee member, responsible for Disaster Management
Daw Shwe Cin Myint	Head, Communications Division	Daw Kyi Kyi Myint	Deputy Head, Finance Division
U Khaw Soe	Former Head, DM Division	U Aung Thauang Shwe	Programme Coordinator, DM Division
		U Aung Naing Moe	Logistics Coordinator, Logistics Unit

### In addition to the above, MRCS representatives present at the DM Workshop:

U Ganesh	G-1 Officer, Kachin State	U Aung Myat Kyaw	Watsan Coordinator, Health Division
U Ye Yint Aung	CBDM Team Member, Magwe Division	Daw Amy Htet	CBDM Team Member, Magwe Division
U Nay Lin Tun	CBDM Team Leader, Yangon Division	Daw Ohmar Tin	CBDM Team Member, Yangon Division
U Soe Thein	CBDM Team Leader, Ayayerwady Div.	Daw Nay Cyi Win Tin	CBDM Team Member, Ayayerwady Division
U Myint Oo	CBDM Team Leader, Mandalay Division	U Sai Pae Thein	Pathein Hub Manager, Ayayerwady Division
U Kyaw Kyaw	CBDM Team Leader, Sagaing Division	U Aung Naing Oo	CBDM Team Leader, Magwe Division
Daw Thita Oo	CBDM Team Member, Mandalay Div.	Daw Than Than Hla	CBDM Team Member, Ayayerwady Division
Daw Su Su Htay	DRR Programme Assistant, French RC	U Aung Naing Tun	CBDM Team Leader, Sagaing Division

### Federation & NS Delegates in Yangon and Kuala Lumpur:

Bernd Schell	Head of Delegation	Sanjeev Kumar Kafley	DM Delegate
Christopher George	OD Delegate	Arjan Blanken	Recovery Coordinator
Michael Wolf	Watsan Delegate	Alasdair Gordon-Gibson	Head of Operations (Nargis Operation)
Vinay Sadavarte	WatSan Coordinator	Michael Annear	Zone DM Coordinator (KL)
Heidi Gilert	Programme Coordinator	Florence le Paulmier	DRR Programme Coordinator, French RC
		Felix de Vries	Zone DMU Shelter Delegate (KL)

### Representatives of the Government of Myanmar:

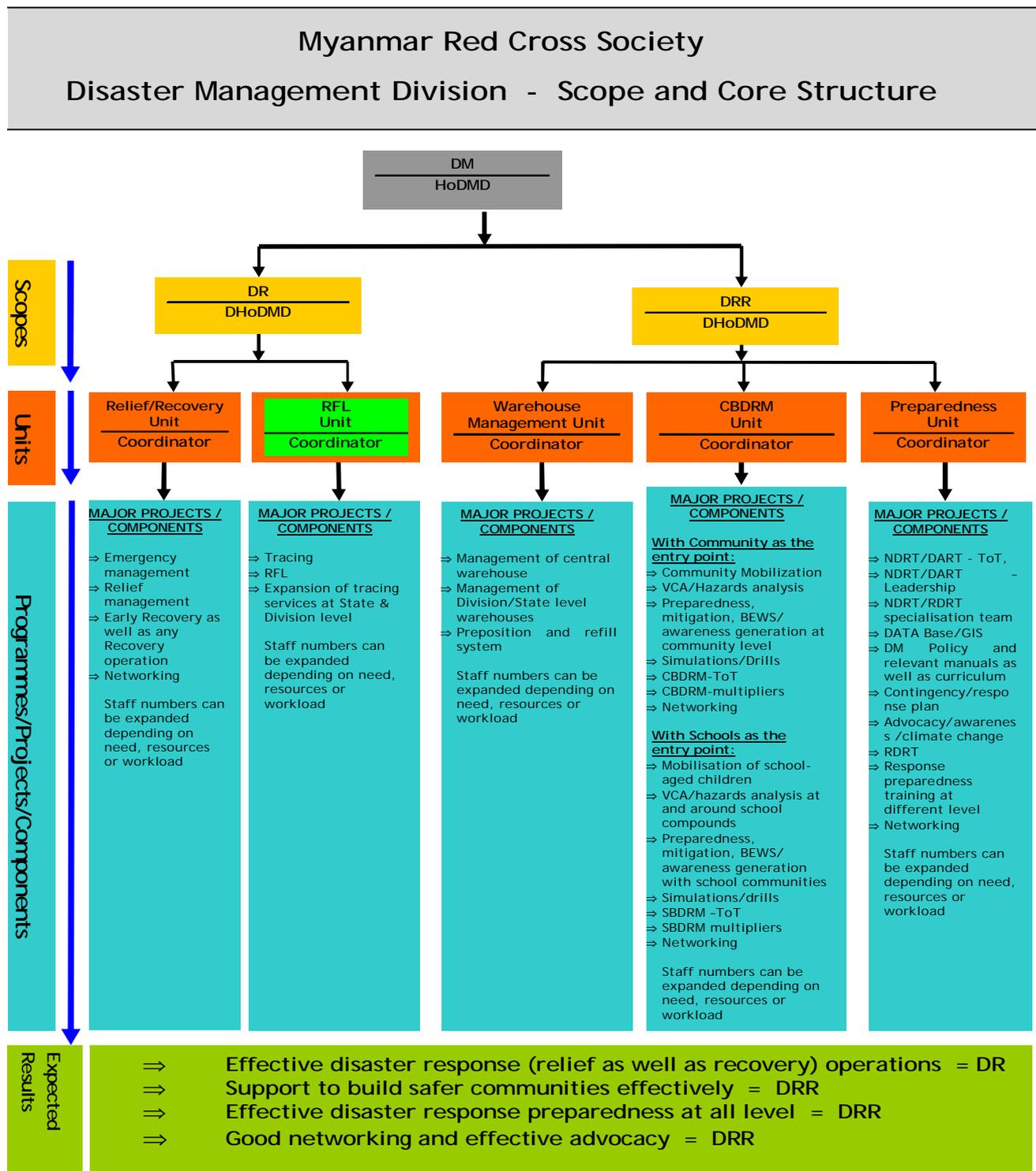
U Than Oo	Director General, Relief and Resettlement Department	Dr Tun Lwin	Director General, Dept. of Meteorology and Hydrology
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### Representatives of other Organisations:

Antonio Massella	Deputy Head of Office, OCHA	Daw Nyunt Nyunt Thein	Programme Officer, UNICEF
Sudhir Kumar	Representative, ADPC	Dr Khin Win Myat	DM Specialist, Early Recovery Programme, UNDP
		Dr Swe Thwin	Director, Mingalar Myanmar (local NGO)



## Annex 2 : Suggested Core Structure (future)



Recommendation for placing DM scopes into their relevant Units and suggesting core structures for the DM Division to achieve the objectives of the scopes. project structures can be expanded depending on the needs and available resources, as well as the workload.

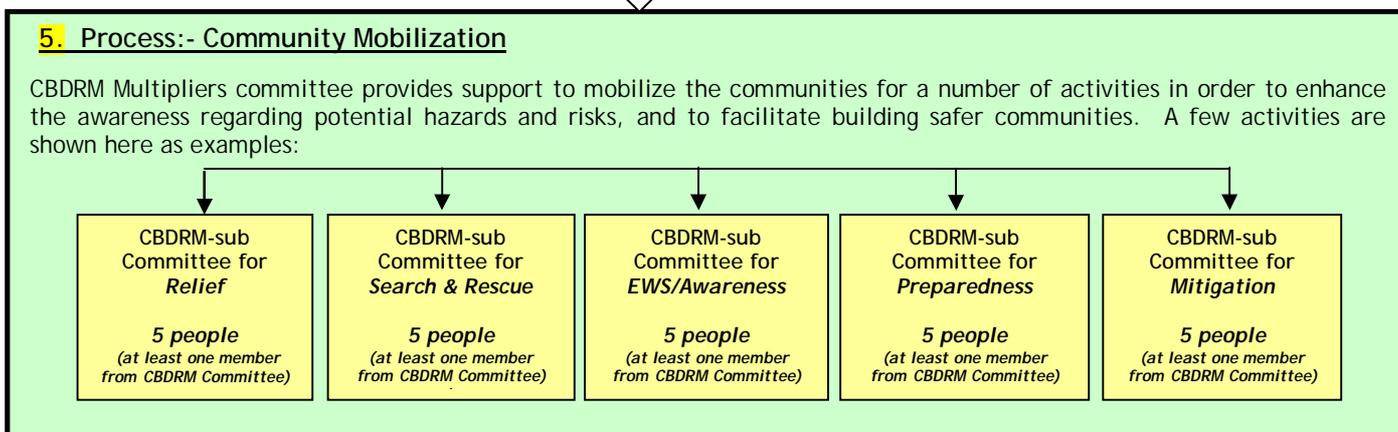
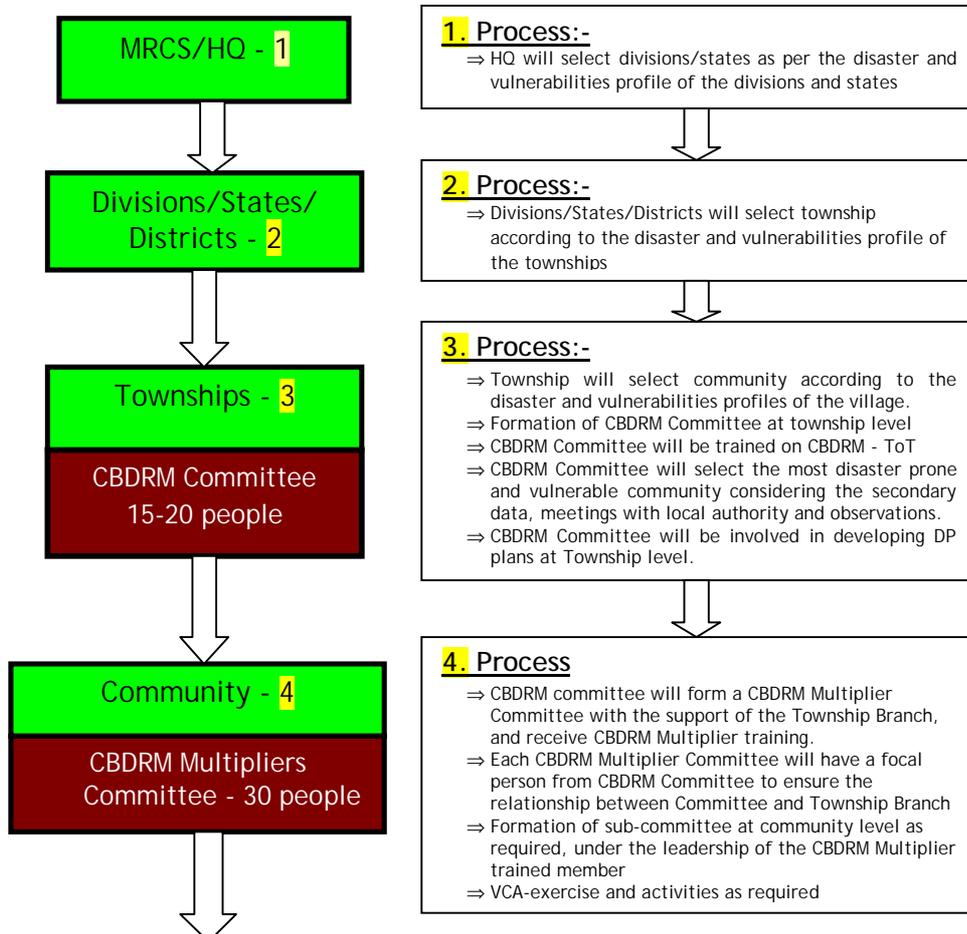
(restoring family links) is really a disaster response activity and it should be situated in the DM Division, as in most National Societies



# Annex 3: Proposed CBDRM Framework

## Myanmar Red Cross Society

### Community<sup>4</sup> Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Framework



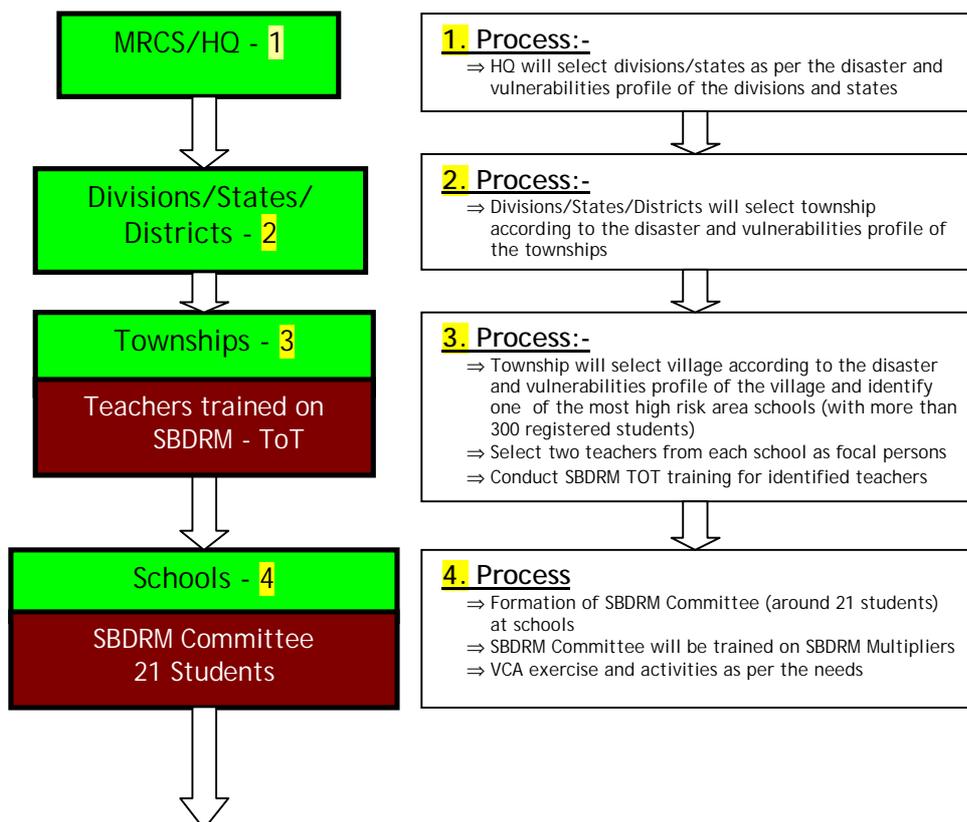
<sup>4</sup> MRCS needs to define 'community' as a village with around 800 to 1,000 inhabitants (or 300 to 500 houses).



## Annex 4: Proposed SBDRM Framework

Myanmar Red Cross Society

### School-Based Disaster Risk Management (SBDRM) Framework



#### 5. Process

The SBDRM Committee supports the mobilisation of schoolchildren for different activities in order to enhance the awareness regarding potential hazards and risks, and to facilitate building safer communities. A few sample activities are shown below:

