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United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot - Brindisi

WFP News Release

7 May 2008

CYCLONE NARGIS: ITALIAN GOVERNMENT DISPATCHES AID FOR MYANMAR POPULATION FROM BRINDISI BASE

BRINDISI - In the wake of the powerful Cyclone Nargis which hit southern Myanmar at the weekend, the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) managed by the World Food Programme in Brindisi has organised an airlift of aid worth around US\$ 560,000 on behalf of the Italian Foreign Ministry's Development Cooperation Office.

An Airbus 300 will take off today for Yangon, Myanmar, as soon as loading operations now under way in Brindisi are completed. On board there will be 25 tons of humanitarian aid requested by Italian Cooperation officials, made up of materials for provisional shelters, water purification and distribution systems and first aid kits.

Other partners of the UNHRD – a network managed by WFP and composed of 5 hubs in different parts of the world providing support to the humanitarian community - are also preparing to send humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, with probable departures from Brindisi and Dubai in coming days.

While WFP began distributing food distributions in Myanmar yesterday, UNHRD has made its bases available in order to guarantee logistical support to the various network partners. The aid to the populations hit by the Cyclone Nargis represents a major logistical challenge for the UN agency specialised in food assistance. Many roads are blocked and the work of assessment teams continues to evaluate needs and action taken. WFP now has more than 800 metric tons of food stocks in warehouses in Yangon, which it has begun distributing and will continue to distribute today in the hardest hit areas.

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency: this year, WFP plans to feed more than 70 million people in around 80 countries. For further information: Vichi De Marchi, Spokesperson for Italy, WFP/Roma, Tel.: +39-06-65132058, Cell.: +39-3480517605, vichi.demarchi@wfp.org

UNHRD is a WFP Network able to deliver humanitarian relief items worldwide within 24/48 hrs. The Network - composed of 5 Hubs located in Brindisi, Accra, Subang, Dubai and Panama City - provides storage, logistics support and services to UN humanitarian agencies, international humanitarian organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, thus reinforcing capacity for humanitarian emergency response. For further information: Marta Laurienzo, UNHRD Network Deputy Coordinator & UNHRD Brindisi Manager, tel 0831 506680 cell. 348 0592174, marta.laurienzo@wfp.org
