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Media Alert: Relief Assistance to Cyclone Affected People Must Be Burma's Top Priority 6 May 2008

We are shocked at the drastic death tolls in the disaster zones in Burma caused by Cyclone Nargis since May 2, 2008. We are also very saddened to learn that the disaster-affected people including civil servants and even soldiers, are being placed in further danger as relief supplies cannot be delivered immediately to them due to the slow response and reluctance of SPDC to cooperate with relief agencies.

WLB would like to reiterate our great concern for all affected people, particularly women and children, who now face possible outbreaks of diseases and other risks.

SPDC should put the urgent humanitarian needs of thousands of people affected by the Nargis disaster as their top priority rather than going ahead with their plan for their sham referendum on May 10, 2008.

We demand that SPDC lift, without condition, all the restrictions hindering local and international relief agencies including UN agencies from getting immediate and direct access to the disaster areas and to affected populations in order to deliver emergency relief supplies.

At the same time, WLB would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the international community including UN agencies, International NGOs and EU, ASEAN, Japan, India, Thailand, Canada and the United States for releasing condolences and emergency assistance for the affected people. WLB would like to urge the international community to use all possible means so that SPDC will cooperate without further delay and paranoia in facilitating emergency relief activities that will reach all the people in the Nargis-affected zones.

In particular, we strongly urge Burma's influential neighbour, China, as a humanitarian gesture, to convince SPDC to immediately allow all relief agencies to directly access the disaster-affected people in Burma.

WLB will work and advocate closely with our networks to enable the Nargis-affected populations to get direct access to emergency relief assistance.

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