

**Bangkok****21 November 2018****SITUATION**

During the night of Thursday the 15th November 2018, the state of Tamil Nadu in India, was affected by the Gaja Cyclone. Severe cyclonic storm "Gaja" crossed between Pondicherry and Nagapattinam with wind gusts up to 120 kilometres speed per hour. Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, Tiruvarur, Tanjavur, Pudukottai and Karaikal Districts are the most affected by this cyclone. As of 19th November 2018, at least 45 people¹ are feared dead and many people have also incurred injuries. Many trees have been uprooted. Significant number of Coconut and Banana Plantations have been destroyed. Thatched houses and tied houses have been damaged. Furthermore, as some of the affected areas are still not accessible, the clear number of houses damaged is yet to come. Many boats have been damaged in the coastal area of Vedaranyam of Nagapattinam Taluk. Around 80,000 families have been evacuated and are staying in 351 camps. In most of the places, they are still in the shelter. Moreover, around 20,000 electric poles have been damaged and this has caused electricity failure in many districts and fallen trees have blocked the roads, affecting the daily life of people in the area. Also, the essential services are affected due of the electricity cut and the poor road accessibility. It is also reported that some of the essential needs are not available in Temporary Shelters. The ACT India Forum members namely Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELCl), and United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India LWSIT) are closely assessing the situation. Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Arcot Lutheran Church members of UELCl areas are spread across the affected areas and are involved in helping the government with evacuation work; around 3,000 families are accommodated in their churches and food has been provided. In some of the affected areas where CASA's projects are operational, the forum is actively taking part in the supporting the government in evacuation and assessment. LWSIT is assessing the situation

NEEDS

The cyclone has put the state in a crisis. The cyclone affected households find themselves in a desperate situation, with many unmet humanitarian needs such as access to: sufficient food, safe shelter and non-food items, safe drinking water, as well as sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, , protection services, and adequate nutrition.

There is a pressing need to provide immediate assistance to minimize loss of life and to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are covered first. In Tamil Nadu, most of the thousands of houses have apiculture / horticulture plantations within their house premises which have also been damaged. With the severe cyclone taking place in many areas, there is a total standstill of normal life where access to livelihood and food is diminished. The government is evacuating people from affected areas and shifting them to Relief Camps and providing shelter and food items.

STAKEHOLDERS

The following national and international entities are present and doing their best to respond to the crisis:

- Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Team
- CARITAS, World Vision
- Indian Red Cross Society, Tamil Nadu
- ACT India Forum members (CASA, UELCl, LWIST)
- Fisher folk community & Dalits and non Dalits communities

The emergency response in ACT India Forum is currently being coordinated by CASA to ensure that the humanitarian response is well coordinated and complementary, the ACT India forum will take part in

meetings with all relevant meetings for a fair and effective intervention. To establish an open line of communication with crisis affected persons and communities to ensure a humanitarian response based on participation and feedback.

ACT Alliance

ACT Alliance members have been working along with the members in the six cyclone affected districts since the morning of 16th November 2018. They are now helping/planning to help people affected by the cyclone. ACT Alliance members namely UELCI and CASA work in areas affected by the cyclone, and are assessing the impact of the disaster to better understand the needs and vulnerabilities. LWSIT will extend support to UELCI. ACT Alliance members are currently monitoring the situation and preparing a rapid needs assessment to have an in-depth context analysis and better understanding of existing vulnerabilities. Emergency teams are ready/preparing to respond according to the results of a contextual analysis and rapid needs assessment. In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the ACT forum has identified a gap in the work of the State Government as they are not able to help all the affected families who are placed in the remote villages and has resolved that if funded, it will have the capacity to properly bridge the identified gap. The ACT forum is planning on submitting Rapid Response Funding (RRF) proposal to provide lifesaving packages and humanitarian assistance to ensure that the cyclone affected persons' basic needs are met with regards to clothing, non-cooked food items and temporary shelter materials. ACT Alliance is ready to respond, providing clothing and non-cooked food items in the coming days. Furthermore, ACT Alliance will engage in advocacy on the national and international level to ensure that the voices of those affected by the cyclone are amplified.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org)

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