



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
HOTLINE**

Church World Service Hotline for the week of November 19, 2007 – available in Spanish (linea de noticias) and in [podcasts](#) in English and Spanish--at www.churchworldservice.org

- **Dominican** families continue recovery from tropical storm
- CWS assists vulnerable **Burmese** families
- Women in **Chinese** village improving their lives, with CWS help

Dominican Republic--“Our houses are still full of mud and... we have lost many of our furnishings... and household goods,” says Alta Gracia Mendez Nicolas, mother of seven children, of Tropical Storm Noel that hit the Dominican Republic some two weeks ago. “We have lost most of our agricultural production and now we are making it by food donations and whatever we can scrape together.”

More than 100 communities are reportedly still inaccessible and incommunicado due to flooding and damaged roads.

Roads in one hard-to-reach area--Bateye Las Bombitas, a predominantly Haitian and Haitian-Dominican community south of Santo Domingo--remain full of mud.

“It was very fortunate and a blessing from God for us to have recently received a shipment from CWS of blankets, canned meat [a donation from the Church of the Brethren], and five-gallon water jugs,” says Lorenzo Mota King, director of long-time CWS partner Social Service of the Dominican Churches, about a “pre-positioned” shipment from CWS that arrived just prior to the flooding.

“With the solidarity of the churches and people of the United States and the solidarity of our own population, we are able to bring a little temporary relief, a drop of hope, to many of the families affected and unprepared for one of the worst storms in the Caribbean since Hurricane George.

“Our goal now is to provide emergency aid--food supplies, clothing, and mattresses,” King adds. “However, we are planning and preparing for a long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction in the agriculture area and housing for many of the families.”

Burma--The humanitarian crisis in Burma (Myanmar) is worsening. Poverty in some regions has reached critical levels, with severe food insecurity and many landless peasants resorting to scavenging to feed their children. In most districts, the neglect of health services has resulted in an increase in diseases and mortality rates. The tightening of international sanctions is making humanitarian assistance and international aid more critical.



Dominican Republic--“Our houses are still full of mud,” says Alta Gracia Mendez Nicolas. Photo: Don Tatlock/CWS

Some 150,000 people who have fled Burma are in nine camps across the border in Thailand. They are dependent on outside support for their food. For 23 years, the Thailand-Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), of which CWS is a founding member, has provided food and other emergency relief for refugees in the camps. Shifts in the international community’s funding priorities, however, are threatening the already minimal ration.

CWS is working with the TBBC to stabilize the food rations for the refugees, and is also supporting humanitarian efforts in Burma to assist thousands of civilians in need of emergency assistance.

This emergency humanitarian assistance program is providing a monthly food ration for families and

severely malnourished children; assistance and medical care for HIV/AIDS patients; curative and preventive measures to control malaria and dengue fever--particularly among children; and assistance in building the capacities of local partners--the Myanmar Council of Churches and Myanmar Baptist Convention--in responding to the needs of vulnerable families in Burma.

China--In Majiacha village, Gansu Province, southwest China, 304 women are learning skills to help them earn more income and improve their lives and those of their families, with help from CWS and partner the Amity Foundation.

In China, economic growth is concentrated along the east coast, leaving most people in the rest of the country--particularly the far west--living very poor and hard lives. The villagers of Majiacha, for example, earn annual incomes averaging \$197, compared to a national average of \$1,100. And the women of the village earn even less than the men.

Through the project, the women in Majiacha are expected to increase their annual incomes by an average of \$63, as they gain access to loans and training in animal husbandry, crop production, business planning, marketing, and bookkeeping.

The women’s new economic empowerment is allowing them opportunities to participate in decision-making at the household and community level.

Thank you for your prayers and support for the life-sustaining work of Church World Service. Contributions may be sent through your church or directly to Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515. Credit card contributions may be made by calling 1-800-297-1516 or at www.churchworldservice.org. To SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE to the e-mail version of the Church World Service Hotline, reply to this message, or write to jcarlson@churchworldservice.org.