

UNCT THAILAND TSUNAMI RESPONSE – SIX MONTHS ON

- The 26 December tsunami was **worst natural disaster** to ever strike Thailand
- **5,395** people were killed and **2,817** still missing in Thailand, of whom 1,972 were Thai, 2,248 foreign nationals. **2,076** bodies remain unidentified
- **30,000** households dependent on fisheries lost their livelihoods; nearly **7,500** fishing boats were destroyed or damaged
- Over **120,000** people lost their jobs in the tourism sector
- Serious impact on natural **environment** (e.g. salination of farmland and damage to coral reefs) are directly impacting on **livelihoods** in agriculture, fisheries and tourism

Context

Although the tsunami disaster had a major impact on Thailand, requiring immediate and focused relief operations, the need to process and identify many bodies, and deal with a large number of foreign nationals, the Royal Thai Government is widely acknowledged to have led **an effective response**. This encompassed prompt provision of health services, major forensic body identification operation, compensation payment, construction of homes, and use of military assets to support the whole tsunami-affected region.

There was **no appeal for international financial assistance**: the Government had the capacity to mobilize the resources to react swiftly. Unsurprisingly, in view of the magnitude of the disaster, the Government welcomed external expertise and equipment to support their own efforts.

Many of the factors affecting relief and recovery efforts in other parts of the tsunami-affected region, like Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka, have not played a significant role in Thailand e.g. no ongoing major civil/military conflict, there is relative political stability and a healthily developing economy. Beyond the immediate aftermath of the disaster there has been no need for large-scale food assistance, a relatively small proportion of the population has been displaced, and there have been only brief and localized disruptions to water/sanitation, health services and education (which were quickly restored).

Therefore, in Thailand it has not been the UN's role to provide humanitarian relief to the entire affected population; its mission has instead focused on **support to the Government-led response** and **assistance to specific target groups**.

United Nations in Thailand

Immediate mobilization of assistance

Within 48 hours of the disaster, the UN Country Team had transferred funds to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for **emergency relief assistance, coordination and logistics**, and an **UNDAC mission** had been dispatched to the affected provinces, headed by the RC/HC.

Other agencies provided emergency assistance in other forms, such as **rapid assessments** conducted with Government partners, or **assistance to specific groups** e.g. vulnerable children or fishing communities who had suddenly lost their means of livelihood.

Although the relief phase was largely considered over after approximately two months, some UNCT emergency phase interventions have continued, since they are oriented towards mid-term recovery.

UN agency	Relief Activity: quantifiable impacts	Funds (USD)
FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20,000 USD was contributed to the MFA tsunami assistance fund ▪ 1,183 farmers (of a targeted 1,500) and 501 of 4,900 affected livestock farmers received agricultural inputs to ensure subsistence ▪ 1,420 fisherfolk of 10,000 affected aquaculture farmers and small boat owners received fisheries inputs 	
ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment missions to Thailand from early January through to the end of April 	
UNAIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5,000 troops assisting in disaster relief received IEC materials and condoms, thus engaging in lower-risk sexual behaviour 	
UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergency relief items procured and delivered (generators, water purifiers, body bags, formalin, etc) in partnership with OCHA ▪ Immediate contribution of 100,000 USD Ministry of Foreign Affairs for logistics and coordination ▪ Support to donor coordination efforts led by the PM's Office 	
UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNEP HQ provided funds for technical assistance to Government for 	

	a rapid environmental assessment	
UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNESCO HQ allocated funds for immediate assessments in the region 	
UNFPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50,000 USD was donated in immediate assistance to the Thai Government; ▪ First-aid and survival kits distributed to 60,000 beneficiaries ▪ 692 Myanmar migrant workers voluntarily repatriated 	
UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNHCR made a contribution of 50,000 USD to the MFA tsunami assistance account, for emergency shelter 	
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School attendance protected for 2,000 children through temporary classrooms, education grants and transport for children living in shelters ▪ Water supply and sanitation upgraded for 12 temporary schools and for 2,000 families in 22 temporary shelters, including purification equipment, latrines and drainage ▪ Emergency support to 15 districts for multi-sector action in shelter, food, health, nutrition, education, HIV/AIDS and child care practices/information 	
WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 11,255 schoolchildren in 767 schools with lunch support, across the six affected provinces ▪ More than 3,000 vulnerable families (15,000 people) have received basic rations 	
WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the Ministry of Public Health, in conducting rapid health and needs assessment • Assistance was requested in technical information and guidelines in forensic operations, psychological and mental health, sanitation and water safety, health promotion, outbreaks monitoring and reporting. 	
Sub-total USD		2.6 million

Recovery programming

With the Government moving towards longer term rehabilitation and recovery in four key areas, the United Nations Country Team is implementing programmes supporting them: social protection, livelihood recovery, environmental rehabilitation and disaster preparedness.

Although the UN flash appeal was mobilized quickly, with projects initially formulated quite swiftly, it has taken time to approve them, with some country agencies using funds allocated for regional activity and others with several implementing partners, thus adding to the consultative and administrative timeframe. **Access to Flash Appeal funds has also been slow**, with one or two agencies still waiting for money to start implementation properly, e.g. UNDP, UNFPA. Other programmes have deliberately been targeted at mid-long term recovery, especially by those agencies perceived not to have an emergency role, e.g. IOM, World Bank.

This means that delivery of some projects has only just or not yet started; so there are few quantifiable impacts available. It is being suggested that the **timeframe for delivery** of certain projects be **extended until at least mid-2006**, to allow for quality delivery, especially where this is only starting in June/July 2005.

UN Agency	Recovery Activity: quantifiable impacts	Funds (USD)
FAO	Provide rehabilitation assistance to farming and fishing communities; assessment of tsunami-affected mangroves and other coastal forests. Recovery phase projects are due to start by the end of June 2005	
ILO	Working with the Ministry of Labour and UNDP, the project (signed June 1) covers post-tsunami livelihood recovery in the tourism sector in Phuket and Phang Nga provinces. Activity focuses on skills acquisition and capacity building, to improve employability and revenue generation	
IOM	<p>The IOM post-tsunami programme is divided into a) humanitarian assistance to migrant workers, and b) provision of health services, including development of longer term assistance mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 tonnes of relief items (clothing, hygiene supplies) have been delivered since March ▪ 3,000 migrant workers have been reached ▪ A further 15 tonnes will be distributed from mid-June to August 	
UNDP	<p>UNDP support focused on (i) community-based livelihood recovery (ii) disaster preparedness and mitigation (iii) environmental rehabilitation (iv) coordination of international assistance. Achievements to date include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordination of international assistance strengthened and Donor Assistance Database (DAD) designed and installed at MFA; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of community revolving funds for 20 villages as well as procurement of communal boat engines for 1,000 households underway in Phang Nga Bay, Phuket and Ranong through Small Grants Programme and in partnership with FAO. ▪ Large-scale and longer-term livelihood recovery programmes for vulnerable Muslim and Sea Gypsy communities in Krabi, Phuket and Phang Nga and Ranong initiated; ▪ 95% targeted coral reef sites cleared of debris ahead of monsoon season and 17 coral reef sites rehabilitated/repared and longer-term protection activities underway ▪ Formulation of a longer term Andaman Strategic Plan for Integrated Coastal Resource Management initiated; 	
UNEP	Provide assistance to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) in implementation of economic assessment of natural resources damages by the tsunami, promote effective knowledge management through strengthening marine and natural resources database, detailed assessment mangrove forests, promotion of eco-tourism in tsunami-affected national park and strengthening coordination at provincial and local level	
UNESCO	UNESCO is an implementing partner for UNDP on the 'Support for Rehabilitation of Traditional Communities and Municipalities in Tsunami Affected Areas in Thailand' project; UNESCO also has approved projects on 'Education for Natural Disaster Preparedness in Asia-Pacific' and 'Supporting Community Learning Centres in Selected Tsunami-Affected Areas': These projects have either only recently commenced or are due to in the coming weeks, so there are no quantifiable impacts available yet.	
UNFPA	UNFPA health programmes specifically focus on reproductive age population, including components on care for pregnant mothers and newborns, family counselling and HIV prevention. Outreach to village health committees aims to make community health care initiatives sustainable, while volunteer training supports livelihoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile clinic, medical equipment purchased • Community health volunteers recruited and trained 	
UNICEF	Projects in various sectors: child protection, emergency education, water and environmental sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention, multi-sectoral emergency support to local authorities, monitoring and social policy analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150,000 children in all six provinces reached with UNICEF-supported psychosocial recovery activities • 141,000 children in 800 schools and young child development centres provided with expanded opportunities for play and recreation and psychosocial recovery (sports equipment and reading books) • 100 child rights volunteers trained to advocate for children rights in tsunami-affected villages 	
WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and expertise in forensic science service including body ID, legal aspects, and psycho-social wellbeing of family members. • Strengthened interventions to prevent post-traumatic injuries and mental health to mitigate post-disaster effects on affected communities • Strengthened active surveillance to detect infectious disease outbreaks • Improved preparedness in natural disasters especially on architectural engineering aspects of building hospitals and health settings in disaster prone areas 	
WORLD BANK	There are no quantifiable available impacts yet as the projects have only recently begun. Objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the capacity of community groups to provide support and leadership in traumatized communities, and support sustainable management of the coastal and marine ecosystem • assist vulnerable populations to help them recover economic means of survival, access services which they are eligible for, and cope with psychological trauma. • to support the efforts of poor and vulnerable survivors of the tsunami to rebuild their lives through provision of legal and related services. 	
Sub-total USD		38.3 million

Other activities

In addition to contributing over 40 million USD of tsunami assistance and programming, the UN system in Thailand has been undertaking a variety of activities, supporting the work of the Government and also regional post-tsunami action:

- Regional *workshops* aimed at to exchange and learn lessons each other and formulate regional strategic framework for **rehabilitation in fisheries, agriculture**, forestry and credit/rural finance, with the participation of tsunami affected countries, donors, UN and regional organizations. Regional *consortium* on fisheries, to share information, enhance coordination and focus on more sustainable development activity. (FAO)
- Inter-agency coordination established bringing together all major governmental and non-governmental agencies working in **child protection** in tsunami affected areas (UNICEF)
- Support to the Thai Government's **Technical Assistance Coordination** Sub-Committee, set up on 14 January, as well as taking the lead international agency role in supporting the three taskforces set up (rehabilitation of coral reefs and marine resources; community livelihood recovery; land subsidence) (UNDP, FAO)
- Ongoing **strategic support** to the MFA Thai International Development Cooperation Agency, tasked by the PM to coordinate international assistance to the longer-term recovery effort. (UNDP)
- Plans developed to deliver **post-traumatic stress counselling** through traditional performing arts collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Network - APPAN. (UNESCO)
- Partnering with the Ministries of Labour and Public Health and NGOs on the documentation and **registration of migrant workers** in tsunami-affected areas. The task should be completed by the end of July 2005 (ILO, IOM)
- A meeting on **Coastal Zone Rehabilitation** and Management in the tsunami-affected region, which endorsed guiding principles for post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction. Additional regional capacity building activities are planned for tsunami waste management, coastal zone management, integrated sustainable development strategies and disaster management. (UNEP)