



TO: OCHA-GENEVA

FROM: JOANA MERLIN-SCHOLTES
UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN THAILAND

SUBJECT: TSUNAMI SITUATION ANALYSIS AFTER 4 WEEKS

DATE: 21 January 2005

THAILAND

1. Overall Situation

Hundreds of thousands of people have been affected by the tsunami that hit Southern Thailand on 26 December 2004. Thailand has handled the emergency Search, Rescue and Relief phases very successfully, and they are now well into the recovery process, even while forensic analysis for victim identification continues apace. Nearly 500 fishing villages along the Andaman coast were seriously affected, nearly 30,000 households dependant on fisheries have lost their means of livelihood, over 4,500 fishing boats have been destroyed or damaged, and over 90,000 people have lost their jobs in the tourism sector. At the same time, the tsunami had a very serious impact on the natural environment, with several marine and coastal national parks severely damaged, coral reefs destroyed by debris, and agricultural land affected by salt water intrusion. These environmental impacts are in turn having serious consequences for the tourism industry and people's livelihoods. The tsunami has resulted in the complete destruction of over 3,500 houses and partial damage of almost 3,000 houses along the southern coast of Thailand, directly affecting 20,000 households (loss of a family member or home) comprising approximately 92,000 people. Four schools were completely destroyed and more than one-hundred were either directly damaged or lost students or teachers; however all schools had reopened by January 10. Of greatest concern is that 25% of children are not going to schools, and are reportedly staying at home because of fear and distress.

2. Overview of operations to date by sector: key interventions, numbers of beneficiaries reached, type of assistance provided

A. Food

WFP has offered 500,000 USD to Thailand, but the money will be held until needs and distribution channels are clearly identified and when/if the government requests assistance.

B. Health

A health assessment was undertaken by a joint WHO/UNICEF team. Health services are in place, measles vaccination (and tetanus) has been carried out and Vitamin A has been distributed. So far, there have been no reports of outbreaks of communicable diseases; a UNICEF-supported team from Mahidol University Institute of Nutrition is this week looking at food security and nutrition issues.

Governmental and Non-governmental services through existing health centers with respect to HIV/AIDS and STIs have been restored in all areas, and access to basic medications and materials (drugs, ARV's, Condoms) are being provided at pre-tsunami levels in most communities and to most concerned populations.

C. Water and Sanitation

For those who have lost their homes and are being cared for in emergency shelters (approximately 7,000 people) water and sanitation systems are in place although some improvements are needed. UNICEF has supported the constructed of latrines in temporary shelters in a number of locations.

D. Shelter and Infrastructure

A joint UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, UNHCR, ILO, IOM and UNEP team has conducted an assessment mission on human settlements. The team assessed needs in affected provinces, and is considering assistance options for their respective agencies to provide support to Royal Thai Government efforts.

E. Education

UNESCO has supported UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in their assessments of damage, health, educations needs and disaster awareness and preparedness (in the development of educational materials). UNICEF has procured school supplies, recreational materials and early childhood kits for the 100 most affected school and nurseries valued at more than USD 300,000, distribution has started and will be completed in the next week. UNICEF supported repair of schools and other buildings for temporary use as classrooms, shelters and latrines; supplied computers and other items to schools; provided funds to hire temporary teachers and cleaners for schools, funded temporary transport including bicycles for school children. UNICEF is currently supporting home-based psycho-social to reduce existing levels of fear, and promote school attendance. ILO has carried out a consultation with the Ministry of Labour and other government agencies about provision of temporary employment and starting skills training courses.

F. Environment

A joint UNDP/World Bank/FAO disaster assessment mission was fielded from 4 to 7 January to assess the mid-to long-term impact of the tsunami disaster with focus on sustainable recovery of livelihoods, recovery of fisheries, environmental rehabilitation, sustainable coastal zone planning and eco-tourism. A project proposal for Responsive Assistance on the Rehabilitation of Natural Resources and Environmental Damages in the Affected Areas is being prepared jointly with UNDP, UNEP and FAO. A joint government of Thailand/FAO detailed technical assessment mission in the fisheries and agricultural sectors has been fielded from 11 January to identify the needs for emergency assistance as well as to identify priority interventions and inputs. FAO has approved an Emergency Technical Cooperation Project worth USD 400,000 to support the rehabilitation in fisheries and agriculture in Tsunami-affected areas, which will be signed by the Government next week.

3. Overview of anticipated sectoral needs and activities until the end of February 2005

A. Food

While food insecurity is not expected to be a problem in Thailand, WFP will send an assessment team to ensure that needs are being met.

B. Health

UNICEF will maintain a field presence for the next six months, with 15 staff working from four temporary offices. Specialists in child protection, health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation and emergency coordination are being recruited to provide technical support to the government for the next phase of the operation. Ensuring the maintenance of clean water and hygiene/sanitation services for populations living in the camps will be a priority, as will ensuring adequate supply of essential drugs for children. UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Health to maintain a capacity to prevent

outbreaks of communicable diseases, especially diarrheal diseases and measles. Community-based HIV/AIDS/IEC/BCC prevention programs and condoms will be a major need in this transitional period when risks and vulnerabilities for HIV/AIDS (particularly unprotected sex and/or drug use) will be highest (before livelihoods and “normal” life has been restored).

C. Water and Sanitation

Ensuring the maintenance of clean water and hygiene/sanitation services for populations living in the camps will continue to be a priority area for UNICEF.

D. Shelter and Infrastructure

UNIDO is planning a follow-up meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry of Thailand as well as elaborations on possible cooperation with Swiss, German and Austrian firms for the provision of equipment such as water desalination treatment plants and construction systems for houses. Further cooperation is planned with FAO RAP for cooperation on assessment missions for a recovery of the fishing industry.

E. Education

UNESCO has planned six projects until the end of February 2005: Environmental assessment for educational material and campaigns across sectors, the role of Community Learning Centres in providing crisis recovery skills, stress counseling through the use of traditional, indigenous performing arts, enduring minimum accessibility standards in the reconstruction of schools and, the re-establishment of community radio stations. UNICEF is planning expansion of the psycho-social services for children who are not attending schools and who are at home, in addition to scaling up school based psycho-social interventions.

F. Environment

UNDP is planning projects for the restoration of livelihoods in the fisheries and agriculture/livestock sectors, environmental restoration of the coral reefs, micro-finance for livelihood recovery, and support for disaster preparedness and early warning.

4. Identification of key issues / challenges that need to be addressed

As Thailand is already firmly in the recovery process, and relief issues are well under control, the key issues facing the country are environmental, psycho-social and livelihoods restoration; ensuring the care for particularly vulnerable groups; and improving disaster preparedness. Thailand's refusal to formally request direct assistance as part of the Flash Appeal, inhibits donor support for UN activities. Thailand has requested specific technical assistance in many areas including: restoration of the coastal environment, addressing geo-hazards (salinity intrusion, sink-holes, landslides), approaches to livelihood recovery, and disaster management capacity building. Information sharing and coordination among the many willing donors for these efforts continues to be problematic and very time consuming. Thai government efforts at donor coordination will need to be strengthened to facilitate effective use of the available resources. Addressing some of the issues of vulnerability of the affected migrant population will continue to be problematic, as migrants are currently fearful of authorities, who are unable to assess their needs.