



To: OCHA-Geneva, UNCT in Thailand
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UN Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator in Thailand
Subject: **Disaster, Field Sit Rep 12**
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I. SITUATION

The most recent figures from the Thai Ministry of Interior Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation on the tsunami include: **5,395 dead** (1,961 Thai, 1,953 foreigners and 1,481 unidentified) and **2,845 missing**, as of April 19, 2005. UNICEF reports that the number of children who lost one or both parents/immediate guardian is now **1,221**, a rise of 49 since the last report; these additional children are from the Phang Nga province. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation now states that the overall population affected by tsunami devastation amounts to **58,550 people**, or 12,017 households. A **significant rise in the number of fishing boats lost or severely damaged** (i.e. non seaworthy) has been released by the Department of Fisheries: **7,446** instead of the 4,500 stated last month. This is because smaller, unregistered boats have now been counted.

II. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES, RESPONSES

Emergency response has largely given way to long term recovery and rehabilitation activity now, apart from continuing food assistance (WFP), psycho-social counselling (UNICEF) and procurement of essential equipment for forensic and coral clean-up work (UNDP).

Disaster preparedness continues to be a focus of government and the international community. In Phuket, following the installation of a siren system and distribution of a coastal evacuation plan, there will be a drill on Friday 29 April, to test both the technology and community response. OCHA is organizing a series of national workshops on best practice and lessons learned: the Thailand event is planned for 26-27 May in Bangkok. UNESCO Bangkok will soon start implementation of the Education for Natural Disaster Preparedness in Asia-Pacific project; the main focus is on improving **planning for relief and recovery using a bottom-up approach**, highlighting the importance of coordination and communication among stakeholder groups at all levels.

Other key issues facing the affected communities in the Andaman provinces include **child protection, livelihood restoration, environmental rehabilitation** and access to healthcare and services by **marginalized groups**. Many of these issues are inter-connected, like the UNDP coral reef rehabilitation project: 95% of debris has been cleared off targeted reefs ahead of the monsoon, supporting both fish populations and the key role the reefs play in sustaining tourism and fishing livelihoods. IOM and UNFPA are supporting marginal populations like the Burmese migrant workers to ensure they have access to humanitarian assistance, helping to control the spread of disease and recognising the social contribution they will make in post-tsunami reconstruction work.

On a positive note, tsunami response is ensuring attention is drawn to existing problems and providing an **opportunity for Thailand** to review its policies on coastal zoning management, sustainable livelihoods and environment among others, and make sure that communities participate in future decision-making. TICA (the Government agency for international development) will hold a national workshop on May 4, during which Thailand will unveil its strategy on improved coordinating mechanisms and discuss **gaps in technical assistance**.

III. MAIN CHALLENGES

According to UNICEF and UNAIDS, the crucial challenge affecting various sectors is prompt **restoration of livelihoods**. The psychological trauma of losing family breadwinners and/or source of livelihood is impacting on issues as diverse as child protection (women/girls turning to prostitution for family survival; increased vulnerability of children to abuse or exploitation) and the **spread of HIV/AIDS** and other STDs (increased unsafe sexual behaviour among displaced, unemployed people, youth) as well as the economy and tourism industry. UNFPA is expanding work on provision of

reproductive health care services to tsunami-affected communities, including improving access to information on HIV/STI prevention, vulnerability of women and young girls and trauma-related counselling.

The authorities are working on repair and restoration of fishing boats and equipment, but in some areas it is not moving fast enough for the communities. In some cases people are **being taught new skills** or sources of income generation, which can be useful even once former livelihoods are restored, while in others measures like **community-managed micro-finance** schemes have been initiated, which complement Government compensation schemes. A new UNDP/ILO project is being formulated, which aims to address unemployment in the tourist sector in Khao Lak and Phuket through skills acquisition and employability: employees have requested more training in income generating activity (IGA), education on rights and obligations and confidence-building training on security and disaster response. After consultative workshops, FAO stresses the need to focus on technologies that assist the creation of **sustainable employment-intensive activities**, which especially benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized.

In some areas Thailand is successfully using **community-based approaches**, for example in assessment of post-tsunami mental health (WHO), while with regard to adequacy of shelter provision or tourism recovery in Phuket, it is felt that more consultation will lead to more sustainable recovery (UNICEF, ILO).

Reaching out to migrant communities is crucial, as mentioned above, but issues such as **high mobility** making continuous health service difficult to provide; the **hesitance of migrant workers** to approach the authorities for fear of harassment or even deportation; and the fact that this is new to many government health officials, all complicate the process. IOM and the Ministry of Public Health are working together to raise awareness on the importance of providing health services to migrants as well as to concretize an action plan on **delivery of services**.
