



To: OCHA-Geneva, UNCT in Thailand
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Subject: **Disaster, Field Sit Rep 13**
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I. SITUATION

The Thai Ministry of Interior Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation issued its latest data on the tsunami on 2 May: the overall figure for fatalities has not changed from **5,395** but as more bodies are identified the number of Thai deceased (1,975) has risen by 14 since mid April and foreign nationals by 292 (now 2,245).

II. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES, RESPONSES

Most actors are now focusing on the transition from emergency response and relief to long term recovery and rehabilitation. At regional UN agency conferences and a Thai government workshop in the last ten days it has emerged that **livelihood rehabilitation** and better **donor coordination** are probably the most important factors in Thailand's road to recovery. The Government and the humanitarian community is focusing on four inter-connected key sectors: social protection, livelihood recovery, environmental rehabilitation and disaster preparedness.

In terms of **social protection** UNICEF has stressed the need for counselling for adults looking after children, who may not be their own e.g. host families, grandparents etc. The agency has also been meeting youth groups and religious leaders in the affected provinces to see how those groups can help. Government officers and NGO staff are due to be trained in child protection issues. The WHO conference on '**health aspects** of the Asian tsunami' was held in Phuket 4-6 May, and several key issues were highlighted: more women than men were killed in the tsunami, leaving children more vulnerable to exploitation; that psycho-social counselling is essential for adolescent boys, who are a high suicide risk group and men, who are more likely to abuse alcohol to relieve stress.

Housing/shelter is a key factor in families' welfare and ability to function normally. The Ministry of Interior has stated that as of 22 April **2,952 permanent homes** are still needed: around 300 families have received financial compensation to build their own homes, but most are waiting for government-built shelter. 271 new homes have been built since the end of April and **2,060** are currently being constructed. The issue of land rights is being dealt with methodically, with the Department of Land Registry conducting surveys of land plots in the affected provinces.

Livelihood restoration is linked to all sectors and while there are many initiatives starting or already in process, better coordination and mapping have been called for. Progress has been made in support to coastal and fishery resource rehabilitation, in terms of boats provided, replenished hatcheries and deep-sea catch assistance by donor governments and NGOs. The Department of Fisheries is now assessing the needs of particular 'tambons' (local districts). Capacity is being sought for quicker rebuilding of boats. The tourism sector is suffering low occupancy rates at the moment: to mitigate the underemployment of workers the government is supporting a restart programme for SMEs and other agencies are helping with income generating activity projects.

Thailand's steps towards improved **disaster preparedness** have begun with a tsunami warning drill in Phuket on 30 April, which was considered successful and will be replicated in Phang-Nga and Ranong provinces. This is seen as a positive step, as a good early warning system is considered crucial for a revitalized tourism industry, and thus impacts on sustainable livelihoods. The Department of Meteorology reported 4 May that it is currently working on automatic seismic monitoring, a database on geohazards mitigation, and tsunami detection buoys in the Andaman Sea. Key issues under consideration are how to get warning information received from seismic stations to district authorities and communities, use of measures other than TV and radio, and use of the knowledge of indigenous peoples when considering any early warning system.

III. MAIN CHALLENGES

Although so many agencies and donors are keen to assist Thailand with reconstruction after the tsunami, the huge response is also presenting the government with some **coordination** issues. Various agencies are involved in sectors like housing construction and social support but both the government – TICA (Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency), NGOs and UN agencies agree that mapping of activity and greater civil society participation to avoid overlap and ensure consultation is crucial. It is felt that successful recovery comes when there is **government-led** coordination, so TICA is now looking for tools to help improve its already positive role and also lead towards a possible regional support role in disaster management. TICA is open to input from other partners. Some examples include the UNDP-sponsored study tour to OCHA Geneva, and involvement in joint activities like the OCHA national lessons learned workshop for Thailand May 30-31, as well as **development of tools and systems** such as the UNDP Development Assistance Database designed to support government-led coordination and the UNRC proposal for assistance with translation of documentation into English for easier access by the international humanitarian community.
