



To: OCHA-Geneva, UNCT in Thailand  
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Subject: **Disaster, Field Sit Rep 15**  
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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 08 June: the overall figure for **fatalities** is now given as **5,395**, i.e. 1,972 Thai nationals and 2,248 foreign nationals. There are also 2,817 people still missing.

The figure is based on the number of bodies received by the Disaster Victim Identification Centre (DVI) i.e. 5,395 bodies, of which **2,076 have yet to be identified**. The other 3,319 have been identified, certified, and claimed by relatives for burial. The DVI is seeking additional budget of up to 260 million baht (6.5 million USD) to set up automatic fingerprint and DNA checking systems, and databases in line with international standards, in a bid to accurately identify corpses more quickly. Almost 2,000 remaining bodies have been sent to Bosnia for lab tests.

In terms of the **2,817 missing persons**, new data shows that among the Thai nationals (1,921), 1,655 are from Phang Nga province, nearly three times more than Phuket. Missing foreign nationals amount to 896 altogether, and are split between Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi provinces (i.e. mainly in the resorts of Patong/Kamala, Koh Phi-Phi and Khao Lak).

## II. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES, RESPONSES

After almost six months, the UN system is conducting a variety of projects and activities supporting the four sectors highlighted by the Government of Thailand in its **longer-term recovery strategy**. Many projects have only just received approval or actual funding, so there are few additional impacts to note since the last situation report. The emergency phase is now considered over in Thailand, in that some assistance is ongoing, but it is for a finite period e.g. numbers of schoolchildren receiving food support until October. In anticipation of public and donor interest six months after the disaster, a report is being compiled on the **Thailand UNCT tsunami response**, which covers funding, implementation and impacts to date.

Apart from providing compensation, assistance to the unemployed and house construction, inter alia, through a post-tsunami rehabilitation budget of 150 million USD, the Royal Thai Government has made it clear that **disaster prevention and mitigation are a priority**, especially in the light of the latest international study on the increased possibility of another Indonesian faultline earthquake triggering a tsunami.

### Disaster preparedness

Following the first public tsunami **evacuation exercise** in April in Phuket, a similar drill was held in Krabi province on 27 May, in one of its most vulnerable districts. Again, the underlying aim was to demonstrate preparedness measures to reassure local inhabitants and tourists.

Thailand's **National Disaster Warning Centre** was officially opened on 30 May by the Prime Minister. Key services include 24 hr monitoring of earthquakes and assessment of tsunami likelihood, plus issue of alerts to all broadcasters, mobile phone providers and, once completed, the network of coastal public announcement stations.

The National **Lessons Learned** Workshop, organized in Bangkok 30-31 May by OCHA, in partnership with the UN System in Thailand and the Thai Government, highlighted the effective response and positive levels of preparedness experienced in Thailand, but also served to identify some **areas for improvement**. The need for a comprehensive national preparedness plan; Improved

utilization of resources in emergencies; Managing contributions and inexperienced volunteers to avoid major, unnecessary strain on already burdened disaster management authorities; Protection of vulnerable groups; Involvement of affected communities, among others. These, and the best practices identified, will be shared by the Government at the **regional workshop**, taking place in Medan, 13-14 June.

Further to the areas for cooperation identified by the Royal Thai Government and OCHA, mentioned in sit rep #14), TICA has confirmed that the RTG is considering the feasibility of positioning Thailand as the regional location for a relief dept, of sending Thai participants to this August's UNDAC training session in Singapore, and is identifying appropriate focal points for the proposed Asian Humanitarian Partnership and the Environmental Emergencies Partnership.

**UNESCO** Bangkok's project *Education for Natural Disaster Preparedness in Asia-Pacific in the context of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)* has just been formally approved. The first strategy meeting will be held June 13, with the participation of key actors in the disaster preparedness field, including DDPM, ADPC, IUCN and Thailand Environment Institute (TEI).

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (**UN ISDR**) is in the process of opening an outreach programme for Asia, with an office in Bangkok. The new office will focus on strengthening existing disaster reduction capacities and promoting regional cooperation for disaster management. One of the mission's first events is a **joint media workshop** with the Asian Broadcasting Union 13-16 June. The aim of this will be to highlight the role played by the media during disasters and ways in which broadcasters can contribute to the preparedness of communities.

### **Social protection**

By 8 June, the Government had provided assistance to tsunami victims in the amount of 355,727,050 baht (nearly **9 million USD**). This includes 623,759 USD from the MoF, 2.5 million USD from the Prime Minister's Office, and 178, 500 USD from the Ministry of Social and Human Security Development and covers compensation to the injured, funeral costs, purchase of basic domestic items; and moving expenses.

**Housing** continues to make up a large proportion of state assistance to the affected population, and although construction work continues in all the affected provinces, there are no new figures on completed homes. Work in Phang Nga province seems to be fastest, with **1,816 permanent units** currently under construction, compared with only 85 in Phuket and 166 in Krabi. However, the sea gypsy community in Phuket has submitted a petition to the Governor, claiming that they have not received adequate or fair compensation for housing damaged by the tsunami.

**Migrant workers** are now receiving more assistance, with the help of various NGOs and UN agencies. UNFPA reports that this group is being reached by mobile clinics and Burmese-speaking medical personnel. Community health workers are also being trained, to make the effort more sustainable. A report is due at the end of the month with the results of the survey of migrant workers in the affected provinces. Six tonnes of aid have been delivered through IOM, with a further 15 tonnes to be delivered from the middle of June. A **registration** initiative is now being undertaken by the Ministries of Labour and Public Health, in partnership with IOM, ILO and other NGOs.

**Psycho-social counselling** continues to be provided to children and those caring for them. Last week the Government organized a seminar and workshop in Phuket for professionals and the community on how to better deal with children's problems caused by the tsunami, using Trauma Relief Expressive Art Therapies such as body-mind, cognitive, expressive verbal and non-verbal, spiritual and ritual support, and social support building methods.

The MoPH Department of Mental Health suggests that nearly 4,000 tsunami survivors have reported **mental health problems** since the tsunami disaster. According to local medical experts, survivors in Phang-nga province, which bore the brunt of the disaster, are most likely to suffer mental health problems, and are at high risk of committing suicide. The DoMH has established teams of mobile psychiatrists able to give emergency advice to tsunami survivors, and has also opened a psychiatric rehabilitation centre in Khao Lak.

### **Livelihood restoration**

Livelihood restoration is not something that can be completed in a short period, but efforts continue, with support from various actors in the field. New Government figures released show that as of 31 May, **34,710 registered employees** of 952 businesses in the six provinces have been affected by the tsunami. 443 have either permanently or temporarily stopped operating, affecting a further 3,546 workers. Phuket province has the highest number of affected employees, either now un- or under-employed: 21,197 out of the total number. The Social Security office has paid over 5 million USD in benefits in the Andaman region.

In order to boost confidence in Phuket the Government has initiated a number of activities, including language **training** for tourism workers: thirteen languages on offer include Russian, Mandarin, Finnish and Arabic. Thailand's provincial authorities plan to hold a three-day seminar in Phuket in August to support the island's tourist business: **hotel bookings** for June and July are less than 10% of the usual rate for the season.

Almost **9 million USD** has been paid to fishermen and hatcheries as of 20 May according to the Department of Fisheries. This includes fishing, fish processing and tourist boats, as well as fishing gear and hatchery equipment. The Government is also close to reaching its target on compensation to shop owners in affected areas, with only 29 people left to be paid out of a total of 4,267.

A new project on '**Post-tsunami Livelihood Recovery** in the Tourism Sector in Phuket & Phang Nga' was signed on June 1 by the partners involved, the Ministry of Labour, ILO, and UNDP. The project aims to address unemployment in the tourism sector, focusing on **skills acquisition** and capacity, to improve employability and revenue generation.

In addition to ongoing projects on agriculture and fisheries rehabilitation, **FAO** is now reporting that a further four projects will be launched this month, totalling 1.8 million USD. These will also support farming and fishing communities in the affected provinces in Thailand, as well as carrying out an in-depth assessment of mangroves and other coastal forest for sustainable coastal resource management. FAO is one of the leading agencies in the **Regional Consortium to restore livelihoods** of communities in Tsunami affected nations (CONSRN), and the first CONSRN regional joint programme workshop was held on 30 May in Bangkok.

### **III. MAIN CHALLENGES**

The Royal Thai Government has acknowledged that the country is dealing with challenges in areas such as land titlement, victim ID, housing provision and tourism. **Progress** is being made, as described above.

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