



To: OCHA Geneva, UNCT in Thailand
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Subject: **Disaster, Field Sit Rep 16**
Date: 07 July 2005

I. SITUATION

Six months after the tsunami struck the Indian Ocean region, the Thai Ministry of Interior Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) confirmed 30 June that a total of **5,395 people** lost their lives in the disaster, 2,248 of which were foreign nationals from 37 other countries. 2,817 people remain missing. More than 1,900 bodies have yet to be formally DNA identified, according to the Thailand Tsunami Victim Identification Centre (TTVI) on 05 July. Approximately 7,000 people are still living in temporary shelters in Phang Nga and Krabi provinces, awaiting completion of permanent housing (Ministry of Social Protection data, 06.07.05).

II. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES, RESPONSES

The recovery process continues in the six affected provinces, with the support of UN agencies, international and domestic NGOs and donor countries. The estimated central budget contribution to tsunami recovery in Thailand over the next 18 months is **149 million USD** (around 6 billion baht). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has explained that this sum includes all the emergency phase expenditure plus medium term rehabilitation measures, until the end of 2006, concerning funds taken from the central budget. Thereafter, recovery funds will be included in each province's annual budget.

To date, the Government has paid out 25.6 billion baht (**624.2 million USD**) in compensation and assistance to those affected by the disaster. This total includes a) 4.8 billion baht (118.3 million USD) from thirteen ministries; b) 20.4 billion baht (nearly 500 million USD) from bank credit; c) 281.9 million baht (6.8 million USD) from the Prime Minister's Office. 30 million USD of private donations were received in Thailand, and were used to set up a Relief Fund for Disaster Victims administered by the PM Office: 12 million USD have already been spent.

This includes assistance paid to tsunami victims for general household items, hospital costs, funeral fees and tools; financial assistance has also been provided to store vendors in the affected provinces (**6,846 vendors**, who have received 132 million baht in total/3.3 million USD); of 3,127 housing units required, 1,402 have been completed, and a further **1,725 are under construction**; nearly 500 million baht has been paid to support the fishing sector, covering more than **9,000 boats** (fishing/tourist/fish processing) tools, and almost 8,000 hatcheries. Social Security has been paid out to the unemployed and injured, credit funded for small businesses, and of 14,656 students, 6,296 have already received their 15,000 baht relief payments.

UN agencies in Thailand have mobilized **40 million USD** for emergency relief - 2.6 million USD - and the rest in recovery assistance for ongoing delivery until the end of 2006. A financial tracking matrix is now available on the UNCT Thailand website, for further clarification (<http://www.un.or.th>) of beneficiary communities and projected outputs.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs **tsunami coordination forum** on 5 July, the Government reported on current progress and needs in four sectors: tsunami victim identification, early warning systems, environmental rehabilitation and livelihood rehabilitation.

Victim identification

The latest figures from the Royal Thai Police and the TTVI suggest that there still around 1,900 bodies that have not yet been identified. Only 5% of bodies have been DNA matched, as there have been some challenges in obtaining **DNA** from both sides of a victim's family to ensure reliable data. This has been more difficult in the case of Thai victims, as whole families were killed, and homes/possessions destroyed. Dental records and DNA have been easier to obtain for the foreign

nationals who died, since many of them were tourists with above-average income and good healthcare. New information on foreign national victim ID will be available after 18 July, regarding samples being matched in Sarajevo. New software is being procured by Thailand (budget approved by the Government) so that other samples will not have to be sent to Bosnia. The Ministry of Public Health is continuing to collect paternal DNA samples in the field, to expedite the matching process for Thai victims.

Early warning systems

Thailand is in the process of developing a comprehensive early warning system including the National Disaster Warning Centre (NDWC) that opened on May 30, and the first two **warning towers** on Phuket's popular Patong Beach. The Ministry of ICT has confirmed that two more towers will be erected in Khao Lak in the next few weeks, while the Government has now approved the budget for a further 62 towers in tsunami-prone areas, to be in place and functional by the end of 2005. The governor of Phuket has urged the Government to ensure the island's system is fully functional by the end of August, to restore tourist confidence.

The NDWC is now in full operation, cooperating with agencies such as the Departments of National Parks; Mineral Resources; Supreme Command HQ and others. The Centre is also working with other international partners on upgrading the Early Warning System: it has been noted by various actors including Japan and the Thai Government that the roles of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) and NDWC need further **clarification**, if the latter is to be positioned as one of Asia's multi-nodal regional centres.

The Ministry of Education is preparing **handbooks** on natural disaster procedure, for school administrators, teachers, fisherpeople and other coastal communities. MoE and UNICEF are cooperating on joint workshops to train these groups on how to use the handbooks.

Environmental rehabilitation

A wide variety of activities is being undertaken by both the Government, the UN and donor countries, since it is clear that tsunami damage has impacted both on the ecosystem and on human livelihoods. Recent developments include pilot studies by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE) on water **contamination**, both by seawater and by metals (in former mining areas); post-tsunami impact studies with assistance of Norway, Japan for example; development of GIS/remote sensing technology for improved natural resources management. The Thai Government has acknowledged that it would welcome more cooperation in capacity building and on-the-job training abroad.

The Royal Thai Navy Hydrographic Department is currently undertaking a coastal survey, mapping coastal/marine tourist attractions and deep sea ports, but the process is subject to **delay** during the monsoon season.

Livelihood rehabilitation

Many observers and stakeholders agree that livelihood restoration is key to the recovery of Thailand's affected people, provinces and economy. From psychosocial health to macroeconomic progress, this is still a factor in many sectors.

Thailand now has an opportunity to ensure that sustainability is a key focus of **livelihood development** in the fishing and tourism industries. For example, UNDP is working with local government and NGOs on community-based livelihood recovery for vulnerable Sea Gypsy and Muslim groups, as well as establishing community-managed finance for 30 villages. ILO and UNDP are supporting skills development and income-generating activities for tourism workers and small businesses in Phuket and Phang Nga provinces, while the World Bank is supporting community legal aid initiatives in Phang Nga province.

The Thai Government and UN agencies have emphasized in particular the effect on vulnerable children and their families – without work, there is greater pressure on caregivers and more **scope for exploitation** of women and children. This is exacerbating the tsunami trauma, and in turn, prolonging the impact on communities, key industries and the economy. Other issues that have been highlighted include i) access to financing for SMEs and the informal sector; ii) the need for more trained mental

health volunteers and adaptation of know-how from other countries to the Thai context, iii) inclusion of marginal and vulnerable groups in planning and decisions affecting livelihoods; iv) the need for awareness of unscrupulous individuals/groups who may seek to exploit the vulnerable, especially children living in disordered circumstances; v) disputes over land ownership, whether as a result of lost papers or encroachment by wealthy developers (several thousand villagers are said to be involved in cases in Phang Nga province alone).

UNICEF has reiterated the risks for the most **vulnerable communities** affected by the tsunami, especially children, but warns against assuming that orphans are worst off, or that they would benefit from adoption. In fact most are being cared for by extended family: the key issue is to support caregivers in terms of income regeneration, and train social workers in how to assess vulnerability properly.

The Department of Fisheries confirmed that field workers are still assessing the needs for boat replacement or compensation. FAO reports that three new projects have been approved, with a total budget of 1.18 million USD. These will assist farmers in restarting agricultural production in southern Thailand; carry out an in-depth assessment of mangroves and other coastal forests affected by the tsunami; and provide emergency assistance to fishing communities. One of the leading agencies in the **Regional Consortium** to restore community livelihoods (CONSRN), FAO organized the latest meeting (01 July) to discuss development of policy guidelines.

III. MAIN CHALLENGES

The Royal Thai Government has acknowledged that the country is dealing with challenges in areas such as land title, livelihood restoration, maternal and child health, HIV prevention, housing provision, and identification of victims.

Key concerns among other partners include:

- *Vulnerable groups*: ensuring that assistance to communities like Muslims, Sea Gypsies, and migrant workers is sensitive to local needs and cultural diversity
- *Child protection*: need to strengthen capacity for care of children especially in shelter camps; and provide more trauma counselling
- *Land issues*: people being unable to rebuild their lives where they used to live is hindering recovery; UNDP and the World Bank are providing legal support to vulnerable communities
- *Trauma*: is impacting on people's recovery, not helped by loss of livelihoods: counselling and income generation/skills development are essential mechanisms for Thailand's recovery
- *Tourism*: the fact that this sector is not rebounding as quickly as hoped compounds the above; confidence measures and stronger marketing might help.

Coordination remains a concern for Government and other partners in the recovery effort. Recent developments have included the installation of the Donor Assistance Database (DAD) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to aid tracking of tsunami assistance to Thailand.

However, as UNDP, which sponsored the initiative, pointed out, the DAD is only useful if the data is updated regularly. A request has been made for focal points for TICA to contact. Training is also being organized to ensure the tool is effective.

Relief and recovery agencies in the field have recommended that more **leadership in coordination** is needed at provincial and district level, to avoid duplication and ensure civil society participation.

Please visit <http://www.un.or.th> for more information on the United Nations in Thailand response to the tsunami disaster, including all situation reports, joint press release and a six month financial tracking matrix.