



United Nations Development Programme

Communications Office

PRESS RELEASE

THE CLEAN-UP BEGINS: ACEHNESE HIRED TO CLEAR TSUNAMI RUBBLE

Jakarta, 13 January 2005- Three hundred displaced and affected people by the tsunami in Indonesia's Aceh province have been hired today by the Minister of Public Works with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to remove debris from the Indian Ocean Tsunami. This rubble removal mass-employment initiative aims to provide income to displaced people while helping them to begin rebuilding. "To get normality back into people's lives they need to be given the opportunity to start reorganizing themselves in ways that benefit them, earning cash to ensure that they have choice in the market, they can choose what they want to do", said UNDP crisis recovery team leader in Aceh Kristanto Sinandang.

Two weeks after the devastating tsunami, over 105,000 Indonesians have been confirmed dead, while the livelihoods of over 500,000 have been devastated. Thousands of fisher folk, vendors and those dependent on home-based enterprises are suffering major economic loss. According to initial Government assessments, the estimated damage cost could raise to over US\$ 1.1 billion.

"Schools and clinics have been destroyed. Hundreds of kilometers of roads have been blocked or washed out. Bridges have been wiped away in many areas and port facilities have been ruined. Rubble and debris under feet of mud are covering settlement sites, buildings and paddy fields", said UNDP Senior Deputy Resident Representative in Indonesia Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son, who recently returned from Banda Aceh. "The recovery of Aceh will take years to come. By providing people with short-term employment and quick financial resources early on, they can begin cleaning up the villages and municipalities, and getting their children back to school," she said.

The emergency relief effort in Aceh is growing steadily. UNDP with its partners is working to assist people in the long process of rebuilding their livelihoods. The disaster has impeded North Sumatra's development gains and jeopardized the region's ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

For further information, please contact: Caroline Cooper at caroline.cooper@undp.org or +62 21 314 1308 xt159; or Christelle Chapoy at christelle.chapoy@undp.org, or +62 813 1672 7804; or Elis Nurhayati at elis.nurhayati@undp.org or +62 811 85 25 50.

* * *

UNDP is the United Nations worldwide development network. It advocates change and provides countries with access to the knowledge, skills and resources their populations need to improve their lives.

Latest information on tsunami disaster efforts is available at:

<http://www.undp.org/bcpr/>