

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



UN Assistant Secretary General and Regional Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau of Asia and Pacific begins his visit to the Maldives.

20 February 2005, Male' Maldives – The United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific Mr. Hafiz Pasha has today begun his three day visit to the Maldives. Mr. Pasha is the UNDP chairperson for the UNDP Tsunami Task Force and his visit to the Maldives is part of a regional tour which spans the Tsunami affected areas of Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand in addition to the Maldives.

During his visit, Mr. Pasha will call on His Excellency President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and meet with members of the National Government Taskforce on Disaster Response, in addition to other top ranking Government officials. Mr. Pasha will also undertake a field visit to Meemu Atoll; Kolhufushi- one of the worst affected islands and Naalaafushi- where UNDP in partnership with Banyan Tree Maldives is supporting the recovery effort. This partnership has been supporting the affected communities of Naalaafushi helping restore houses that were damaged by the Tsunami.

Since the launch of UN Flash Appeal on 6 January, UNDP has been mobilizing resources for four key sectors that are covered by the Agency under the Flash Appeal: infrastructure, livelihoods, shelter and disaster risk management. Significant funding has been secured to date from various donors and UNDP regional funds to these sectors and UNDP is in the process of finalizing the project proposals for early implementation of the relief and recovery efforts.

Noting the funding gap for the shelter component more than seven weeks after the disaster, UNDP, last week launched an initiative inviting in particular private donors to ADOPT AN ISLAND and thereby directly help communities rebuild their lives. Mr. Pasha will be briefed about this and other activities being undertaken by the UN Country Team and particularly UNDP in Maldives before concluding his visit on the early morning of 23 February 2003.

Mr. Pasha's visit to Maldives is one among a number of visits by high ranking international level dignitaries being undertaken to the Maldives in the wake of the destruction caused by the Asian Tsunami of last December.

For more information, please contact: Aishath Jeelaan UNDP on 32 4501 ext. 227 or 787 987.