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India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Seychelles, Somalia: Earthquake and Tsunami OCHA Situation Report No. 8

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OCHA Situation Report No. 8

Earthquake and Tsunami

Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Seychelles, Somalia

- Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, the Special Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Tsunami affected communities left on 31 December 2004 to carry out missions in Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia, Thailand and India.
- Preliminary estimates on requirements were presented on 29 December 2004 by a number of UN Country Teams in Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka for an immediate USD 130 million. A consolidated regional UN Flash Appeal is scheduled to be launched on 6 January in New York. A pledging conference will take place on 11 January in Geneva.
- As of 31 December 2004, USD 814 million has been reported to OCHA as cash contributions for the victims for the tsunami affected communities.

(The figures quoted in this report are official government figures).

INDONESIA

Situation and Constraints

As of today, the Government reported that the death toll stands at 80,000. Thousands of injured people are being treated at public and field hospitals. 108,000 persons are reported to be sheltering in emergency tents. Some camps have been established but are in a poor condition and are not well managed.

The health authority reported yesterday that cholera could reach epidemic proportions particularly in the camps. Therefore, volunteers are expected to equip themselves with masks, vitamins, gloves, mineral water, personal hygiene kits, candle, and torches.

There is a large number of incoming international assistance to Aceh via Medan. Aceh airport has limited capacity to receive airplanes and (up to C130, C17, IL76) and unload shipment. The International Humanitarian Partnership will be deploying a 20-ton forklift which should be operational as of Sunday.

The focus of relief operation is still limited to Banda Aceh. Aid delivery to the west and east coast remains problematic due to resources in the field and security. All UN staff and most of international NGOs based in Aceh are not allowed to travel outside Banda Aceh for security reasons.

Communications is a serious constraint. Only radio VHF with repeater and iridium satellite phones are working. Agencies should seriously consider bringing their own communications.

Lack of fuel is a problem in Aceh. Only one gas station is functioning in Aceh. IOM has sent 26 trucks and fuel to Banda Aceh and is planning to purchase more trucks for transportation within the province.

Requirements

The authorities indicated today that the following items are urgently needed: 1) Ready-to-eat food, 2) clean water, 3) medical teams with supplies such as oxygen, injections, gloves, masks, body bags, 4) fuel, 5) volunteers for evacuation, 6) logistic distribution, 7) setting up public kitchen, and 8) debris clearing services.

National Response

The Government has formulated a three-stage action plan which consists of: 1) emergency measures (December 2004 to January 2005), 2) rehabilitation measures (February 2005 to February 2006) and 3) reconstruction measures (2005 to 2006).

UN Response

The UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) has been established. WHO has sent four doctors to Medan, and will work closely with the Ministry of Health. UNICEF has sent a medical team and non food items (health emergency kits, family kit and tarpaulins). UNESCO is preparing a joint assessment mission with the Ministry of Education to assess the damages to schools, and develop an early warning system. UNFPA decided to send two international medical staff and are also planning rehabilitation of health facilities. On-Site Operation Coordination Centres (OSOCC) in Jakarta and in Banda Aceh are being established with support from UNDAC team to track in-coming assistance and coordinate assessments and distribution of relief items. IOM has developed a network of coordination of volunteers in Aceh through local NGOs such as Aceh Kita and Wahli. UNHCR is organizing airlifts to Aceh to provide more than 400 tonnes of shelter and other emergency supplies from its warehouse in Copenhagen and Dubai for this weekend. WFP estimated the total number of potential beneficiaries for food at 1 million.

MALDIVES

Area affected

The entire country of 200 islands was affected by the tsunami. The worst affected areas were the central atolls.

Impact

Mass flooding and disruption of normal life on a national scale leading to loss of lives, injury to thousands and devastation to property and other essential life lines like food, water, sanitation, shelter and communication. Livelihoods have been lost or severely compromised due to damage to boats and harbours, and the impact of the disaster on the tourist industry.

Damage by sector:

Information on damage and needs is available from 80 percent of inhabited islands, collected through government surveys, telephone discussions with inhabitants, and on-site assessments. According to Government figures, 4,000 buildings have been damaged. On 13 percent (25) of these islands, there is near total destruction of all buildings.

Regarding transportation infrastructure, the international airport continues to function normally during the day allowing only take offs during the evening. Of the four regional airport runways, two have sustained some damage. Inter-atoll and inter island transport is only possible by boats or small sea planes. Fifteen percent (30) of islands suffered damage to jetties and harbours. See more on the transportation sector below under "constraints."

The telecommunications network has now been restored in all atolls and electricity has been restored to almost all currently inhabited islands. Gas and supply of fuel continue to be a problem, especially in the most severely affected islands due to transportation difficulties.

Health posts on ten percent of islands (8) have been completely destroyed or washed away with just one health post among these having minor damage (structure usable).

Although a limited supply of basic staple foods (rice, flour and sugar) has been delivered to most islands, food security remains a concern. In particular, the government has requested food for children and babies.

Two members of the UNDAC team, with WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and the Government Technical Task Force, conducted an assessment of Guraidhoo Island on 29 December, and continued to assess islands on 30 December. The general observation on this particular island was that the physical damage could, with appropriate assistance, be cleaned up and restored in the near term.

The team confirmed initial reports about the gravity of the overall situation in the Maldives. The following observations from Guraidhoo island give an indication of conditions on some affected islands, but does not represent the worst affected islands.

Displacement: Two-thirds of the population of Guraidhoo (about 1,000 people) evacuated to Male, while some 25 residents remained in the National Mental Health Institute, one of the few undamaged buildings.

Water and sanitation: An estimated 30-40 percent of rainwater harvesting equipment has been damaged and groundwater wells have been contaminated by sea water. While bottled water has been delivered to the island, solutions will be needed quickly to ensure a more regular water supply for drinking, cooking and bathing. Chlorine is normally used for water purification, and since the disaster, chlorine has been extensively used for disinfection, depleting supplies.

Health and hygiene: The tsunami scattered household fish and household waste from the main dumpsite across the entire island, leaving a layer of debris of cans, plastic, glass, organic matter, rotting fish carcasses. Clean-up will be a major challenge owing to the lack of heavy equipment on the islands, and the difficulty of bringing such equipment by boat as, in most cases, island access is designed for small boats (see below under "secondary threats"). The waste poses a serious health risk and could make it difficult for people to return to the island. The health centre has been extensively damaged and basic medications are needed.

Shelter and infrastructure: An estimated 30% of houses are destroyed beyond repair. The remaining houses are inhabitable but many need repairs. The jetty is intact and can be used for emergency deliveries by boat. Electricity and mobile phone communications have been restored

Nutrition: Food and water had been delivered to the islands but the handouts are not, as yet, based on specific needs. Foodstuffs for infants were not available.

On 30 December, the UNDAC team visited a school in Male which is hosting 460 people (mainly women and children) evacuated from some of the worst affected islands.

According to officials and volunteers at the centre there is currently adequate food, health, and shelter supplies. Recreational activities for children and counselling are being provided, through local volunteers. All of the equipment, food and non-food items at the centre was donated by local people and businesses, and the daily running of the centre is through volunteers. While assistance is stable for the time being, officials and volunteers warned that this could change quickly depending on the length of the crisis and would be welcoming international support.

Effects on population:

The number of people killed stands at 75 and the number of missing at 42. Some 11,000 people have been displaced and registered by the authorities, although it is believed that thousands more have sought shelter with family and friends and are unable to live in their own accommodation. Two-thirds of

the population (some 200,000 people) were directly affected by the disaster, and some 100,000 people (or one third of the population) were severely affected (e.g. rendered homeless, lost most or all of their possessions, forced to evacuate their islands, remain displaced, have no access to food, water and sanitation) and will be the focus of UN response. Specific information on reproductive health is currently not widely available. The authorities have compiled a list of the number of pregnant women per island.

Projected Evolution/Secondary Threats

Concern is increasing that the plight of the Maldives is being understated in the international media. It should be noted that the entire country was affected by the tsunami, and one-third of the entire population (some 100,000 people) requires immediate assistance, having in many cases lost their homes and possessions and their livelihoods. The Maldives also faces particular challenges to the provision of assistance, namely:

- Population dispersion over 200 islands scattered over 900 kms which means that even small quantities of aid have to be transported to every island by either boat, sea plane or helicopter.
- On most islands, access is designed for small boats, thereby restricting the amounts of supplies and equipment that can be delivered at any one time.
- Inclement weather (as in the past two days) restricts travel by boat and plane and hampers delivery of aid.
- As a result of the above the country and its people remain vulnerable to continuing effects of the disaster.

National Response

Administrative measures

The status of national crisis and national emergency declared by the President remains in effect. The Association of business industry and the State Trading Organisation has called on business and people not to hoard food or increase prices.

Clearance formalities for in-kind contributions are handled under the auspices of the Government Crisis Taskforce. All costs related to customs and clearance have been waived by the Government

Constraints

The challenges of delivering aid to some 200 islands are formidable. In the medium term, these challenges will also impact on recovery and reconstruction efforts as all construction equipment and materials will have to

be delivered to each island. The forthcoming Flash Appeal will include a significant request in the transportation and logistics sector.

Country-level UN Response

Resources mobilized/contributed locally

The Task Force's Aid Coordination Unit has recorded a number of cash contributions from Maldivians and the local private sector totalling some USD 750,000. Maldivians have also contributed in-kind through the donation of food, bottled water, non-food items, as well as boats and sea planes for transportation.

Coordination

The UNDAC team, with UNDP, WHO, UNICEF and the Government Technical Task Force are conducting field assessment of some islands and public buildings in which IDPs are residing.

Requirements for International assistance

Government requests

The Government's Crisis Task Force relocated to a larger facility and the UNDAC team has unimpeded access to all of the relevant ministers. On 29 December, the Task Force issued a revised list of priority emergency items. Efforts are underway to urgently clarify with the Government the quantities needed of these items.

Priority needs: water and sanitation, medical supplies, food items, logistics and coordination (in-country transport, storage and handling of relief supplies), communications, shelter, blankets, clothing, household utensils, repairs of infrastructure, restoration of critical facilities, coordination, tents.

The UNDAC team is working closely with the Government's Crisis Task Force to clarify this information and put in place a system for tracking aid requirements, aid supply, and to identify aid items that are not a priority.

Channels for delivery of international aid

Cash contributions

The Government has set up bank accounts for cash donations:

Ministry of Finance and Treasury Disaster Relief Fund

Bank of Maldives

Account No (Foreign currency): 7701- 147 900- 002

Account No (Local currency): 7701- 147 900- 001

Bank swift code: MALBMVMV

In-kind contributions

Accessibility to disaster zones are undertaken from the main International Airport. There are four regional airports (North, South-East, South-West and South), which can accommodate smaller aeroplanes. The International Airport is central and is located next to the island of Male. Seaplanes also function although a number of seaplanes were badly damaged in the disaster. Boats and Naval ships continue to form part of the distribution chain although slower than compared with other means.

IL76 and Airbus can land on the airport in Male; it is not clear whether larger aircraft (AN124 and B747) can land. All Navigation Aids are down and therefore some operators refuse to operate to Male. There is no fuel available.

Other information

Field office contact

Aishath Jeelaan, Communications Officer, United Nations Resident Coordinator System, Tel: (960) 324501 ext. 227, mob: (960) 787 987.

SRI LANKA

Situation

As of 31 December, 28,508 people were reported dead, 5,023 are still missing. 804,599 persons are displaced. Approximately, 80,000 houses were destroyed.

Requirements

The Government's Task Force has requested that the manifests for all incoming shipments of aid be sent to them in advance to ensure efficient processing and to facilitate distribution. There have been some bottlenecks at the airport, which has limited warehouse space. The manifests need to be sent in advance to: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of External Resources: der@foreign.gov.mv, fax: +960 317 592 and copy to: The Aid Coordination Unit: rshareef@dhivehinet.net.mv. UNDP Focal Point for Logistics: shaheem.razee@undp.org

List of urgently needed items / equipments for restoring water supply facilities: bladder (foldable tanks) of varying capacity and quick assembly steel tanks – 10 to 60 m³ capacity with tank stands; small package water purification plants with generators; flange adaptors (restrained joints) suitable for DI/ PE pipe connections 250 – 500 mm range dia pipes (10 Nos from each size); 100-500 mm dia. range ductile iron wide range coupling (bigger numbers of smaller sizes); water disinfection kits and ceramic water filters, taps, stands, etc.; engine driven portable well cleaning equipments (pumps of 10-30m head); portable generators and flood lights; foldable tents for working crews; life jackets and rubber dinghies; safety harness equipment; general tool kits and equipment for quick repair and maintenance work.

The Disaster Relief Network (DRN) has set up operation at the airport in Colombo and signed an agreement with the Government of Sri Lanka to receive all incoming relief commodities. Agencies / organisations sending relief commodities to Sri Lanka are requested to provide the following information on the virtual OSOCC in addition to the clearance request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The information required by DRN is: cargo specification, weight and quantity, origin, consignee, a contact point of the receiving agency in Sri Lanka and instructions on how to contact, specification if commodities are for common use or for specific agency.

Priority needs: safe drinking water, proper sanitation, shelter, clothing, transport vehicles, drugs and medical supplies.

Import procedures for relief commodities to Sri Lanka are available on the UNJLC website (www.unjlc.org).

UN Response

Four groups of UN staff volunteers have been sent to the districts of Galle, Hambantota, Kalatura and Matara to assist the local authorities to coordinate the relief effort. Two more groups will be sent 1 January 2005 to Ampara and Batticaloa. UNDAC members have been deployed together with UN Volunteers in the more problematic districts to assist them in the initial coordination phase.

Dispatch of WFP food commodities so far has reached around 140,000 people.

The following website aims to be a support for relief and reconstruction efforts: Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami (<http://www.ideo.columbia.edu/~lareef/tsunami/>)

THAILAND

Situation

The latest figures released by the Government as of 1200 hrs local time today are:

- 4,541 dead (Thai: 2,128, Foreigners: 2,230, Unidentified: 183)
- 10,469 injured (Thai: 5,042, Foreigners:1,510, Unidentified: 3,917)
- 6,479 missing (Thai: 4,582, Foreigners:1,663, Unidentified: 234)

Recovery and identification of human remains is still ongoing. The forensic capacity is improving with specialised teams from many countries in place working along with the Thai police. There seems to be a problem in distributing formalin and body bags to all the temples used as morgues.

Although many countries are air-lifting injured foreigners, the capacities of the hospitals in the affected area still extremely stretched due to the vast amount of people injured. There have been no reports of outbreaks of diseases.

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team has fielded two assessment missions to the disaster-affected areas. The team has been reinforced by the OCHA Regional Disaster Response Advisor for Asia.

Requirements

Needs and requirements as indicated by the Government are as follows: 1) Metal caskets/coffins (for international transportation), 2) Medical supplies (such as first aid kits, dressing sets, gauze and bandages), 3) Medicines (especially anti-diarrhea, anti-biotic and anti-septic), 4) Rubber gloves, masks, 5) Tents and office supplies, 6) Blankets, clothes, shoes, sandals, underwear, pants and sanitary napkins, 7) Heavy equipment (such as excavators and bulldozers), 8) Power generators, 9) Water purifiers, 10) Forensic pathologists, 11) Freezer containers for storing bodies, 12) Communications equipment, and 13) Dried or canned food and rice.

International Response

Representatives from 37 embassies are presently in Phuket to give assistance to the victims, focusing on recovery and identification on human remains. A daily coordination meeting on forensic work takes place at the police headquarter in Phuket. Airlift for forensic teams to the three main areas of work is now available. A joint information collection centre will be established at the Phuket town hall for gathering information from relatives.

Several needs assessments are currently being conducted. The immediate needs seem to be met in most places through emergency assistance from many European countries, countries in Asia and other parts of the world and UN agencies. However, there is an increasing need for preventive infectious disease control measures.

SEYCHELLES

Situation

The extreme tidal movements caused severe flooding and considerable damage to transport infrastructure (roads, bridges) including fishing infrastructure (ports infrastructure and facilities, fishing sector), public utilities (schools), houses, agricultural sector and private property on the coastal areas of Mahé and Praslin islands, and to a lesser extent on certain coastal parts of La Digue and Cerf Islands.

Requirements

A preliminary estimate from the Government is that the tidal waves resulted in

damage amounting to USD 30 million.

SOMALIA

Members of the aerial assessment mission conducted on 30 December shared with the press the findings of their mission. The mission comprised representatives from OCHA, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, ECHO and the Associated Press TV. The team flew from Hafun Island to Bender Biela and later over Garacad, which composed the three sites identified to be worst affected. Hafun appeared as the worst hit with considerable damage to shelters, at Bender Biela some of the houses were demolished as well however to a lesser extent. The damage to shelters at Garacad appeared minimal. Other sites to the north were not visited due to limitation of flight time. The assessment team recommended immediate action by the respective agencies, emphasizing that findings of this assessment should be triangulated with findings of assessment teams on the ground.

The acting Humanitarian Coordinator stressed the fact that unlike other affected countries in Asia, Somalia lacked the indigenous capacity to assess the damage caused by the tsunami, which has placed the responsibility on humanitarian actors.

The members of the Somali Disaster Management Committee (DMC) stressed that the magnitude of damage at some regions is alarming, citing that up to 30,000 people might be affected. Most urgent needs quoted were drinking water as a large number of drinking wells were washed away, in addition to food, medication and shelter.

Based on initial findings, emerging needs were currently within the capacity of most operational agencies. However these resources are borrowed from existing projects and would need to be replenished, particularly the food aid.

PLEDGES - CONTRIBUTIONS

OCHA is prepared to serve as a channel for unearmarked cash contributions to be used for immediate relief assistance, in coordination with relevant organizations in the United Nations system. For banking details, please contact the desk officers indicated below. OCHA provides donors with written confirmation and pertinent details concerning the utilization of the funds contributed.

Updates on contributions to this disaster may be found by clicking on Financial Tracking at the top of the page for this disaster on the OCHA Internet Website (<http://www.reliefweb.int>). Donors are requested to verify this table and inform OCHA Geneva of corrections/additions/values. Donors are encouraged to notify OCHA Geneva of their contributions to this disaster using the OCHA Standardized Contributions Recording Format, available electronically in the above-mentioned Financial Tracking Website.

Together with further information on other ongoing emergencies, this situation

report is also available on the OCHA Internet Website at <http://www.reliefweb.int>.

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