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What is the Adopt-an-Island Scheme all About?

By Minivan News
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As Bill Clinton, the UN Special Envoy for the Tsunami, visits Maldives and promotes UNDP's Adopt-An-Island scheme, Minivan News asks UNDP what all the fuss is about.

Here is their response:

The UNDP Adopt-An-Island initiative is a chance for wealthy individuals and organisations to sponsor the reconstruction of one or more of the Maldives' 22 worst-hit islands. In return, sponsors are given information on the progress of their island, which they are encouraged to publicise.

Supporters include businesses, civil society organizations, foundations, governments, and individuals. Adopt-An-Island is a highly effective, personal means of contributing toward the recovery of this island nation because all donations are allocated to readily identifiable projects.

UNDP Maldives provides donors with progress reports of the activities supported through Adopt-An-Island, a list of the projects to which their funds have been applied, and information about the beneficiary communities.

The UN says the project is aimed at "helping tsunami recovery work in three key areas: shelter reconstruction, infrastructure rehabilitation, and restoration of livelihoods."

Shelter Recovery

In the Maldives, building a home can take a lifetime. People build their homes room by room, year by year. Furthermore, shelter on the Maldivian islands is as much about lives and livelihoods as it is about providing people with housing.

A home kitchen is a productive unit where women process and dry fish for sale or to feed their families. A home's roof is also a lifeline – collecting rainwater in dispensers for drinking. The tsunami swept away decades of progress in a matter of minutes, destroying over 2,500 houses and severely damaging more than 3,500 others.

UNDP recognizes that recovery begins with a home. The objective of our shelter programme is to address the urgent needs for shelter while laying the foundation for an integrated long-term sustainable recovery of the housing sector in all of the country's atolls.

Infrastructure Rehabilitation



One third of the population has been affected by Tsunami

One-fourth of Maldives' inhabited islands suffered major damage to essential infrastructure. Among these were jetties, quay walls, sea walls and other civil works in harbours, which form the basis of the country's transportation network. The tsunami also damaged other key public infrastructures, including telecommunications networks, electric power supply systems, and water and sanitation systems.

While recovery work is ongoing, it may take years to fully restore the country's infrastructure and public works. UNDP is helping the Maldives rebuild the critical infrastructure on which most livelihoods are based.

Restoration of Livelihoods

While the physical damage to the country can be rebuilt with sufficient time and resources, restoring people's livelihoods will be one of the greatest challenges facing the Maldivian Government and the international community.

Vast tracts of agricultural land and fisheries were destroyed and tens of thousands of people lost their boats, nets, and other essential tools and equipment of their trades. Many families also lost their life savings, which were kept in their homes.

UNDP is supporting the Government's effort to provide the Maldivian people with the necessary tools to rebuild their homes, repair their fishing vessels, and restart crop production.

Cash-for-work programmes are generating income for communities to rebuild their villages, and micro credits are helping people restart their small family businesses.

If you would like more information on the UN's 'adopt an island' initiative, please contact:

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