



## UNDP RESPONSE TO TSUNAMI DISASTERS IN SRI LANKA

Devastating Tsunami disasters emanating from two major earthquakes in Indonesia and Andaman and Nicobar Islands respectively affected the coastal areas of most of Sri Lanka on the morning of 26 December 2004. More than 12 of the total 25 districts of Sri Lanka were severely affected.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) immediately mobilized its financial and human resources to assist the Government of Sri Lanka in emergency relief to the affected area. Within a few hours of the disaster, the UNDP Country Office redeployed its team of UN Volunteers working on disaster management in the southern districts to some of the worst affected districts and UNDP Headquarters released an initial allocation US\$100,000.

The same day, the UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative met with senior government officials and has convened thereafter a daily meeting for donor coordination and information exchange, bringing together relevant multilateral and UN, bilateral, INGO and NGO partners. UNDP is providing secretariat support, and serving as the clearinghouse for up-to-date information on the status of needs and donor emergency relief efforts. The meetings are providing a ready forum for the work of the UNDAC Team and the coordination of rapid assessment missions to each of the affected districts, comprised of international emergency expertise from the UN and bilateral partners and supported by locally based partners.

The following are specific areas of UNDP support:

**Information coordination support at the local level:** On the day the Tsunami struck Sri Lanka, UNDP redeployed UN Volunteers trained in disaster risk management to the affected districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara and Matara. These UNVs are providing immediate support to the District Secretaries and helping to coordinate information on damage and emerging relief needs. Over the next two days, UNDP will be deploying additional UNVs to other affected districts in collaboration with the UNDP office in India and the agreement of the Government of India.

**Information compilation and exchange at the central level:** In collaboration with the NDMC, UNDP has launched and is temporary host to a website on the Tsunami disaster (linked to the CO website), which acts as an information sharing platform for the government, international community as well as civil society organizations. The website is also playing an important role in coordinating the offers of relief assistance. UNDP is helping the international donor community coordinate its information requirements and compile updated information on donor support and resources in support of the country's relief efforts.

**Support to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at NDMC:** The UNDP is providing technical support to the EOC at the NDMC. Two specialist UNVs have been deployed at the EOC on a round the clock basis to assist the EOC functioning. A Liaison Officer to coordinate the government and international efforts has also been placed the Emergency Operations Center

**Support by UNDP Field Offices under the Transition Program:** As the relief effort gets into full swing, UNDP Project Field Offices are gearing up to support local district administrators in liaising with the needs assessment teams, as well as in coordinating information on who is doing what where.

**Support to the UN Resident Coordinator:** The UNDP CO are supporting the UNRC in preparing regular updates of the situation and in organizing daily coordination and information sharing meetings of all the national and international humanitarian actors present in Colombo.

On the next day after the disaster UNDP deployed its **Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor** for South West Asia and a UN Volunteer from his team to work closely with the UNDP Country Office in supporting the Office in emergency phase as well as in defining its involvement in the recovery phase.

Recognizing the fact that the needs of the victims of the disaster are going to extend way beyond the current emergency phase, and just as the damage assessment efforts begin, the UNDP is also gearing up to look at **mid and long term disaster recovery and risk reduction** issues.

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