

Tsunami Recovery: Taking Stock after Two Years

Executive Summary

1. This report, from the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, documents the status of the recovery effort at two years. The earthquake off the coast of Sumatra on December 26, 2004 and the tsunami it triggered, together with a subsequent earthquake in the same region in March of that year, claimed the lives of over 186,000 people across 12 countries, with some 42,883 still listed as missing, and created over \$10 billion in damages. These events also triggered a massive humanitarian effort and an unprecedented outpouring of support from governments, private companies, development banks, and citizens. Now, two years after the tsunami, progress is apparent across the affected region – affected populations are living in newly constructed homes, children are back in school, and hospitals are being rebuilt and repaired. But while progress in physical reconstruction efforts is palpable after two short years, many complex challenges remain as the recovery efforts across the region continue. Each affected country faces different challenges, and thus the picture of progress is an uneven one; yet common to all is the reality that it will take many years for individual households, and the wider economies on which they depend, to recover from the most destructive disaster caused by a natural hazard in recorded history.

Introduction

2. During the first two years of recovery efforts since a devastating tsunami struck the coastlines of 12 countries on December 26, 2004, recovery partners and local communities made enormous strides toward rehabilitation and reconstruction. Across the five most affected countries, the progress was very evident by the end of 2006, with some 150,000 houses built or repaired, nearly 1,000 schools built or repaired, and approximately 430 health centers constructed. Moreover, the affected countries were fulfilling the promise of building back better in many areas, with safer houses under construction, improved education and health facilities, and important steps forward on disaster risk reduction.

3. Much of this progress has been achieved in the face of serious obstacles, such as logistical hurdles, administrative constraints, lagging capacity, coordination challenges, rising inflation, and the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka. In 2007 and beyond, the recovery process will confront its share of these and other challenges, from operational hurdles, such as speeding up progress on permanent home building, to policy issues, such as concerns about ensuring equity in the assistance process. The transition to long-term development processes in the five most affected countries will pose tests for local communities, local and national governments, and international organizations; it will be important to ensure continued, strong oversight and management of the

recovery effort. It will also be critical to ensure that local governments and communities have the necessary capacities and resources to finish the job. Stakeholders must maintain momentum and remain committed to seeing through the enormous job that remains in terms of rebuilding and building back better.

4. This report provides a brief overview of the progress achieved and challenges ahead in the five most severely affected countries -- India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It focuses primarily on recovery efforts in key sectors (housing, health, education, and livelihoods) and also on disaster risk reduction. It does not purport to cover the field, either in terms of progress achieved, which has been substantial in all five countries, or in terms of the challenges that recovery actors will continue to face. Rather, it aims to provide an overview of both, drawing heavily on joint two-year reports by governments and recovery partners in most of these countries. These reports are publicly available and provide a much more in-depth picture

India

5. In India, more than 12,000 people were killed and nearly 650,000 people had to relocate to safer places after the disaster. The state of Tamil Nadu was the most severely affected, followed by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Across all affected areas, it is estimated that one-third of the people affected were from the traditionally underprivileged and socially excluded groups, such as Dalits or tribal people. With rebuilding underway across a range of sectors, India is using this as an opportunity to build back better in many ways.

6. Across India's affected areas, 100,000 houses are in need of repair or rehabilitation. To date, 27,845 homes have been rebuilt overall, and in Tamil Nadu, 23,414 houses -- one third of total need -- have been rebuilt. Efforts have been made to rebuild houses to safer standards, and, again in Tamil Nadu, comprehensive guidelines on construction are being implemented, helping to ensure that homes are rebuilt to quality standards. In addition, guidelines for retrofitting houses, handbooks on safe construction, and training for engineers and masons are helping to guarantee that homes are being built to better withstand future natural disasters.

7. Health infrastructure was also significantly affected, with damage to primary health centers and peripheral health care facilities in rural areas. In addition to reconstructing these facilities and providing medical supplies, several other initiatives are underway that aim to improve the quality of health care and health issues emerging in a post-disaster situation, such as training and enhanced services for mothers, newborn babies, and children.

8. Rehabilitation in the education sector has concentrated on both rebuilding the 360 primary and secondary schools that were destroyed or damaged and using the disaster as an opportunity to improve the quality of education. Quality Education Packages, which include new curricula, materials for teachers, furniture, and supplies, are being introduced in the affected areas. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which historically have had problems with retention of students, a quality education initiative will soon be expanded to all schools. Constraints in rehabilitating damaged schools and improving education have included uneven service delivery, with some districts being underserved, a lack of data on children at the district level, and non-enrollment of children from socially excluded groups. (A survey in the five most affected areas in India

concluded that one-third of Dalit children were not enrolled in school.) The prohibitive distances between some temporary shelters and schools that children attended before the disaster and a lack of schools at the temporary shelter sites have also posed hurdles.

9. Because of the disaster's impact on the coastline, the fishing industry was the most significantly impacted. But rapid programming quickly put fishing communities back on their feet, mitigating the tsunami's effects. This included distribution of funds directly to self-help groups, which covered the immediate needs of 360,000 families. Other initiatives aimed to make certain that non-fishing families were not overlooked and to develop a long-term plan for sustainable fisheries livelihoods.

10. Disaster risk management is an integral part of reconstruction and rehabilitation in the tsunami-affected states in India. Efforts are being made to link a systematic and sustainable disaster risk management effort at the district, state, and national levels. There have been a wide range of programs to manage risks from the many disasters that affect India. These have included vulnerability mapping and coastal management planning, construction of cyclone shelters and cyclone and flood proof housing construction, and strengthening of early warning capacities of governments and communities. A pilot project in the Cuddalore district, which will soon be scaled up to other coastal areas, aims to strengthen communication systems in 55 villages, create training manuals for villagers, and conduct community training programs in disaster awareness.

11. Although India has made significant progress in the two years since the tsunami, the years ahead will include many challenges. Perhaps most immediate is the need to construct new homes. With the majority of those displaced by the tsunami still living in temporary shelters, there is a continuing need to support temporary housing sites, including with basic social services, while prioritizing faster delivery of permanent homes. There is also a need to speed up construction of other types of infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and public buildings. India's aid partners have invested heavily in the recovery of the fisheries sector, but more thinking is needed on how to achieve long term, sustainable management of that sector and the creation of alternative livelihoods.

12. While India has taken significant steps forward on disaster risk reduction efforts, more remains to be done, including improved coordination among responsible institutions and greater integration of disaster risk management principles into new construction and reconstruction and development policies. And while the government and other aid partners have made strides in their efforts to achieve equity in the recovery process, it will be important to continue monitoring social equity issues, with the aim of institutionalizing equity principles into long-term reconstruction and development efforts.

Indonesia

13. Physical destruction in Aceh from the tsunami was immense, with reconstruction needs estimated at \$4.5 billion. A subsequent earthquake on Nias Island in March 2005, together with rising inflation, has put the price tag on long-term recovery in Aceh and Nias at \$6.1 billion. More than 130,000 people were killed in both disasters, with as many as 37,000 persons still listed as missing. The livelihoods of at least 500,000 people were affected by both disasters.

14. Financing needs to cover the long-term recovery of Aceh and Nias are now calculated at \$8 billion, which includes \$1.2 billion for inflation and \$1.9 billion in estimated needs to build back better in Aceh and Nias. To date, a total of \$8 billion has been pledged toward this total, of which \$5.9 billion has already been committed to specific projects. Expenditures stood at \$2.2 billion at the end of 2006, with an average of \$100 million spent per month in 2006.

15. With 120,000 new permanent houses required and repairs to an additional 85,000, the housing sector has presented the greatest challenge in Indonesia. Toward that total need, 57,000 houses were constructed by the end of the year in Aceh and Nias. In addition, in 2006, virtually all IDPs moved into durable transitional shelters. During the first half of the year, more than 65,000 IDPs were moved out of tents and into 12,000 transitional shelters, which can last approximately three to four years, significantly improving the living situation for tens of thousands still awaiting permanent homes.

16. In social services, such as education and health, work has focused on both physical reconstruction and improving quality. The disaster severely impacted the education sector, killing 2,500 teachers and destroying or damaging approximately 2,000 schools. To date, 623 permanent schools have been rebuilt or rehabilitated, supplemented by 379 temporary facilities. In Aceh, 5,100 teachers have been trained, and nearly 300 have received training in Nias. A lack of coordination and planning has slowed efforts in the education sector, as evidenced by agency competition for building sites and reports of over-construction in some areas. Although the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias (BRR) started to harmonize standards in school reconstruction in August 2005, concerns remain that some schools may not have been built to the correct safety standards.

17. In the health sector, which saw 122 buildings damaged or destroyed, 305 health facilities, including three hospitals, satellite health posts, and health centers, have been rebuilt or rehabilitated in Aceh, with an additional 19 in Nias. Figures on reconstruction exceed the number of health facilities affected by the disaster because many health centers that were damaged during the war in Aceh are also slated for rehabilitation. In addition to reconstruction, there is a continuing need to provide medical supplies and skilled personnel to staff these new facilities, and the BRR is providing access to training and education to develop capacity and provision of health services.

18. In a sign of progress in reducing potential risk from disaster, over 33 kilometers of coastal protection, such as sea walls, and 24 kilometers of saltwater dykes have thus far been constructed. There are concerns, though, regarding building quality and reconstruction of some communities too close to the coast. Nonetheless, increased community awareness and the planned design and mapping of escape routes and safe refuge areas will contribute to safer communities. The BRR is also working on a comprehensive disaster risk reduction framework, which links relevant provincial, local, and national government entities.

19. The tsunami had a massive impact on livelihoods. In addition to \$1.2 billion in damage to the productive sector, 100,000 small business owners lost their sources of livelihood, 4,717 boats were lost, 20,000 hectares of fish ponds were destroyed, 60,000 farmers were displaced, and close to 70,000 hectares of agricultural land were damaged. Livelihoods restoration is visible, with over two-thirds of the male labor force back to work in both rural and urban areas. In

addition, 4,420 boats have been distributed, 6,800 hectares of fishponds rehabilitated, and more than 50,000 hectares of agricultural land rehabilitated.

20. The peace process in Aceh stands as perhaps the most important example of building back better. In mid-December 2006, Aceh held its first-ever provincial and district level elections, and peace is seeming ever more irreversible for this long-time conflict-affected province. Still, 2007 will be a pivotal year for the reconstruction process and the years ahead will be enormously challenging.

21. In terms of housing reconstruction, there is a continued need to ensure that housing and settlement planning is better integrated with other sectors, in particular, community and social infrastructure and livelihood restoration activities. Moreover, home building partners must focus on better quality and stronger monitoring and coordination of housing reconstruction. Delays in the land titling process have significantly delayed housing efforts thus far, and it will be important to clear bottlenecks in land acquisition and tenure issues. Moreover, special attention must be paid to the needs of renters, squatters, and displaced people who can not return to their previous land to ensure these vulnerable groups are included in permanent housing schemes.

22. Disaster risk reduction poses another important challenge, as disaster management must become fully integrated into the activities of all reconstruction partners. In the education and health sectors, greater attention will be needed in the coming years to improving quality and strengthening local capacity. Aceh also still faces challenges in terms of short- and long-term livelihood creation and planning. There is a need for immediate investment in short-term opportunities, including agriculture, fishing, and other areas.

23. In these and other areas, the BRR has recognized the importance and on-going challenge of information management. This includes the continuing need to develop an accurate beneficiary list, which will be a focus for early 2007. It will also be important that the BRR continues to strengthen its regional offices and their collaboration with local government throughout the province.

24. Finally, as the BRR begins to plan its own handover to local government and exit from Aceh and Nias in 2009, all reconstruction partners will also begin to think about transitions in their programs. This suggests the need to ensure early focus on transition strategies in 2007 and highlights the need to maintain the high-level commitment to reconstruction and building back better that has characterized the effort thus far.

Maldives

25. The tsunami flooded all but nine of the Maldives' 199 inhabited islands, with 53 islands suffering severe damage. A third of the population -- approximately 100,000 people -- was affected through the loss of homes, livelihoods, and infrastructure damage; 15,000 people lost their homes. Aggregate estimated recovery needs of \$393.3 million are now covered fully by existing commitments, although there are still shortfalls in certain sectors because provision of funds does not always match requested needs, with some sectors underfunded and others overfunded. A total of \$141 million had been spent by the end of 2006.

26. The tsunami's drastic effect on the economy -- GDP initially contracted by five percent -- is

now being mitigated, mainly by increased revenue from the tourism industry and the reconstruction boom. Following intensive efforts by the government, the tourism industry is fully recovered; arrivals in April 2006 were the highest ever recorded. The overall number of tourist arrivals in 2006 is very close to the record number that arrived in 2004. This rebound in tourism, as well as fisheries (the 2005 catch was the highest catch on record) contributed to an extraordinary 18 percent projected GDP growth in 2006. Growth is expected to stabilize at pre-tsunami levels of seven percent in 2007.

27. Of the 10,660 people currently registered as internally displaced, approximately 6,000 are in temporary shelters, with the remainder living with families. Although not moving as quickly as originally planned, permanent housing reconstruction has seen progress. Nearly 6,000 houses were in need of repair and 3,000 in need of rebuilding as a result of the tsunami. Of this, more than 1,100 houses on 83 islands had been repaired at the end of 2006, and repairs were underway on an additional 2,500; 158 houses had been rebuilt with another 1,161 under construction. Land acquisition and allocation, the tendering and selection of partners, and logistics and access to some islands have all presented challenges in permanent housing construction. Nonetheless, the new permanent homes are a key example of the government's effort to build back better: materials and construction quality have been improved, houses use reinforced concrete and have a proper foundation, and all houses have a water tank and access to well water and rainwater harvesting. The housing sector still has a shortfall of \$19 million, leaving housing on seven islands unfunded.

28. In the health sector, work has focused mainly on reconstruction and replacement of physical infrastructure and equipment. Construction is underway on three atoll hospitals and one regional hospital; of the 12 health centers that will be rehabilitated or rebuilt, six have been completed and four are underway. A total of 30 health posts will be rehabilitated or reconstructed, and 24 are complete. It is expected that all health posts and centers will be operational by the end of 2007.

29. Recovery in the education sector has also consisted mainly of physical reconstruction. In all, 87 schools and 20 pre-schools will be upgraded or rebuilt. In addition, efforts are underway to improve the quality of education, focusing on improving teacher training. Internet access is being provided to 24 teacher resource centers, which will connect teachers, school administrators, and students on islands to a global network of teacher training and educational resources.

30. Damage to the fishing industry was relatively minimal, and recovery targets in this area have been met. Efforts are now concentrating on long-term development, which includes the elaboration of appropriate regulations and guidelines for the industry, capital investment (including installation of ice plants), technical support for diversification, and training for commercial fisher-folk. In the agriculture sector, over 6,000 farmers have benefited from close to \$1.4 million in cash grants. Training in sustainable agriculture principles have led to a one-third increase in production since the tsunami.

31. Harbors in the Maldives sustained extensive damage, with 100 needing repair or reconstruction after the disaster. Due to a shortage of funds in this sector, the government is planning to rehabilitate or repair only 50 of these; thus far, funding has been secured for 11, of

which five had been completed by the end of 2006 with the remainder under construction. The government aims to complete all 50 harbors within the next two years and is seeking additional funds toward this end.

32. The National Disaster Management Center, which was transformed into a permanent institution in December 2006, has developed a National Plan on Disaster Management. The government and international partners are also providing disaster risk reduction education and awareness building at the community level. The government is undertaking the Safe Islands Program, which aims to relocate some island populations to seven islands that are considered safer or create safe zones for isolated communities on distant islands. The seven islands have enhanced coastal defenses, thus providing better protection to inhabitants.

33. Although the recovery process is on track, several key challenges remain. Increasing the pace of housing construction will remain a critical priority for 2007, which will require tackling logistical constraints, the small labor market, and escalating construction costs. Harbor reconstruction is another key challenge, including the need to secure funding to ensure construction on the 50 high priority harbors requiring rehabilitation. On the disaster reduction front, implementation of the Safe Islands Program is making only modest progress thus far, as the government and communities face the complexities of relocating and consolidating communities on different atolls.

34. Finally, political reform has been a key goal in terms of building back better in the Maldives. The government launched a comprehensive process of governance reform in early 2005, which continues to face serious challenges. It will require a commitment to political compromise and political dialogue on the part of the government and the opposition, and need close monitoring and engagement by friends of the Maldives in 2007 and beyond.

Sri Lanka

35. The tsunami devastated over two-thirds of Sri Lanka's coast and caused more than 35,000 fatalities there. Sri Lanka's financial needs were estimated at \$2.15 billion. A total of \$2.99 billion has been committed for reconstruction, of which \$1.095 billion had been spent by the end of 2006.

36. Sri Lanka has embraced a different approach to housing reconstruction. The majority of those in need of new homes are receiving cash grants to rebuild their homes, with the remainder having their homes rebuilt by donors, NGOs, or others. In all, 114,069 houses need to be rebuilt or repaired. Roughly one-third of the total house requirement falls within the so-called buffer zone, which is the area close to the coast where the government does not allow home building for safety reasons. People falling within the buffer zone qualify for the donor built housing scheme, which gives them both land and a house built by an implementing agency. A total of 29,830 houses are slated to be rebuilt under this program, of which, by the end of 2006, 12,207 had been rebuilt and 12,897 were under construction. The remaining 79,184 houses to be rebuilt or repaired fall within the owner driven scheme, whereby owners receive a series of cash grants to rebuild their houses themselves, with the amount depending on the extent of the damage. By the end of 2006, a total of 46,531 houses had been completed under this initiative, and 32,653 were in progress.

37. The tsunami caused some 150,000 people to lose their source of livelihood, half of whom were in the fisheries sector, 45 percent in the service sector (for example, trade and tourism), and five percent in the agriculture sector. About 80 percent of all affected people lost their main source of income and 90 percent lost productive assets. Livelihood programs have utilized cash grants, cash for work, asset replacement, and access to capital through microfinance. In the fisheries sector, most fishermen are back to sea, and the fish catch now stands at 70 percent of pre-tsunami levels. All damaged fishing boats have been repaired and 19,741 boats, representing 95 percent of the total destroyed, have been replaced, although only 21 percent of destroyed multi-day boats were replaced. In the tourism sector, owners of 90 percent of tsunami affected hotels have repaired their property through a loan scheme supported by the Central Bank. More than 10,000 enterprises have been restored under the Back to Business Project, a comprehensive private sector economic rehabilitation effort. An additional 57,862 loans and grants were provided by government-sponsored microfinance schemes, which are separate from the aforementioned project.

38. In the health sector, the main emphasis has been on reconstructing damaged health facilities. Although 102 health facilities were destroyed or damaged in the disaster, the government has set a target of 243 health facilities to be rebuilt or repaired, including some facilities in need of general upgrading although they were not affected by the tsunami. By December 2006, 55 had been completed. As a direct result of the tsunami, 183 schools were destroyed or damaged, and an additional 444 schools were damaged from their use as welfare centers for IDPs. Of the 183, 18 schools had been completed, and 105 were under construction as of December. The government was able to secure funding to repair just over one-half of the schools used to house IDPs. Of these, 38 were complete as of the end of 2006, with 152 in progress.

39. The Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act was enacted in May 2005, establishing the National Council for Disaster Management as the main institution for disaster risk management. And there are a number of initiatives underway to better prepare for future disasters. Communities have been educated about what to do when disasters strike and have taken part in emergency response drills. The Reconstruction and Development Agency's (RADA) risk management unit is also working to create a micro-insurance program in the event of future natural disasters, and the first project to insure tsunami houses has already begun.

40. Without doubt, the most significant challenge to the recovery process is the ongoing civil conflict. Escalating violence over the past year has caused serious setbacks to the reconstruction effort in the north and the east of the country, although reconstruction continues largely apace in the south. Dialogue, political reconciliation, and a meaningful resumption of the ceasefire will be critical to continued progress in recovery, from both the tsunami and the conflict.

41. Security concerns have created major operational obstacles across a range of sectors, as it has become much more difficult, and in some cases impossible, for international aid partners to move supplies to and carry on work in the north and east. On the housing front, this has meant a serious slowdown in progress in the owner-driven program in the north and east, as that program depends on a robust field presence of donor agencies to verify progress and eligibility for the next stages of funding. Other challenges to both the donor and owner-driven housing programs include the general need for heightened monitoring and evaluation and improved coordination. In terms of the donor driven program, there is a continuing requirement to identify appropriate

land on which to build new houses, and the need for accurate and complete beneficiary lists continues to cause delays and in some instances, has led to inequities in distribution of houses.

42. In the health sector, challenges going forward include the need to break ground on large-scale construction projects, build capacity of health care workers and communities, and improve coordination mechanisms at the local level. In terms of education, progress and program monitoring have significantly slowed in the north and east due to the security situation, and funding gaps remain. While progress has been made in rebuilding large-scale infrastructure such as roads, bridges, railways, ports and harbors, and electricity and water supply, challenges persist, including difficulties in procurement and logistics, increasing costs of construction materials, a lack of sufficient skilled contractors, and coordination.

43. It will be important to maintain momentum in the area of disaster risk reduction. The main challenge identified for 2007 is the need to focus on building capacity for national level agencies and other managers.

44. In the fishing sector, there is continued concern about oversupply of small day boats, which is causing labor shortages and harbor capacity problems, as well as a need for multi-day boats, which typically catch about one-third of the total fish supply. The replacement and repair of these vessels has been under-funded thus far. On the tourism front, tourist arrivals continue to be low, which has a greater impact on small-scale operators, who are facing serious financial difficulties. In the north and east, especially, there is a continued demand for cash grants and cash-for-work programs. There is a general lack of adequate administrative capacity to implement livelihood programs -- especially given the resurgence of conflict. More profoundly, the current political situation appears to be discouraging donors and the private sector from making longer-term investments in economic recovery.

Thailand

45. Hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the tsunami in Thailand. Over 8,200 people were killed, 400 fishing villages along the Andaman coast seriously hit, and tens of thousands of people in the fisheries and tourism sectors lost their means of livelihood. The tsunami also seriously affected the environment, with marine and coastal national parks severely damaged, coral reefs destroyed, and agricultural land affected by salt water intrusion.

46. A total of 4,806 houses were destroyed or damaged. Of this, 4,110 home owners requested support from the government, which will rebuild 3,558 and provide cash support for repairs for 522. As of July 2006, 2,983 of those houses were finished, and 575 were under construction.

47. There has also been significant progress in other areas. Five schools were destroyed, with an additional 19 suffering damage, and of these, all but one had been replaced or repaired at the two-year mark, with the remaining school under construction. Efforts in the education sector have also aimed to improve the quality of facilities for marginalized groups. A new initiative is bringing safe drinking water and toilets to schools in the poorest ethnic minority and migrant communities of Krabi, Satun and Trang provinces. A total of 48 health facilities were destroyed or damaged, and 40 have been repaired or rebuilt. In the fishing industry, 4,480 new fishing boats have been delivered.

48. The government and its international partners are also striving to support the longer-term recovery of communities, giving them a voice and active role in the rehabilitation effort. Priority has been given to poor and vulnerable communities, including Sea Gypsy and Muslim fishing communities, with an emphasis on recovery efforts that protect and promote their cultural heritage. Initiatives have included the creation of revolving funds, saving schemes, occupational groups, and cooperatives. These self-help mechanisms are enabling people to restore traditional livelihoods, finance lost assets, and initiate new sources of livelihoods.

49. The government has also focused on resolving land disputes, which are mainly related to loss of land by communities that did not retain formal ownership of land they had lived on for many generations. As of November 2006, over 60 of about 100 major land disputes submitted by tsunami-affected communities had been resolved by the Government Sub-Committee on Resolving Tsunami-Related Land Rights Issues.

50. The government is working to strengthen disaster preparedness at the local level and to develop a national tsunami early warning system. To date, 425 provincial and local government officers have been trained in basic emergency response, crisis management, and damage/needs assessment. The Community Based Disaster Risk Management and Preparedness program has been initiated in six pilot communities, which is enhancing capacity in disaster risk reduction and planning and preparedness as well as establishing risk maps, community shelters, community emergency response committees, search and rescue teams, and community and household risk reduction plans.

51. Many of the challenges Thailand will face in tsunami recovery going forward are long-term, systemic ones for which the Royal Thai Government has put in place new strategies and policies. Vulnerable groups remain a matter of particular concern, especially Sea Gypsy fishing communities that were especially hard hit by the tsunami. Accumulated debts combined with rising oil prices (that affect boat operators) will continue to affect their recovery. It will be important to continue efforts to safeguard the land rights of these groups. Land disputes between local communities, private developers, and the government continue and will need ongoing attention to reach an equitable resolution. The Royal Thai Government has also indicated a need to prioritize the psychological trauma on tsunami-affected children and adults, recognizing that this is a long-term undertaking.

52. The continued engagement of local government in the ongoing recovery effort will be critical, as local government institutions are better placed to orchestrate the type of community participation required to ensure that outcomes are truly anchored in the needs of the affected households.

Conclusion

53. Two years after the devastating events of December 26, 2004, an enormous amount has been achieved in the tsunami recovery process. The scale of the disaster has without doubt tested the financial, human, institutional, and logistical capabilities of all stakeholders. Each has responded with extraordinary commitment and determination to see this enormous task through. Yet as we take stock of all that has been achieved, we must not lose sight of what we have learned in other parts of the world in the wake of disasters of this scale: progress in rebuilding

the physical, social, and human capital of shattered communities is measured in years, not months.

54. Furthermore, the generosity of the response, including unprecedented levels of funding from private sources, government contributions, and significant financial commitments by many of the affected governments themselves, has allowed the affected communities and their assistance partners to aim high -- to go beyond simply restoring the status quo ante and seek to build back better. It is through this ambitious lens that the tsunami recovery process should be judged over the years to come.