

ASSESSMENT OF THE TSUNAMI RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT*

A. OVERVIEW OF DISTRICT

1. Approximately 255,000 people out of a total population of 536,000¹ in Batticaloa were affected by the tsunami. Nearly 3,000 people died and over 2,300 were injured, while 13,000-15,000 houses were completely destroyed and more than 5,000 houses partially damaged. As of March 11, 2005, roughly 21,000 people remained in 'welfare' centres, while 35,000 stayed with friends and relatives². According to a post-tsunami survey by the ILO/WFP, Batticaloa and Hambantota had the highest number of affected households below the poverty line.

2. The population relies primarily on fishing and agriculture for their livelihoods. Agricultural production and investments in the fishing industry were severely hampered by the war. Prior to the tsunami there were 21,040 active fishermen in Batticaloa³; 4,603 fishing boats were reported damaged by the tsunami⁴. In addition, 2,417 agricultural families owning 857 acres of land devoted to paddy, vegetables, fruit and beetel were affected, particularly by salination. The agricultural sector also suffered the loss of 453 water pumps, 369 sprayers and 9 rice mills. Many craftsmen lost their tools and capital, and traders lost their businesses.

3. Affected people see their main priorities for recovery as shelter reconstruction and livelihood restoration, as well as access to safe water and sanitation. They emphasise the importance of consultation regarding their needs, of opportunities for feedback to the authorities and of access to information about the recovery plans. They would like to understand the justification for the 200 m buffer zone in the north-east, versus 100 m in the south and believe there is a need to establish a warning system regarding future disasters.

4. As for administrative officials (there are no elected representatives, as local elections have not been held in many years), they desire clear policy directives from the central level, more administrative and financial autonomy, improved coordination among line agencies, a greater involvement of the local authorities in planning, implementation and monitoring, the incorporation of environmental safeguards into reconstruction efforts and the Inclusion of local NGOs in the coordination process, along with the INGOs.

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¹ District Statistical Information 2003.

² Tsunami Disaster Information Unit, District Secretariat Batticaloa

³ Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources

⁴ Tsunami Disaster Information Unit, District Secretariat Batticaloa

B. FINDINGS OF POST-TSUNAMI DAMAGE & NEEDS ASSESSMENTS FOR BATTICALOA

5. The UN's stocktaking of the relief phase in Batticaloa was generally positive: basic humanitarian needs were met through coordinated efforts between a large number of local and international actors⁵. According to the Welfare Task Force, the majority of basic non-food needs of the camp population were covered. As for health, the Deputy Provincial Director of Health Services provided adequate cover for the district. There are gaps in the water and sanitation sector both in the camps as well as for people who return. OCHA further points out that inadequate attention is given to people residing with friends and relatives, who may have special needs, for example, related to disability.

6. The reports of the Government, the LTTE and the donors (Joint Needs Assessment – JNA) agree that extensive damage was inflicted on the fishing sector, resulting in loss of income for fishermen and their families. As for non-fishing livelihoods, the reports do not go into loss of livelihoods in any detail. According to the JNA, the district financing needs amount to US\$ 175 million. Housing needs are estimated at US\$ 67 million, roads US\$ 31 million, water and sanitation US\$ 18 million, health US\$ 18 million, railways US\$ 17 million, fisheries (including boats, fisheries harbours and buildings) US\$ 8 million, education US\$ 8 million and power at US\$ 8 million. The TAFREN report⁶ proposes upgrading the Batticaloa General Hospital to a teaching hospital and improving the Batticaloa-Trincomalee road.

C. KEY CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

7. **Socio-political issues.** Both Tamils, who comprise 73.4% of the population in Batticaloa, and Muslims, who comprise 25.9%, were severely affected by the tsunami. In addition there are small groups of Burghers, indigenous persons (*Veddahs*) and seasonal Sinhalese fishermen. With the exception of Vakaraï, the coastal areas in Batticaloa are government controlled, while large portions of the agricultural hinterland are under the control of the LTTE. The security situation in the East remains highly volatile due to conflict between two LTTE factions and possible involvement of parts of the security forces. The result has been an increasing number of killings of activists identified with one side or the other. Nine killings were reported in February and 23 in March⁸. Further deterioration in the situation could have serious implications for reconstruction efforts.

8. The post-tsunami period saw significant collaboration between the Muslim and Tamil communities. Community-based mediation mechanisms are already in place to deal with potential disputes. However, the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE vie for the support of the Muslim community, while existing conflicts over land issues could easily worsen, as Muslims who fled to the coast during the war now want to reclaim their land in the interior. Muslim civil society representatives claim that Tamil communities have resettled on land belonging to them, stopping Muslims' return to their original lands.

⁵ OCHA Batticaloa February 2003: Stocktaking of humanitarian tsunami relief activities in Sri Lanka, February 2005 and OCHA: Mid-term review of flash appeal 2005

⁶ Presidential Secretariat and TAFREN: Rebuilding the tsunami affected area implementation plan

⁸ Foundation for Co-Existence

9. Tensions are also building between tsunami-affected and conflict-affected people, as well as with those affected by previous floods or simply the chronic poor, as each group feels they are not receiving an equitable share of the overall assistance available. In addition, the extensive involvement of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation in the temporary settlements has caused unease among parts of the beneficiary population.

10. A proliferation of INGO's in the district has made the local NGOs feel marginalized, as international agencies poach staff and drive up prices, without investing in local partnerships. Given the difference in the nature and scale of the work required of the local NGO's in the post-tsunami period, they do need capacity building assistance in a number of areas. But those who have established effective partnerships with INGOs are the exception, with the majority being unhappy regarding the newcomers to the district.

11. To address these issues, existing informal dispute mechanisms need to be made more use of in resolving tensions between Muslims and Tamils. At the same time, a more inclusive, equitable approach should be adopted with regards to assistance programs targeting tsunami-affected, flood-affected, conflict-affected and poverty-affected people. There is also a need for INGOs to develop an agreed salary structure and to ensure that the local NGO's are capacitated not only through technical training but financially to ensure their sustainability. Finally, in line with some other countries, the Government might want to consider making it obligatory for INGOs to identify local counterparts with whom they will work.

12. **Local Governance Capacity.** Although, the Government Agent (GA) is in principle responsible for reconstruction, he currently tends to be merely a communicator of decisions and policies formed at the central level, due to his lack of administrative and financial autonomy. This "top down" approach is further aggravated by frequent policy changes. As a result, administrators are reluctant to share policy positions with affected parties. The affected persons complained of not being consulted or even informed of policy decisions.

13. The Divisional Secretaries (DS) and Grama Sevakas (GS) are responsible for field level operations. Affected individuals lack confidence in the administration and their local members of parliament. Certain individuals noted that they do not trust the beneficiary list prepared by the GS. While most people noted that they are kept informed by the GS, some disagreed.

14. Line agencies such as the Road Development Authority (RDA), Survey Department (SD), National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB), Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB), National Housing Development Authority (NHDA), and Urban Development Authority (UDA) do not have the required personnel in the district. But they are confident of being able to get the necessary resources from other districts when their recovery roles are clearly defined. However, for the RDA, and Road Development Department (RDD), staff consider that the main issue is inability to perform due to lack of funds.

15. The GA and DS's urgently require additional human, technical and logistical resources, including more clerical assistance, plus an incentive scheme for skilled staff working in difficult areas. Costs of procurement for photocopiers, computers, etc. to reinforce the GA's and DSs' capacity should be borne by donors. DS's in particular need to collaborate with NGOs in operational activities. Meanwhile, the central line agencies will have to ensure adequate redeployment of staff to enable smooth implementation according to existing policies. Furthermore, budgetary allocations will have to be increased in line with tsunami related work.

16. **Gender.** The general lack of consultation with the affected population in addressing their needs is especially marked in the case of women, who have been relegated to their traditional roles, as opposed to having a say in the recovery efforts themselves. None of the women met had been consulted and there was little if any female representation in the various camp and administrative committees. No attempts appear to have been made to ensure that both men and women are treated equally when providing land titles and ownership rights.

17. Reports of sexual and domestic violence have increased as many men and women have sought solace in alcohol to cope with the trauma. The lack of privacy and the proximate living conditions have resulted in children as young as 13 and 14 years of age living together. These alliances could result in underage mothers ill equipped to cope with the responsibility of parenting. Other implications include sexually transmitted diseases and a general breakdown of social mores. An issue raised by many organizations/individuals concerned allegations of sexual abuse of children within the temporary camps. Despite attempts to investigate and refer these concerns to the police, there is a fear that such abuse is still much in evidence. Play therapy as well as discussions with the family are used to attempt to resolve such issues.

18. Security concerns have been exacerbated by the lack of toilet facilities in certain IDP camps such as in Kalkuddah and Vadduvan, where women wait till dark to relieve themselves. Poor lighting, or in some instances, lack of lighting, is a cause for serious concern, both for women and for those with mobility disabilities. Many Muslim women complained of not having separate places for worship, while others complained of a lack of privacy to breastfeed their children.

19. The camp committee in Chettipayadam raised a particular concern in connection with the adjacent Army camp. While the men are engaged in agricultural activity in their original villages, the women have complained that army personnel come over at night and "harass" them. Although this complaint was only from this camp, (versus other locations where the army has been responsible for ensuring the security of the camps and are commended for their services), this remains a matter of concern.

20. Women should be afforded representation on all committees involved in post-tsunami reconstruction, where necessary supported by training. The gender impact of post-tsunami reconstruction needs to be identified and systematically monitored by existing women's national as well as international agencies. Police women and children's desks need to be strengthened and made more accessible to better address sexual and domestic violence cases. General human rights training with a particular focus on safe-sex, HIV/AIDS and STD awareness, plus reproductive and family health issues, should be provided through the existing national organizations in consultation with the National STD/AIDS program.

21. Organizations working in these areas should continue to be vigilant about the security needs of children, and ensure that measures adopted are sustainable and act as a deterrent to future abuse. INGOs engaged in provision of water and sanitation should expand their activities to meet the needs of all IDPs in camps and temporary housing. These issues should be addressed at the weekly task force meetings. Meanwhile the selection of campsites should be done with greater care. Where possible, IDP camps in the vicinity of military settlements should be moved to a neutral location. Appropriate mechanisms to address grievances in camps should be established in collaboration with the local government authorities and with the national and international NGOs working in the district.

22. **Environment.** The tsunami has had a severe impact on the local environment, through the destruction of coastal vegetation, pollution of the lagoon, generation of large quantities of solid waste, contamination of groundwater wells, and increased salinity in groundwater and soil. While demolition waste still remains along the roadways and coast, residents have recovered whatever bricks can be reused and the local authority is using the debris as fill material for damaged roads. The local authorities (LA) are not able to otherwise dispose of this waste as there is no suitable disposal site in Batticaloa, even for the disposal of daily municipal waste.

23. It is clear that environmental issues are not being considered a priority in the reconstruction efforts. Environmental officers of the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) attached to the Divisional Secretary's offices and the Municipal Council are not included in the planning or decision-making processes or in any of the committees that meet regularly.

24. Large areas of land, around 140 Ha, have been cleared for resettlement within Batticaloa town (Thiraimadu) without conducting any form of environmental assessment. Site selection is done purely on the basis of land availability. Other issues such as availability of water, quality of ground water, impact on land use and on adjoining lands are not taken into consideration. It is evident that due to the perceived urgency in initiating reconstruction activities, existing environmental policies have been put aside. While the CEA guidance for implementing the environmental assessment process states that under emergency situations, where necessary, action that may have a significant environmental impact may be taken without observing the provisions of the regulations, it also notes that the agency concerned should consult with the CEA in this regard.

25. Long-term assistance is required to develop a suitable waste management system for Batticaloa district. In addition, environmental officers should be represented in all reconstruction committees at the local level, while the CEA should issue clear guidelines through its district environmental officers on what flexibilities can be adopted, if any, regarding the existing environmental laws.

26. **Legal Issues.** Organizations such as the Human Rights Commission, together with the Assistant Registrar General, have initiated efforts to address the documentation needs of affected persons. The main focus has been the issuance of death certificates, especially from Vakarai to Pottuvil. As difficulties were experienced in taking a coroner and a judge to areas controlled by the LTTE, the requirements for obtaining such documentation were relaxed in these areas. The Department of Registration is expected to implement a mobile service to issue civil status documentation, as done in the South of the country. No plans are in place for the issuance of land deeds, which, a priori, can mean that women and the disabled are under-represented. In some cases where the records of the Divisional Secretaries are intact, copies of death, birth and marriage certificates can be obtained. But the problem arises in relation to the divisional secretary's office in Vakari that was completely destroyed. Copies will have to be obtained from the central office in Colombo. The re-issue of lost documentation, which has not yet begun, will have to be addressed immediately, given that, according to TAFREN policy on housing, title deeds are required to establish eligibility for obtaining housing assistance.

27. **Risk reduction measures.** Batticaloa is a disaster prone area, having witnessed cyclones, floods, etc. Many NGOs had established capacity to address such concerns and as such were able to respond quickly following the tsunami. But no formal mechanism has been put in place to increase public awareness of disaster mitigation or disaster management. Post-

tsunami, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is conducting a rapid environmental assessment, where it will identify mechanisms for proper coastal zone management to minimize adverse consequences of extreme coastal events.

28. A committee comprising local government, local NGOs, faith-based organizations and other representatives of civil society should be organized and empowered to coordinate local natural disaster management. Awareness campaigns on the impact of destruction of the natural environment and risks from natural disasters should be introduced, particularly in schools. The administrators should develop a mechanism in collaboration with the police and armed forces to provide timely information to the public of impending disasters.

29. **Human Rights.** There is a general lack of consultation with local organizations and no consultation whatsoever with the beneficiaries regarding the measures taken or to be implemented to address post-tsunami needs. This is seen as a violation of a person's right to be consulted about his/her future and to decide where s/he would like to reside. The reconstruction in Batticaloa is still in the early stages, with much time spent on trying to understand the changing policies and their application, rather than on actual implementation and/or consultation. For example, the Muslim community feels they are being discriminated against in the distribution of assistance. They noted that their concerns are not being addressed as priorities by the State. Muslim cultural restrictions on taking interest-bearing loans have also been a deterrent to restarting their livelihood.

30. Affected persons, including women, the disabled and the elderly, should be systematically consulted and kept informed prior to initiating any reconstruction efforts. For the district level committees including the GA's task force on rehabilitation, representatives of the Muslim community should be included.

31. **HIV AIDS risks.** The general consensus in Batticaloa is that HIV/AIDS is not currently a concern. Condom usage does not appear to be a priority and there is an apparent lack of awareness of the inherent health risks of not using protective methods. Most organizations/individuals working in Batticaloa are focused on providing immediate needs post tsunami, while hospital authorities are of the opinion that there is a low risk of HIV in Batticaloa.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

32. **General.** Sectoral task forces have been established in water and sanitation, social welfare, psychosocial needs, shelter, livelihoods, education and health. These task forces meet weekly and are led by a Government representative with an international agency as co-chair. The chairs of the task forces meet once a week with the GA. While a relatively smooth coordination among INGO's has been established, local NGO's are hardly represented at these meetings. To ensure more participation by local stakeholders, the plan is to hold task force meetings in Tamil. While these task forces coordinate programs by INGOs, existing multilateral and bi-lateral donor projects are not discussed. This could lead to potential overlaps.

33. An information center, responsible for collating information from numerous agencies, has been established in the GA's office. This is staffed by a UN volunteer, but lacks sufficient personnel and essential resources such as computers, photocopiers, etc. The GA has also initiated the production of an information leaflet, which should be disseminated in public places and among affected persons.

34. At the divisional level, the DS's coordinate work undertaken by local NGOs and meet with the GA once a week. The DS's expressed concern about the lack of communication concerning government policies. Since the establishment of TAFREN, they generally learn about government initiatives only via the media, rather than via official circulars, and are reluctant to act on this basis. Many line agencies noted that they were unfamiliar with TAFREN and its mandate.

35. Local authorities, who will eventually be responsible for maintaining public infrastructure, are not consulted and are unaware of the plans in place. One of their key concerns is the lack of allocation of funds for work already carried out after the tsunami. While a circular has been issued stating that tsunami work will be funded by the respective divisional secretaries, the LA's are yet to be reimbursed for funds expended. Meanwhile the lack of a consistent information flow from the central level to the district has caused many uncertainties for the administrators. For example, some beneficiaries and administrators are of the view that the Rs 5,000 allowance is a monthly allowance to be given for the first six months, while others are of the opinion that this is a one-time allowance.

36. Civil society, INGO's and local NGO representatives expressed fear that current aid may create a "culture of dependency", with some affected persons reluctant to re-start their lives, as they fear that by leaving the camps they will lose out on handouts. Camp level committees have been formed, although it is unclear as to how the members are selected. Since they distribute government goods and services to the people, this is an ideal mechanism to disseminate information and instill confidence in the administration, although care must be taken to ensure that camp officials act in a fair and equitable manner. The present committees lack women representatives.

37. TAFREN should work in close consultation with the External Resources Department (ERD), while district representatives should be kept informed of donor-funded initiatives in their area to avoid duplication. In addition, the information center within the GA's office should be strengthened through additional staff and equipment and TAFREN policies should be communicated through regular official channels. Furthermore, TAFREN needs to engage in more consultation with line ministries and agencies that will eventually be responsible for continuing the work initiated by TAFREN.

38. **Housing.** TAFREN's policy on housing and township development of 26 February 2005 was sent to the authorities only in early March. At the time of the team's visit, the authorities had just received the policy and were unable to comment without review. As of 21 March 2005, 1500 temporary houses had been completed by INGOs and national NGOs. Pledges had been made towards an estimated 4,000 permanent houses. The relocation to temporary housing is constrained by the inability to find land, lack of building materials and skilled labour.

39. The affected parties questioned the rationale for the difference in the width of the buffer zone for the East and the South. While they accept the need for a buffer zone, they favour a flexible, localised approach and prior consultation. Where land is available in close proximity to their original homes, people are willing to relocate. In certain instances, where the land selected is around 5 km away from the original site, such as in Navalady, the residents are reluctant to relocate. Some householders living outside the 200m buffer zone have also requested to be resettled with the rest of the village.

40. Twenty-seven sites, state and privately owned, have been identified for development of resettlement sites. The affected parties have not been consulted in the site selection process and there has been inadequate consultation with other agencies, such as NWSDB and the LA's. Funding for other related infrastructure too has not been identified. While the INGOs have come forward to fund houses, it is unclear who will bear the cost for community infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, playgrounds identified in the plans.

41. If private property is selected, land acquisition procedures stipulated in the Land Acquisition Act need to be followed. Since this process could take up to 18 months, there is a need to establish a fast track process to expedite land acquisition. The administration should also clearly establish land ownership prior to initiating activity. In Thiraimadu, land initially assumed to be state land, was later found to be private property after over 140 Ha had been cleared. Depending on land availability, allotment varies from 7 to 15 perches per household. Varying land allotments has not been raised as an issue as yet, due to lack of awareness among affected parties. Inequality in allotments could lead to potential conflicts.

42. Certain categories are not addressed in the present policy on housing: (i) orphaned minors who cannot provide the required evidence to be eligible for housing; (ii) squatters, many of them conflict-IDPs, who have been resident in the 200m buffer area for many years; (iii) houses which do not appear to be damaged, but are structurally unstable to live in; (iv) parties who wish to return to their property abandoned during the conflict in the early 1990s.

43. The district offices of the UDA and the NHDA need strengthening, including in terms of architectural accessibility for the disabled. The district does not have government evaluators, who will be required for the acquisition of private lands. The Survey Department (SD) noted that it has adequate surveyors, but the surveyors require more mobility. At the time of the field visit, all survey work had been suspended as the staff had resorted to trade-union action.

44. Agencies involved in temporary housing recommended that the process of clearing incoming materials at Colombo port be expedited. The shortage of skilled labour could to some extent be resolved through on-the-job training. In the district, consultation and public information is necessary during the early planning stages to ensure that people's views are considered with respect to relocation sites in order to avoid disruption of livelihoods. Consultation could take place through an expanded Village Rehabilitation Committee structure, with representatives at the Divisional and District levels.

45. Financing of community infrastructure needs to be clarified early in the planning process. At the same time, land acquisition for reconstruction needs to be expedited, but land ownership must be established as a first step. Persons not covered by current policy directives need to receive clear and equitable guidelines.

46. **Education.** The delay in erecting temporary shelters to house persons displaced by the tsunami has resulted in three (national) schools that provide education to some 5,000 students being occupied by the displaced. On the one hand, this violates the children's right to obtain an education, and, on the other, if the displaced are taken out of the camp, they are in effect "homeless" without even basic shelter requirements.

47. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed at the central level but the zonal directors are unaware of the parties to such MoUs and their contents. Development is

rendered more complex as approximately two-thirds of Batticaloa is controlled by the LTTE and only the town area is under the Government. Although the required number of teachers for the district is 340, the current staff strength is 90. Resource allocation between the “national” schools, administered by the Central government and the “provincial” schools is inequitable.

48. School rehabilitation plans drawn up with NGO’s and other donors should be discussed first with the zonal directors to ensure that issues such as location and design have been adequately resolved, while steps should be taken to fill existing cadre positions.

49. **Health.** The MoU’s for rehabilitation of damaged health service institutions are signed at the central level with NGO’s. The DPDHS has not seen these and is unaware of the contents. Although the DPDHS has indicative costs of repair work for each hospital, he is unaware which NGO has been assigned to which hospital. Basic waste management systems will need to be included in the work financed by the NGOs.

50. Although, the general hospital was not directly affected, the need to cope with tsunami victims highlighted certain deficiencies. The accident and emergency service ward needs to be improved. Furthermore, although the workload has increased tremendously over the years, the number of cadre has remained unchanged for the past 20 years. This is particularly relevant to the para-medical, nursing and minor staff, where only 250 of the 560 positions have been filled.

51. There should be ongoing communication mechanisms in place between the central level, the DPDHS and the relevant hospital or dispensary directors to ensure that recovery work is properly costed and allocated and that health facilities are adequately staffed to meet the needs.

52. **Psychosocial issues.** Psychosocial trauma was compounded following the tsunami as many well-intentioned organizations and individuals descended on the tsunami-affected areas to carry out “counseling”, as opposed to following a coordinated approach to address these concerns. Many did not speak the language and spent only a few days in Batticaloa. As a result, a temporary coordination unit on psychosocial issues called “Mangrove” was set up to work on linking needs with the available resources, establishing referral systems and diplomatically guiding international agencies by educating them on what is required to better address the concerns of the affected population.

53. Batticaloa already had an established system in place for trauma counseling and as a result was able to respond quickly. Addressing and responding to the psychosocial needs of the tsunami-affected, including children that have lost one or both parents, is a long-term commitment that will be complemented by developing the mental health unit at the hospital. Many persons are suicidal following the loss of family and belongings and still others resort to extreme measures when confronted with an obstacle.

54. The mental health unit at the hospital should be strengthened as part of a comprehensive national plan on mental health that equally addresses persons affected by the tsunami and others with psychosocial problems. Assistance should be provided to train personnel that are able to work across different cultures, using information systems that facilitate the support and coordination of small projects.

55. **Livelihoods.** Due to the war, land under cultivation decreased from 118,168 acres in 1982 to 80,713 in 2002. Access to land and disputes over entitlement are major constraints to

cultivation. Following the tsunami, increased soil salinity is the main concern of farmers. According to experts, nature must take its course in soil leaching over the course of the next 2-3 monsoons. Farmers suggested that they be provided with advice on alternative crops, or with support to commence alternative activities, such as fishing.

56. Livelihoods of craftsmen, traders and workers engaged in cottage industries too have been affected as many have lost their tools and equipment. Some others have been indirectly affected such as traders who deliver to, or buy from, the fisheries sector.

57. Affected people prefer grants or equipment to restart their livelihoods. They are unable to provide security, collateral and/or deeds and as a result banks are hesitant to provide loans. Although the government has made available a credit line at 6% interest, banks are reluctant to administer these loans due to high administrative costs and because the clients are without a banking history. Bankers refer to the low repayment rates after the cyclone in 1978. Borrowing from micro-credit institutions has decreased, which was attributed to a preference among people for grants due to concerns about their own ability to repay.

58. There are several micro-credit institutions in Batticaloa, run by local and international NGOs as well as by the Government. The Samurdhi bank has 348 officers working in government-controlled as well as LTTE-controlled areas of Batticaloa, with a clientele of 40 000 affected families.

59. There is no single solution to helping regenerate livelihoods. Support options need to include grants, soft loans and regular loans, depending on the resources of the individual and the purpose of the assistance. The delivery mechanism should be provided in a culturally sensitive manner, for example with regards to the Muslim community, and should allow access by both directly and indirectly affected people. Delegation of more authority to the District Samurdhi representatives should be explored, enabling them to take action based on local needs and issues.

60. **Needs of fisher folk.** The fisheries sector had just begun to recover after the ceasefire when the tsunami struck, affecting 3,627 non-mechanised craft, 26 traditional boats, 654 FRP boats and 278 day boats. Anchorages as well as one ice plant and a Fisheries Training Centre in Navalady were destroyed. Unless fishermen can be relocated in very close proximity to their original village and to the sea, they are reluctant to move. This is a cause for concern among Navalady fishermen, where the proposed resettlement site is 5 km from their original land.

61. With the exception of multi-day boats, pledges have been made by private organisations, international NGOs and bilateral agencies to replace all totally damaged boats. Outstanding issues include cleaning of the lagoons in Batticaloa, Vakarai and Valachchenai, as well as some beach areas and the repair of boats. Repair of and compensation for motors and compensation for owners of multi-day boats still need to be resolved. This is an area not covered by grants from existing donors. Industrial facilities for making boats in Batticaloa would increase the capacity and quicken the process of producing boats locally.

62. Currently there are five fisheries inspectors stationed in Batticaloa, although the need is for 14. Following the tsunami, the department was responsible for surveying damage, certifying the quality of boats produced and approving the beneficiaries identified by the GSs. Department staff need additional motorbikes or vehicles to improve mobility. International

agencies have supported the department with computers and staff, but more facilities and training is required.

63. Procedures for identifying the beneficiaries, prioritisation of beneficiaries, quality control and distribution of boats need further attention. The current capacity of the Fisheries Department in these areas is insufficient. Mechanisms such as joint distribution and publication of the details of all beneficiaries in newspapers and public places have been implemented to ensure transparency.

64. Other consultative mechanisms, such as working through the Fisheries Cooperative, should also be examined. At present there is no formal mechanism for consulting with the Fisheries Cooperative Society in the rehabilitation of the fisheries sector, although it is acknowledged by civil society that it represents the views of fisher folk.

65. **Social Protection.** There does not appear to be a formal administrative structure in relation to security, although in Batticaloa the army has been used to ensure that the temporary campsites are secure and free from problems. However the general security situation in the district is tense with the killing of civilians day and night. The recruitment of child soldiers also appears to have increased since the tsunami. This tension has an obvious impact on persons displaced by the tsunami as they are placed in a particularly vulnerable situation.

66. Affected families are uneasy about their future as there has been no definite communication as to whether they will be provided with permanent housing and if so the location. They have no information as to the transition process from camp to semi-permanent to permanent housing and on the type of assistance if any, that will be provided to begin their livelihoods. No attempt has been made to use the skills of the displaced in the reconstruction effort, which would keep them occupied and thus help lessen their trauma.

67. Many of the initiatives targeting vulnerable sections of the population have originated with non-governmental agencies and/or individuals, such as the temporary psychosocial unit named "Mangrove" and the women's coalition for disaster management. As indicated earlier, children, women and disabled people remain at risk of abuse of their basic rights. The general impression is that, although working with the best of intentions, the local government personnel are overwhelmed by the task ahead of them. They are under-staffed and under-resourced, which is further compounded by constantly changing policies at the central level.

68. **Transport.** The RDA under the central Government is responsible for A and B class roads while the RDD, under the purview of the North East Provincial Council (NEPC), is responsible for C and D roads. The local authorities are responsible for all other feeder roads. Immediate rehabilitation work has been carried out but more work is required. The main issue appears to be the lack of funds for the RDD to carry out post-tsunami construction work, although proposals have been submitted to the GA and the NEPC.

69. The RDA Batticaloa will require additional staff if they are to supervise road construction in excess of 10 km. If the roads are to be improved using new technology such as ABC surfacing, the existing local contractors may not possess the required skills and capabilities. Roads within the resettlement sites will be the responsibility of the local authorities. However, they have not yet been informed if they are meant to undertake it.

70. Budgetary allocations for tsunami work have to be identified and provided to the respective institutions. The local authorities should also be involved in planning rehabilitation work, as maintenance of public infrastructure would eventually be their responsibility.

71. **Power Needs.** The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) was confident that they have the capacity to provide the power needs, as they have access to staff from CEB offices in other areas. The CEB is obliged to reconnect its customers at no cost to the consumer.

72. **Water and Sanitation.** The present water supply, which serves Batticaloa town, is obtained from 7 shallow groundwater wells. These wells, constructed in 1917, were largely unaffected by the tsunami, with the exception of some of the covers being damaged. The pumping main was damaged by the tsunami and OXFAM has initiated the replacement. Water quality testing is done fortnightly in Ampara, as Batticaloa does not have the facilities. Although salinity levels have increased, it is below the limits set by WHO.

73. The local unit of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board is responsible for operations and maintenance, but assistance is sought from Colombo when identifying new sources for water supply schemes. Presently, no consultations are held with the NWSDB when selecting sites for relocation.

74. It is imperative that the NWSDB be consulted at the initial stages of selecting any resettlement site, in order to identify water sources with sufficient yield and suitable water quality. There is also a need to take into account service delivery pipes when establishing road width requirements. Since NWSDB expertise would have to be brought in from Colombo, there should be coordination among the different DS's, so that water testing could be done in a number of sites during the same period.

75. **Coastal Protection.** One of the main concerns is how the government will enforce the newly introduced buffer zone. As the Government was unable to enforce existing regulations under the Coast Conservation Act, there is no guarantee that this new law will be enforced. District officials are unclear as to who will be responsible for enforcing this policy as the Coast Conservation Department (CCD) does not have representatives in the district.

76. Furthermore, the housing policy issued by TAFREN states that land owners within the newly declared buffer zones can maintain ownership of their lands. While the Forest Department (FD) has plans to develop a green belt through agro forestry on the coastal belt, mechanisms will have to be drawn up with the individual landowners, if the government wishes to implement coastal conservation measures on private land.

77. In the absence of a CCD representative in the district, the Government will have to delegate authority to another line agency to ensure effective long-term implementation of the policy. As for the agro-forestry program to be established by the FD, it should extensively involve the community in the planning and implementation in order to make it sustainable.

78. **Construction capacity.** Batticaloa has over 95 registered contractors ranging from M4 to M9. Following the ceasefire, they have been able to increase their capacity due to the large number of construction projects initiated. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of skilled labor, such as masons and carpenters. Most of the raw material needed for re-construction is in LTTE-controlled areas and therefore higher costs are incurred as materials are obtained as far away as Polonnaruwa and Mahiyangana.

79. Administrators should ensure that affected persons are involved in reconstruction efforts, including organising access to vocational training. Some of the reconstruction work may require M1 to M3 contractors. It is recommended that in such instances joint venture partnerships with district contractors be promoted to improve their capacity.

E. OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

80. The following recommendations reflect the desire expressed by many in Batticaloa to adopt an integrated, inclusive approach to ensure that conflict-affected, as well as other vulnerable groups have access to the same quality of services, and to enable a link between reconstruction and development. As discussed previously, existing local structures need to be provided with extra human and technical resources so that the implementation of reconstruction can be done through these agencies. To summarize, the key recommendations are:

81. Involvement of beneficiary communities:

- Communities, for example through Village Rehabilitation Committees (VRCs), should be consulted in the planning and implementation of recovery work, particularly in relation to housing and livelihoods support. The VRCs should delegate representatives at the Divisional and District levels. These bodies could represent the views of the affected communities, as well as disseminate information from the government to affected persons. The VRC's should include representation from all ethnic groups and marginalized groups such as the disabled, as well as demonstrating gender balance.

82. Improved coordination and implementation:

- More financial and administrative autonomy should be given to the district administrators, allowing them flexibility to make decisions within an overall national policy framework, while simultaneously reinforcing their planning and implementation capacity.
- The GA's office will require a unit headed by a senior technically competent supervisor, to ensure reconstruction efforts are implemented according to plan, and ensure effective coordination among all key actors. This unit will eventually take over the coordination efforts led by sectoral task forces, be responsible for information dissemination, be accountable to stakeholders including donors, receive and act on complaints made by affected persons and report to the GA. A senior representative of TAFREN should participate in this unit, in order to report to the central level on the requirements of the district and ensure that district officials are informed of new policies being developed.
- Budgetary allocations should be provided to the line agencies to effectively carry out work related to their sectors.
- The District Secretariat should build on its present coordination activities. An expansion of membership in the existing weekly meeting for coordination of tsunami work should be considered. Candidates for the revamped body are the GA, sectoral heads, Regional Assistant Commissioner for the Governor, an LTTE representative, Muslim MP, Tamil MP, TAFREN representative, line agency representatives, Donor/INGO representatives and local civil society representatives. Information on existing and new projects (prior and post-tsunami) should be shared with all development partners.
- The information management capacities of the District Secretariat should be strengthened for better information sharing with all local stakeholders; the newsletter initiated by the GA

should be expanded and other mechanisms such as public hearings and the use of mass media should be explored.

83. **Other issues:**

- Crosscutting issues such as gender, disability and environmental safeguards should be integrated into all the recovery plans.
- Mechanisms for increased transparency need to be developed, such as publication of beneficiary lists and the establishment of joint monitoring systems involving donors and beneficiaries, as well as government agencies.