

ASSESSMENT OF TSUNAMI RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION IN HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT¹

A. OVERVIEW OF THE DISTRICT

1. The level of tsunami destruction was less severe in Hambantota than in neighboring districts. According to the initial Joint Needs Assessment, less than 20% of the approximately 525,000 living in the coastal portion of Hambantota were affected, compared, for example, to an estimated 80% in Mullaitivu and 78% in Ampara. There are nevertheless pockets of severe damage and loss of life, with an estimated 3,100 dead. It appears that a significant proportion of the fatalities were sustained by individuals from the interior who were in Hambantota market when the tsunami struck, suggesting that the social and economic impact was widely felt. In the four directly affected divisions (Hambantota, Tissamaharama, Tangalle, and Ambalantota), there remains confusion about the extent of the damage, with reports on losses varying significantly. Statistics on displacement have also proven difficult to ascertain, as the majority of displaced families are not in the camps, but staying with nearby relatives. Current estimates by the UNDP estimate that 20,235 remain displaced, with 1,638 families residing in 17 temporary camps².

2. Given their relative poverty, Hambantota residents are particularly vulnerable to the economic shock caused by the tsunami. It is estimated that between one-quarter to one-third of the population in the Southern province lived below the poverty line before the tsunami, with these numbers climbing in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. The level of infrastructure in Hambantota is also below national standards. The Sri Lankan 2001 census classified 38 percent of all dwellings in the district as “temporary”, based on the use of non-durable construction materials – 11 percent higher than the national average. Before the tsunami, less than 60 percent of all homes in Hambantota enjoyed the benefit of indoor electricity – again, lower than the national average, which ranges between 60-80 percent.

3. Currently, the focus of the government and NGOs appears to be on housing and fisheries. While a large number of affected individuals will benefit from progress in both areas, it will take time, and there is growing concern that a culture of dependency is developing in the IDP camps. Beneficiaries expressed frustration that they are sitting idle, unable to work because their businesses have been destroyed. Donors and government officials worry that both directly and indirectly affected communities are sedentary and that social problems (drinking, violence, sexual harassment) are worsening as a result. As we move into the reconstruction phase, getting people back to work must be a top priority.

B. FINDINGS OF POST-TSUNAMI DAMAGE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS IN HAMBANTOTA

4. **Education and Child Protection.** Many school personnel have been affected by the disaster, some severely, with five principals and twenty-four teachers being killed. Six schools in the district were affected, with damage estimates at just over \$600,000. Five percent of Hambantota pupils returned to school on January 10, 2005 when schools

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² UNDP Situation Report, January 8, 2005 www.lk.undp.org/ndmc

reopened. As of mid-February, the number had increased to 90% in unaffected schools and approximately 60% in affected schools.³

5. **Power, water and sanitation.** Preliminary repairs have been made to correct much of the initial damage in the power, water and sanitation sectors. The power sector suffered significant damage, with a total loss of \$1.61 million in assets, affecting approximately 8,650 residents. Short-term replacement/repair costs for these in the medium term (3-12 months) is estimated at \$3.1 million. Physical damage to the existing water and sanitation facilities occurred primarily in areas adjacent to the shoreline, with estimated damage of approximately \$1.1 million, including direct damage (pipe systems, wells, and sanitation systems) and indirect damage (costs associated with service to camps, and survey costs).

6. **Housing.** Sri Lanka's Census Bureau reports a total of 2,374 destroyed and damaged houses⁴, while the UNDP's January 15 situation report claimed a higher figure, at 4,047.⁵ This number represents approximately 3% of Hambantota's pre-tsunami permanent housing stock. While there is significant controversy about who should relocate to the new homes, land has been identified for relocation outside the buffer zone and construction plans are in place.

7. **Agriculture.** Entry of seawater into productive fields has caused high levels of soil salinity in some areas. Affected farmers will be unable to grow crops until the salinity is naturally flushed out by the seasonal monsoon rains, which could take several years. In Hambantota, the damage is summarized as follows:

Damage to Crop Agriculture

Damage	Hectares
Paddy Area	143
Other Field Crops	19
Vegetables	23
Fruit Crops	20
Total	205

*Source: Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment
Annex VII Agriculture and Livestock

8. Several Salt Water Exclusion (SWE) Structures in Hambantota were damaged. The structures both prevent salt water from entering the drainage canals and carry potentially damaging floodwaters to the sea. These structures have in many cases been clogged by debris, and their control gates and related equipment have been damaged by the force of the waves. In addition, approximately 100 goats and a similar number of cattle were lost in the tsunami. It is also reported that the cattle grazing areas along the shore have been damaged by flood and seawater seepage, posing a potential threat to cattle in the area.

9. **Environmental impact and disaster risks.** The damage to the coastal environment by the tsunami was patchy. Impacts were severe where the beach was narrow and low in height and also where seawater funneled through areas with natural and man-made canals and lagoons. The damage to life and property as severe where natural sand

³ Sida/Dfid/GTZ. *Hambantota District Verification Mission*. February 13-15, 2005.

⁴ Department of Census and Statistics. *Preliminary Statistics of the Census of Buildings and Persons Affected by the Tsunami – 2004: Hambantota District*. February 10, 2005. According to the Census Bureau, 1019 houses were "completely damaged", 271 were partially damaged but not usable, and 1084 were left partially damaged but usable.

⁵ UNDP Situation Report, January 15, 2005 <http://www.lk.undp.org/ndmc>, and Sida/Dfid/GTZ. *Hambantota District Verification Mission Report*. p. 6. February 13-15

dunes had been exploited or converted into managed landscapes, where coral reefs have been subjected to pre-tsunami destruction such as coral mining and where houses and hotels were constructed in sensitive coastal or riverine reservation zones. These indicate that the coastal belt is highly vulnerable at this point and the risks are likely to increase during monsoon season. Accumulated debris in lagoons and other coastal ecosystems, plus salt intrusion inland, will negatively affect the fisheries and other aquatic life including the turtle populations and will reduce the productivity of agriculture land and home gardens. Waste disposal into wetlands by municipalities is a problem that has already affected the drainage systems and flood retention areas. This can increase the possibilities of water-borne diseases. It is necessary to ensure that proper waste removal and disposal mechanisms are put in place as soon as possible to avoid further adverse effects.

10. Hambantota District is unique due to its biologically rich ecosystems. Some of the proposed resettlement sites, located right next to or within such sites, will likely create negative impacts to these biological hotspots. Resettlement sites should be located with an adequate buffer between them and the biologically sensitive sites and should ensure that the number of households relocated is within the carrying capacity of the area. Landscaping should be in accordance with the surrounding ecosystem. Prior to the tsunami, some coastal areas in the district were vulnerable to a number of invasive plant species, particularly the Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia dilleniana*) and Mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*), which have a very high tendency to establish in habitats where they eliminate native plants. The tsunami has caused beachfront populations of the cactus to be transported further inland and new plants have already begun to establish themselves. Spread of these invasive plants may increase over time, as they exhibit competitive dominance under increased saline conditions, affecting the productive land in the area.

C. CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

11. **Coordination & Human Rights.** Despite impressive achievements during the relief phase in clearing debris, constructing temporary shelters, and providing food assistance to affected communities, several troubling patterns are beginning to emerge as the reconstruction phase begins. The central and local government, civil society, and donors must address these issues if they are to effectively deliver aid without exacerbating existing political, class, and ethnic tensions. The failure to do so risks creating long-term systemic problems that could result in what some whom we interviewed dramatically termed a “second tsunami”.

12. Following some early confusion, the government has now defined a clear system for handling donor requests to build housing. Donors submit their requests to the government coordinating body – “Helping Hambantota” – which then reviews the submission and decides the number of houses that the organization/individual can build. To the government’s credit, they often pare down the requested number by more than half in an effort to control excess building. In Hambantota, there are two basic types of proposed schemes, one a series of 3-story flats and the other, single-family homes. Donor organizations are required to follow minimum standards⁶ and encouraged to use an approved, common basic floor plan. The houses will be built by donors and then handed over to the Government Agent (GA) for distribution according to a yet to be defined process.

⁶ Minimum standards require that homes must be 500 square feet or larger, with asbestos roofing prohibited. There is a basic floor plan that has been accepted by UDA. While donors are not required to build the exact floor plan model, most sites visited by the team did appear to be using an approximation. However, minimum accessibility standards are generally not considered in these plans.

13. Concerns are surfacing about the number of houses that donors have promised. While the exact number of houses to be built is unclear, available lists indicate that donors have agreed to provide between 6,570⁷ and 8217⁸ houses. When asked who would receive the excess houses, several government officials in Hambantota city mentioned that they may forcibly move residents from homes within the 100 meter zone, regardless of the status of their former homes. While it is yet unclear whether these are the declared intentions of a few government employees or part of a greater “official plan”, the policy appears to be consistent with the guidelines outlined by TAFREN in the Assistance Policy & Implementation Guidelines on Housing & Township, which states that the following will be prohibited within Hambantota’s 100 m buffer zone:

- a. Construction of new buildings
- b. Re-construction of completely or partially damaged buildings
- c. Additions and alterations to existing buildings that require planning approval
- d. All repairs, re-construction and additions after 26th Dec 2004⁹

14. Donor representatives in Hambantota do not appear to be discussing the fate of the surplus structures, nor the potential that their funds could be used to promote forced dislocation for undeclared purposes, including for development projects such as Hambantota Port. Before any further building proceeds, the GoSL must clarify their plans in writing, allowing donors to assess whether the proposed use of, and distribution procedures for, the new houses is consistent with their organizational mission and ethics, as well as Principal 7 of the *United Nations’ Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, which states:

“Prior to any decision requiring the displacement of persons, the authorities concerned shall ensure that all feasible alternatives are explored in order to avoid displacement altogether. Where no alternatives exist, all measures shall be taken to minimize displacement and its adverse effects”

15. Despite the mandate provided in TAFREN’s Guidelines, some divisions have begun to implement participatory relocation procedures that are more in line with UN principles, giving residents a choice on how to proceed. The Tangalle division procedures fall most in line with the above UN mandate, providing options and incentives for buffer zone residents to move to properties further from the sea, but not requiring such a move.¹⁰

16. **Conflict & Minority Rights.** While the 100 m buffer zone is expressly intended to mitigate future hazards, for many it has become a minority rights issue. The Muslim community near the smaller mosque in Hambantota town has been severely affected by the tsunami. Most homes have been either damaged or destroyed. Despite the highly publicized buffer zone rule, many residents remain in the area in tents or temporary shelters. Government officials believe that this community has agreed to move from their seaside property into several 3-story apartment buildings being built by World Vision. When members of the community were asked, however, they expressed an unequivocal reluctance to relocate.¹¹ They repeatedly asserted that they did not want money or goods, but only the right to remain on their land. While this affected population does not appear to

⁷ This figure was calculated from a list provided by CARE that was received at the most recent Helping Hambantota housing sector coordination meeting.

⁸ UNDP Situation Report, January 15, 2005 <http://www.lk.undp.org/ndmc>, and Sida/Dfid/GTZ. *Hambantota District Verification Mission Report*. p. 6. February 13-15

⁹ The way this is written, this prohibition appears to prevent homeowners within the 100 meter zone from making any repairs or improvements to their homes at any point in the future.

¹⁰ Affected persons are asked whether they prefer to move from their former residence, and if so, are asked to rank their top four preferences of available government land.

¹¹ The team spoke with a variety of individuals in this community, including a local religious leader, affected women, and fishermen.

be considering violent resistance, it is clear that without further negotiations, the GA will not succeed in removing residents without simultaneously sowing lasting seeds of resentment.¹² Some residents believe that the forced relocation is an attempt to shift Muslim voting blocks unfavorable to the dominant parties in the South. Regardless of the truth of these allegations, this combination of factors could serve to further isolate Hambantota's Muslim community. By requiring (and perhaps overseeing) more adequate participatory processes, the donor community can turn this potential pitfall into an opportunity, going beyond their responsibility to "do no harm" by actively promoting inter-ethnic cooperation.

17. **Risk Vulnerability.** A full risk vulnerability assessment has not yet been completed. However it is widely agreed that existing vulnerability maps must be updated for the post-tsunami environment. The issue of risk is an important part of the ongoing debate about the 100 m buffer zone. While some allege that 100 meters is an arbitrary number, created to benefit the tourism industry (who are poised to seek waivers), a thorough study of risks and enforcement methods of the proposed regulations may help to settle the debate.

18. **Conflict Between Affected and Host Communities.** There were widespread accusations that non-affected individuals were seeking tsunami benefits. These claims were heard from donors, civil society groups, affected and non-affected people alike and related to everything from boat donations to food rations. In order to minimize such occurrences, Sarvodaya has reverted to delivering aid directly to affected homes. When distributing food rations, volunteers tear external packaging in order to prevent recipients from selling supplies in the market. Such opportunistic behavior is a reflection of the relative poverty of Hambantota District and foreshadows potential future problems as affected families receive more "big ticket" items, like homes, boats, job training, and productive assets. One volunteer we spoke with, who had not been affected, was hopeful that his family would receive a new home – after, of course, tsunami victims had received assistance. This highlights the importance of avoiding the creation of a more prosperous "tsunami class", while nearby unaffected residents remain poor, unskilled, and in temporary shelters.

19. **Access to Land & Land Titles.** While access to land does not appear to be a problem in Hambantota, the quality of available land is an issue. In this dry district, much of the available land is hot, dry, and unsuitable for agriculture, creating a challenge for developers, many of whom are seeking ways to make the environment more hospitable by planting home gardens appropriate to the harsh climate.

20. It is unclear whether affected families who had previously built illegally (squatters), or who lost documents in the tsunami, will be allowed to move to new houses. The Housing & Township Development Guidelines state on page 3 that only "affected households (within the buffer zone) that can *demonstrate ownership to land* will be provided with a house built with donor assistance on land allocated by the State." Prospective residents are also wary of the government's promise to transfer title to the new owners, alleging that residents of government housing built in the mid 1980's have yet to receive title.

21. **Gender.** It has been difficult to assess the extent of the effect of the Tsunami on women, as gender disaggregated data has not been collected district-wide. Oxfam reports, however, that there is anecdotal evidence that women were killed in greater numbers than men in the tsunami. Women were more likely to have been home when the tsunami struck early on a Sunday morning. Unlike men, women are typically not taught to swim and climb trees in Sri Lanka, which would have increased their chances of survival significantly. In the

¹² It is worth noting that this area has been receiving significant support from the Kuwait Red Crescent society and currently is "guarded" by several uniformed Pakistani soldiers. The controversial nature of the remaining settlement at this location is well known, making the uniformed international presence appear a show of support for the Muslim community's right to remain.

post-tsunami environment, many are concerned that women may not have the social influence or economic resources needed to recover quickly from this crisis. The limited political influence of women reduces the chances that they will be consulted in the reconstruction process, reducing the likelihood that their special needs will be taken into account. Some fear that incidents of domestic violence (an issue before the tsunami) will increase, as pressure on the family unit increases during the recovery phase. Women living in camps are at greater risk, with crowded conditions and inadequate facilities. Bathrooms are often not segregated, are poorly lit, and temporary houses do not often have separate rooms where women can change. Camps do not typically contain facilities designated as washing areas for sanitary cloths. There are reports that women have had difficulty accessing benefits because families are often registered in their husbands' names in government and insurance records. As aid is distributed, it is important that women are paid equally under cash-for-work programs, and that their names are included on ration cards, as well as on titles of new homes built for tsunami victims.

22. **Political Sensitivity.** As the home of the Prime Minister and the political base for the President and JVP, some consider that Hambantota has become a political showcase for competing interests' reconstruction efforts. While the validity of these claims could not be confirmed, it was clear that the various institutions created in Hambantota bore the unique stamp of the respective political body that had created it. "Helping Hambantota", for instance, was recently created by the Prime Minister's office to act as the primary liaison between the Prime Minister, the district GA's office, and donor organizations. This structure seems to have only a limited relationship to the nationwide coordinating body, TAFREN, which was created by the President's office to fulfill the same function. Another example of competition is in Tissamaharama Division, where the JVP holds its only Pradeshiya Sabha in the country. In cooperation with CARE, who has supplied all building materials, the JVP very quickly built a well-managed camp, proving its ability to govern under difficult circumstances. When providing support in Hambantota District, donors should be aware of these potential political dynamics and should find ways of ensuring that they engage actively with key stakeholders like Helping Hambantota, TAFREN, and local political parties, while keeping in mind the dangers of political patronage or bias. A failure to develop this awareness could inadvertently nourish social tensions and result in cases of de facto discrimination.

23. **Subsidiarity.** Subsidiarity allows for locally appropriate solutions and relieves bottlenecks caused by heavy workloads at the central level. In addition, local decision-making fosters more effective coordination between the government, civil society, NGOs, and local communities during the planning and implementation phases. While the reluctance of the center to devolve authority to the local levels is a nationwide problem, the apparent political competition in Hambantota serves to exacerbate the issue, leaving entrepreneurial public servants and elected officials vulnerable to scapegoating and exclusion.

24. While many decisions affecting Hambantota are made in Colombo, we found that some divisions did exhibit a willingness to adapt solutions to local needs. This was clearly apparent in the Tangalle Divisional Secretariat, where the DS had taken the initiative to develop a participatory system used to make decisions about potential relocation, rebuilding, and compensation. The DS was clearly aware of the local and international donor work in her division and, when asked, was able to quickly provide a wide variety of written information to the team including her own office's research and that conducted by NGOs and other civil society groups. The Tangalle DS's choice to bring affected communities into the decision-making process had clearly had positive effects. Unlike the communities in Hambantota itself, Tangalle residents interviewed by the team were

knowledgeable about their options and were relatively happy with the way that the housing/relocation decisions had been made.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

25. **Livelihoods.** From destroyed fishing boats, to damaged guesthouses, to lost inventories, thousands of livelihoods have been shattered by the tsunami in Hambantota. Coastal economies, especially the tourism and fishing sectors, were devastated. Before the tsunami many of the income generating activities were informal and part-time, but were crucial to meet household needs. To restore livelihoods, tsunami-affected households require: (1) short-term economic opportunities that generate quick cash flow; (2) replacement of productive assets damaged or lost; (3) financial services so that income generating activities are self-sustaining; (4) the skills needed to earn a living in the altered economic landscape.

26. Continued support to Cash for Work programs in the short to medium term is essential. Evidence of ongoing programs of this type was clear in many divisions of Hambantota. The cessation of those activities at this point would create additional strain on affected populations. It does appear, however, that the work of clearing debris in Hambantota is almost complete and that more substantive tasks should be found for these groups as reconstruction processes get underway. Cash for Work beneficiaries could be trained to participate in a variety of reconstruction activities, including construction, mobile healthcare, or education programmes. Care should be taken to ensure that alternative options are available to those who are physically weaker or disabled.

27. The second priority for the first year of reconstruction is the provision of assistance for small and medium enterprises, including those that disabled persons might wish to set up. In-kind grants, or “infusions”, of productive assets will allow businesses to more quickly re-engage in local markets. For households who have lost a breadwinner, new income-generating skills and market linkages will be essential for survival, particularly for widowed women. Those we interviewed preferred to engage in productive activities inside the home, enabling them to care for young children during the day. While many declared an ability to sell these items from their homes, a more profitable option would be to encourage the development of local women’s associations with linkages to more robust market settings – providing both increased income and valuable social networks for involved women.

28. **Needs of fisher folk.** The lack of coordination is creating a troubling pattern in the fisheries sector in the Hambantota District. This is a particularly unwieldy field, given the number of donors involved – both those experienced in foreign aid and those less so. Boats are painted with the insignias of a variety of organizations, ranging from groups like “Friends of Sri Lanka in New Albany” to major bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors. Government officials in the Helping Hambantota office seem confident that all former boat owners are registered, making it impossible for others to receive boats. This is not the story told by the fishermen however. One man interviewed claimed that on that day there were six boats donated to local residents, four of them to individuals who had not previously been fishermen. Former boat owners tell us that their former employees, who had previously operated their boats, are the new recipients. Some fear that as orders are filled and boats are distributed in the area, the number of boats in Hambantota will increase significantly, create more competition which will lead to a reduction in the price of fish, and increase the possibility of over-fishing the shallow seas.

29. This lack of donor coordination in the fisheries sector must be corrected as soon as possible. Given the variety of players, it will be difficult for the government to take the same

approach as with the housing sector. Failure to do so, however, could be detrimental to the future viability of the local fishing industry. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that boats are distributed only to former boat owners, and that a proper mix of single-day and multi-day boats is maintained to prevent over-fishing of the southern shoreline.

30. **Education.** In Sri Lanka, there are two categories of schools – national and provincial. Emergency education support to Hambantota District has been coordinated entirely by the National Ministry of Education in Colombo. The team observed that, in most cases, the Provincial Department of Education and the Zonal Education Offices were not included in decision-making. We received reports that the schools themselves were not always aware of what aid had been promised. In order to ensure that locally appropriate decisions are made, a consultative process should be designed that involves provincial and national education authorities, as well as community members and affected children.

31. According to UNICEF, all schools are currently functioning. The two schools that lost principals in the Tsunami, however, were having a more difficult time returning to 'business as usual'. In order to ensure a return to normalcy, teachers and principals should be trained in psychosocial support techniques, to more effectively engage in assisting the children.

32. The team spoke with a number of mothers who provided useful insights on educational priorities in Hambantota. First, they were clear that their children's education was essential to their family's future. Each expressed a concern that they were not currently able to afford school fees. Older youth were also worried that the extra tutoring often required in order to pass senior level exams would be too expensive, hampering their chances of moving on to the next levels, and eventually, to university. Based on these conversations, two priorities emerged: First, some help in meeting school fees is necessary, either by waiving the fees or offering a way for parents or children to "earn" school fees through volunteer work related to the school. Second, after-school assistance should be provided for youth who would like assistance preparing for major exams. Again, this could be a free service offered to those youth, or could be 'earned' through volunteer work.

33. **Housing.** Housing has proven to be a very controversial issue that must be handled with great sensitivity. First and foremost, the government must clarify the intended use of the excess houses noted earlier. Next, consultation must be improved between both the central and local government structures, and between the government and the affected communities. The Tangalle process provides a model that can be replicated by all divisions. This model contains five important elements that can help to diffuse existing tensions and growing resentment that exist elsewhere, particularly in Hambantota city:

1. Housing models and size are consistent.
2. Displaced people are encouraged, but not forced, to vacate their current property;
3. There is a clear, transparent process through which individual opinions and situations are considered; these opinions actually affect the outcome;
4. Options and procedures are *clearly* communicated to affected communities; and
5. Potential recipients can visit *completed* model homes.

34. Giving affected communities a choice will help to reduce the potential for tension caused by the dismemberment of existing social structures. The displaced come from different family networks and religious traditions and vary in land ownership and social status. Some previously lived in very modest temporary shelters, while others lived in more substantial two-story homes. Allowing choice and providing ways for families to apply for relocation in clusters will relieve the pressure on the GA's offices, which has been tasked with distributing houses.

35. Regardless of the future success of the GA's office in preserving social structures, an entirely new community will form in the new housing complexes. In the longer term, it is important to recognize that these are not only houses, but planned communities that must be formed, managed, and maintained for the well-being of all categories of residents. A wide variety of programming options can be implemented as part of community building and maintenance, including psychosocial play programs for children, women's associations, job training programs, and management committees for neighborhood facilities, utility services, etc. In an effort to engage host communities, these programs should be opened up to the surrounding areas as well.

36. **Water & Sanitation.** Work in the water and sanitation sector must progress on three fronts over the course of the next year. First, major water projects started pre-tsunami must continue in order to relieve the pressure on already limited water resources.¹³ Second, efforts should be made to ensure that temporary camps have access to running water and that damage to the sector's assets has indeed been repaired. While Hambantota's NWSDB (National Water Supply & Drainage Board) seemed certain that damaged water infrastructure had been fully repaired and that water needs in the camps were being met, interviewed camp residents assert that water is often not available after 6:30pm. The team was not able to confirm whether the NWSDB's claim to have repaired all damaged water infrastructure referred only to pipe-system damage, (which was relatively limited), or whether the repairs extended to communal well damage (which was much more significant, at 43.8 m LKR replacement cost).

37. The third focus of water and sanitation efforts during this reconstruction phase is to build the infrastructure to supply new settlements with accessible running water and sanitation facilities. The NWSDB has submitted a water supply plan to the central government with a target completion date of August 1, 2006. As work progresses, assessments should be completed in nearby communities to assess the current availability of water. Given the somewhat remote locations of several planned housing complexes, it is quite likely that current residents do not have running water. These areas should be included in the plans in order to avoid creating unnecessary tension between new residents and host communities.

38. The Hambantota office of the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) recommends individual wastewater and sewage pits for each home, as well as compost bins that could be used to fertilize individual gardens. The CEA would also like to facilitate neighborhood recycling points and a local recycling collection center in Hambantota district. Currently, material for recycling must be shipped to Colombo. A local recycling storage facility would both encourage environmentally friendly behavior and create local jobs.

39. **Health.** Government health staff are regularly monitoring the health situation and providing assistance to those affected and those living in temporary shelters. A Midwife and Public Health Inspector are visiting the camps on a daily basis and no severe illnesses have been reported. There is concern over the danger of drug distribution and abuse due to the opportunities that prevail in the area for drug traffickers to influence young people living in temporary shelters, as some do not have adequate security and supervision (with the exception of the Kirinda camp in the Tissa Division). In addition, sexually transmitted infections tend to spread faster where there is powerlessness, poverty and social instability. Hygiene standards are also a concern, and are critical in combating diarrheal diseases and intestinal worm infestations, reducing opportunistic infections, and improving maternal and child nutritional status. Public awareness campaigns could be implemented by camp

¹³ Before the Tsunami, major water purification projects were in place in Ambalantota and Tangalle.

residents, through cash-for-work programs, in order to educate affected communities about the dangers associated with these common post-disaster problems.

40. **Social Protection.** The social structures that existed before the tsunami have been severely disrupted. While the team did not hear direct reports of abuse, it is clear that many children, disabled people and women have lost the family structures that offer the most effective source of protection in the Sri Lankan social structure. Community-managed social protection mechanisms should be established through consultation, and a civic education campaign should work to inform vulnerable populations where to go for help in case of an emergency or abuse. Basic skills training and livelihood support for older youth and widows will also serve to decrease vulnerability to risky or illegal behavior.

41. **Loss Compensation.** Each family receives 15,000 LKR for the death of an individual family member, which is intended to cover funeral costs. Families that suffered the death of a breadwinner received an additional 5000 LKR to assist them with household expenses. The distribution procedures for these funds seemed clear. All families interviewed by the team had already received payment and had no residual complaints.

42. Compensation for loss of property and in particular, property within the 100 m buffer zone, was a much more undefined and controversial matter. As of mid-March, the GA's office was aware that funds had been distributed to the banks for the purpose of compensating affected families for loss of property, but the procedures for distributing those funds was yet unclear. The first priority of loss compensation is to clarify, and then to publicize, those procedures in order to ensure transparency.

43. **Governance Capacity Needs.** The unanimous conclusion of those consulted is that the single most important aspect of governance capacity needs relates to coordination and monitoring. Specifically, a data collection mechanism should be developed at the district level that can track affected individuals and their needs, as well as track the distribution and progress of aid. This innovation would help to avoid duplication, corruption, leakage, and the delays associated with the current ad-hoc nature of aid delivery. In Hambantota, the database and project staff to manage the data collection process could be housed in the office of the GA, with satellite offices in each affected Divisional Secretariat¹⁴. The collection and analysis should be closely coordinated with Helping Hambantota, the primary contact for NGO's working in the area. The GA's office does not currently have the staff to manage this undertaking, so it is essential that individuals with appropriate skills and energy be located to manage the process under the direction of the GA.

44. Training in consultation methods, including the consultation of "invisible" members of the community (in some cases, the disabled or women), would be of great value to both government and civil society staff. We often found that widely held assumptions in the District Secretariat's office and, in some cases the INGO community, about the needs/preferences of the affected people did not hold true for many people at ground level. While officials claimed that "most of the affected people in the 100 meter zone lived in shanties before, so they will be grateful for the new homes", we found evidence of a wide variety of structures in the affected areas. Prospective house recipients complained vigorously about the size and location of the homes in the new complexes. One resident claimed that government officials had come to speak with him, but that when he expressed his concerns, the conversation was quickly redirected. It is clear that government officials and NGO staff are quite dedicated and have worked non-stop since the tsunami without

¹⁴ It should be noted that the Grama Niladhari officer is currently collecting the data at the local level. Several people interviewed by the team mentioned that some residents are embarrassed to go to the GN to provide information. They explained that the GN is typically used to distribute aid to the poor, and non-poor Tsunami victims see it as a reduction in status to look to the GN for help.

receiving overtime pay, or sometimes even a “thank-you”. It is also evident, however, that organized, grassroots consultation has not been built into the process in a meaningful way.

45. **Coastal Protection.** In the short-term, the relevant authorities should take appropriate actions to protect the remaining intact sand dunes, mangrove stands and coral reefs, as well as implementing awareness programs for the local communities, highlighting the importance of maintaining natural coastal ecosystems to protect against natural disasters such as tsunamis, cyclones, etc. Non-biodegradable debris should be collected and disposed of in suitable locations and, when possible, the debris should be recycled for further use. Proper solid waste collection and wastewater removal methods need to be employed in both temporary housing areas and new construction sites to avoid adverse health impacts. Special attention must be given to removing debris that has accumulated in lagoons and coral reefs, so the communities that depend on these systems, mainly fishermen, can re-start their livelihood activities soon.

46. Reconstruction activities in sensitive coastal reservation areas, including banks and outlets of rivers and lagoons, low-lying beachfronts and in areas close to biological hotspots, must be prohibited. Propagules of invasive cactus that have been carried inland should be removed and burnt to avoid further establishment. As medium to long-term measures, areas where the eco-system was destroyed by the tsunami, as well as sensitive areas exploited by people prior to the tsunami, should be restored and regeneration encouraged. On the beachfront, *Casuarina* can be used as nurse vegetation allowing the stabilization of new and exploited dunes, but should later be replaced systematically with native dune and beach vegetation. It is necessary to take measures to replant the destroyed patches of mangroves. Some community members have already shown greater interest in ensuring that the vulnerable areas are restored. Restoration of home gardens should be encouraged during the rainy season, with multi-purpose and multi-storied vegetation that can act as a buffer and increase soil fertility. It is necessary that actions be taken by the relevant authorities to implement suitable solid waste disposal mechanisms. This will be necessary mainly in urban settings such as towns, resettlement sites, etc. with high population density and the possibility of large quantities of waste generation.

E. OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

47. **Livelihoods.** It would be useful to further develop cash for work programs to go beyond debris cleanup into more substantive areas, including construction, healthcare, sanitation training, and other civic education programs. In-kind grants of working assets to businesses that have lost assets can be promoted. Women, particularly widows, should be offered skills training and help to create links with the marketplace through women’s associations. Programs involving in-kind grants of productive assets will create similar coordination challenges as have been experienced in the fisheries sector. This will need to be addressed by a single coordinating body and information unit.

48. **Fisherfolk.** Enforced standards for boat donation will ensure a proper mix of single and multi-day boats. A central database must be created that enables donors to ensure that only former boat owners receive boats. Skills training should be offered for those who opt out of the fisheries industry due to increased competition created by the number of new boat owners. Improved coordination in the fisheries sector will admittedly slow the process of boat distribution. However, the long-term environmental and economic costs of proceeding without this investment could be much greater.

49. **Education.** Bi-weekly meetings attended by local, provincial and national school officials working in the Hambantota district would help planning and coordination. Meetings

should be used to create a two-year reconstruction plan for each affected school that includes new construction and curriculum changes. In the provincial schools, these meetings should be led by provincial education officials and attended by teachers, school principals and Ministry of Education representatives. Such a consultative process between provincial and national stakeholders in the education sector could open a forum for debate on issues that have previously been decided and may delay implementation. The long-term benefit, however, is the promotion of local responsibility and the assurance of aid that is suitable to local needs and the needs of particularly vulnerable children, including disabled children. After-school study programs for youth would help them prepare for major exams. This service could be offered free, or could be earned through volunteer work.

50. **Housing.** First, construction should stop until the GoSL clarifies, in writing, the purpose of the surplus houses and how they will be distributed. While this issue is being clarified, each affected division should develop a system similar to the Tangalle model, with household surveys and information distribution methods (radio announcements, newsletters, town meetings in camps) that inform recipients of their options and take into account their needs and preferences. As the process progresses, model homes should be built, so that recipients have a clearer idea of their options. The establishment of a survey application process promises, however, to be work-intensive. In Hambantota Division, where need is greatest and staff is already overworked, it is hard to imagine that the plan could be implemented at current staffing levels.

51. **Water and Sanitation.** Pre-tsunami water projects should be continued to relieve the burden on the already scarce water supply. Water Board staff should ensure that camps consistently have access to clean running water. Host communities and marginalized members of the community need to be included in water infrastructure development consultations associated with new housing. The inclusion of unaffected communities in the water pipeline infrastructure raises an important issue for those responding to reconstruction needs – to what extent should host communities be included in the delivery of aid?

52. **Health.** Camp security needs to be reinforced to guard against the dangers of drug distribution and sexual assault. Cash-for-work programs in civic education are needed to promote proper hygiene practices.

53. **Governance Capacity.** A reconstruction database in the GA's office with a sufficient number of additional staff that can track need and aid distribution is urgently needed. While a central database is essential to ensuring proper aid distribution, delivery cannot wait for such a system to be developed. Donors will have to bear the cost of undetected opportunistic behavior in the meantime, sharing information on common challenges through the working groups established by Helping Hambantota. Once a database and collection mechanism are established, donor organizations will also have to dedicate staff time and resources to ensuring that their activities are adequately captured. A feedback mechanism should also be established that links with local mediation councils trained to resolve local disputes.