

MALDIVES STATUS REPORT

31 January 2006

Introduction

Main stream FAO activities continued. In particular, the second phase distribution of agricultural inputs to remaining yet uncovered islands in the South of the country and bokkuraa construction progressed. Further measures have been taken among organizations with regard to coordination and collaboration. Some actions geared towards Avian Flu prevention and preparedness are being taken.

Coordination:

As envisaged during the November coordination meeting on livelihoods, FAO held a follow-up workshop on January 26. Participants from all major aid agencies still present in the Maldives for rehabilitation programmes attended the meeting. Highlight of the meeting was the attendance and full participation of the Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources (MFAMR) as the key actor in the delivery of assistance in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

The workshop's main purpose was to offer a platform for agencies to share views on what livelihoods meant to their respective organizations. This was done in a pragmatic way with the respective agencies informing on their current activities, the geographic locations of their actions and indicating their intentions for future activities. A matrix drafted by FAO encapsulating current activities by agency on an island basis across the archipelago was circulated and discussed. There was consensus regarding the usefulness of this instrument as a tool for more effective coordination, It was agreed that the matrix will be fine-tuned on the basis of contributions from the agencies. In particular, the Ministry advised considering the planning tool developed for the National Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (NRRP) and the scope for reconciling the categories in matrix with the NRRP. A key conclusion of this meeting was the commitment by the Ministry to assume responsibility for convening monthly coordination meetings of the development partners. In this regard, FAO Maldives committed to provide support to the Ministry in organising and servicing these meetings.

Follow-up discussions have been held with representatives from UNICEF, the British Red Cross and Italian Consulate to develop ideas and further explore the scope for FAO to implement projects funded by them or to play a specific technical assistance role in the field of agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Fisheries:

In the commercial boat yard where the bokkuraas are being constructed, 20 hulls and decks were completed and are being assembled. In the 3 islands where Community Based Organizations are building the 69 other bokkuraas, work is progressing and the bokkuraas are expected to be completed by end of February.

To date, the community in Kudahuvadhoon produced 6 hulls and 2 decks. The community in Naalafushi has produced 23 hulls and the deck construction is about to commence. The Maroshi community completed 15 hulls as well as other small items such as thwart, front under deck etc. Another month is required for that community to complete the 23 bokkuraas.

Distribution of FAO fishing gear is on-going on the basis of beneficiaries coming from their islands to Male to collect the items they are due. The beneficiary package includes: feather hooks; compasses; fins; navigation lights; snorkels; underwater torches; fishing lines and ropes. To date 225 (59%) of the damaged vessels needing assistance have benefited from the assistance. This represents about 11 250 people receiving aid.

Agriculture:

The target for the second phase distribution to the islands of the southern atolls was not reached. Indeed, stormy seas continue to hamper the finalisation of the distribution.

During the month of January, distribution also slowed down due to the holiday period which caused some delays in supplier deliveries to Male. However, plans and arrangements have been made for the continuation of the second phase to start in early February. That round of distribution is destined to complete the December distributions and to cover 7 new islands of Meemu Atoll (563 beneficiaries) representing all tsunami affected islands of that atoll, and 5 out of 10 affected islands of Laamu Atoll (427 beneficiaries).

All in all, at the completion of this round of distribution, a total of 2 833 families or 95% of the targeted beneficiaries, would have received the agriculture kit composed of (72 gm vegetable seeds; 100 Kg compost; 100 Kg manure; 29.5 Kg inorganic fertilizers; 1 hoe; 1 rake; 1 shovel; 1 sprayer; 1 bush knife; 1 watering can; 1 wheel barrow).

Similarly this round of allotments will result in a total distribution of 224 000 seedlings, roughly 50% of the total quantity of 460 000 to be distributed.

To date 12 of the 13 atolls affected by the tsunami have received the complete agricultural relief kit necessary for restarting their production effectively. All atolls are expected to be covered by the end of February.

Forestry:

Following the approval of the one year Emergency Project OSRO/GLO/502/FIN funded by Finland for an amount of US\$500 000, the consultant overseeing implementation of the project arrived in the country. He was accompanied by a forestry expert from the FAO RAP office on a 2-week inception mission. During this time, the operational plan is being developed and is to be submitted for endorsement to the authorities.

Avian Flu:

Following a risk assessment conducted in November and funded under the OSRO/MDL/504/CHA project, FAO is considering how to assist the authorities on this matter. Meanwhile, an officer from the Ministry of Health will attend FAO's Sub Regional Training Workshop on Diagnostic Laboratory Techniques for Avian Influence. FAO Maldives has been coordinating with UNDP Male for the recruitment of a UNV Veterinarian to assist the Ministry in this area.