

## THAILAND STATUS REPORT 31 January 2006

### Coordination:

A regional fisheries consortium has been established for the coordination of a fisheries and livelihood recovery programme in collaboration with relevant regional fisheries and aquaculture organizations. The FAO Regional Office in Bangkok also organized four regional workshops to identify a strategic framework for medium- and long-term tsunami rehabilitation in the region, thereby enhancing collaboration and coordination among the partners.

The FAO Regional Office expanded the function of its Tsunami Task Force with the establishment of a Tsunami Technical Coordination Unit. The activities of the Task Force will be supported and strengthened through the new regional project "Regional co-ordination and information management on strategies for early recovery of agriculture in coastal regions" (US\$800,000) which is funded through un-earmarked OCHA funds.

### Fisheries:

In the fisheries sector, FAO assisted the Government's efforts to re-establish sustainable fishery activities, rehabilitate affected/damaged areas and restore fisheries-based livelihoods. More specifically, fishers were assisted to resume fish harvesting for improved nutrition and income in the most affected provinces of southern Thailand, thereby reducing their dependence on food assistance and their vulnerability to financial crisis. FAO has distributed 800 fish cages, 180 000 fish fingerlings, 18 000 fish traps (crab, squid and fish traps), 3 320 sets of shrimp gill nets, 408 wood pieces for boat repair and 328 fish cage nets. In addition, to support a rapid re-establishment of sustainable income-generating activities by fisher folk, 430 boat engines and associated accessories are being supplied to 28 fisher groups in six provinces, which will then be provided on loan to 430 selected fisher folk. FAO is now moving towards a medium and longer-term post-tsunami rehabilitation phase. Under this new phase, two new recently approved FAO projects (US\$ 760,000) are supporting the government to undertake (i) a technical assessment to determine the fishing capacity level and (ii) a stakeholder analysis for implementing community-based sustainable coastal resource management as well as empowering coastal fishing communities for the development of their self-help capacities. The project will also enhance the coordination capacity of the Department of Fisheries (DOF) under a joint DOF-FAO post-tsunami rehabilitation coordination unit which is being established within the Department of Fisheries.

In November 2005, an additional 82 cage nets were distributed to beneficiaries in Phuket and Satun provinces. This activity completed the distribution of boat engines and fishing accessories. Follow-up of the utilization of the engines/accessories is an ongoing activity. Leasing agreements for 430 beneficiaries are being finalised. In January 2006, fish cage net sets and 20 sets of fish cage structure were delivered to beneficiaries in Puyu Island in Satun province.

## **Agriculture:**

Several low income farming communities in the affected regions lost their crops, livestock and production assets making it difficult for them to meet the immediate food needs of their families without external assistance.

The intrusion of sea water due to the tsunami and resulting soil salinity affected grasses (important as livestock fodder) and a range of crops including vegetables, young oil palm, rubber seedlings, rambutan, and mangosteen. The crops died within three to four weeks of sea water intrusion. By August 2005, FAO had delivered 247 tonnes of gypsum (natural calcium sulphate) to farmers. Gypsum application has improved the soil structure, thereby facilitating the leaching of salts from the rooting zone. A total of 15000 fruit seedlings (coconut, oil palm and cashew nut) were also given to the farmers. A total quantity of 1 052 tonnes of organic fertilizer was procured and distributed to tsunami-affected farmers to improve the soil organic content of their farm land and offset the effects of salinity. The distribution of 177 tonnes of animal feed and 1 500 mineral block pieces for livestock was also carried out to help livestock farmers. FAO has a target of helping over 1 600 farmers resume agriculture activities. FAO is now moving towards a medium-term rehabilitation phase through a new project (US\$ 323,480) for the implementation of an in-depth technical damage assessment in the agriculture sector and the identification of appropriate soil reclamation measures for medium/long-term post-tsunami rehabilitation.

Eighty Hydroponic and 30 net house vegetable production units have been delivered to tsunami-affected farmers under the "building-back-better" concept. In addition, 38 tonnes of gypsum, 7.7 tonnes of organic/chemical fertilizers and 4 450 fruit tree seedlings were handed over to tsunami-affected farmers in October 2005. In November 2005, training on hydroponic was provided to beneficiaries in Tambon Lamkean, Phang-Nga province.

All project inputs had been delivered to beneficiaries by the end of January 2006. Training on the practical use of salinity meters was organised for field officers of district and provincial DOAE and DLD stations on 26 Jan 2006 at Ban Lamkean School, Thai Muang district, Phang-Nga province.

In later February 2006, it is proposed to arrange training on the technical and management aspects of hydroponics for the 80 hydroponic beneficiaries in Thai Muang district.

## **Forestry:**

In early July 2005, an in-depth technical assessment of tsunami-affected mangroves and other coastal forests in south Thailand began under a new project (US\$220 000). The project's Plan of Operation was approved by the Government-chaired Project Steering Committee in August 2005 and the project inception meeting was held in September 2005. Assessment missions are continuing to obtain additional information for a final scientific and socio-economic assessment.

This project will also support development of Government capacity for integrated coastal land use planning and forest ecosystem management through the application of remote sensing and RS/GIS. All procurement actions were completed and the delivery of equipment for GIS facilities had taken place in early November 2005. During December 2005 and January 2006, all GIS and surveying instrument sets were delivered to the Phuket Mangrove Research and Development Station of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR). In December 2005, the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA) installed a GIS facility and conducted an eight-day training course on the introduction of GIS/RS for six local DMCR staff.

The Prince of Songkla University (PSU) also organized the first introductory course in RS/GIS for general public organizations as part of the project's public awareness programmes in December 2005.

Project progress reports and work plans were submitted to FAO by the end of January 2006.

In February 2006 it is planned to conduct an advanced training course in RS/GIS by the PSU for the same DMCR trainees. Study teams of the Faculty of Forestry and Faculty of Economics of Kasetsart University will also continue with their field work in February 2006. The PSU group will continue its public awareness activities on forest functions in conservations and mitigation.