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Asia-Pacific forestry focus

ADDRESSING THE FORESTRY NEEDS OF ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES AND SOWING SEEDS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT.

Forestry after the tsunami

The tsunami of December 2004 took over 200,000 lives and destroyed livelihoods and infrastructure all around the Indian Ocean.

Emergency measures were taken immediately to meet the essential needs of affected communities. Later, relief operations included efforts to rehabilitate natural resources including trees and forests, and to facilitate timber supply for reconstruction.

Among other tsunami damage, trees were snapped, uprooted and undermined by the waves and strong currents associated with the tsunami, and houses and fishing boats were destroyed. In addition to the physical damage, trees, particularly planted trees, were affected by soil salination.

Reports that intact coastal forests (including mangroves) had provided protection against the tsunami prompted some of the affected

countries to call for the establishment of coastal “buffer zones” or greenbelts.

Much coastal forest had been cleared or degraded in affected areas, prior to the tsunami. Bringing forests and trees back into the landscape to increase coastal protection and provide forest products and environmental services will help achieve the goal of “building back better”.

FAO is working to help achieve this vision by helping countries to incorporate forestry into their rehabilitation and reconstruction plans. FAO is encouraging an integrated approach, addressing intersectoral linkages between forestry, fisheries and agriculture. FAO is providing advice for technically sound forest planting and management, and is helping countries strengthen coordination among the various groups supporting rehabilitation.



FAO's tsunami related forestry work

Through its Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, FAO supports two forestry projects:

- “Forestry Programme for Early Rehabilitation in Asian Tsunami Affected Countries” funded by Finland.
- “In-depth assessment of mangroves and other coastal forests affected by the tsunami in Southern Thailand” funded by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs.

FAO is also supporting many fisheries, agriculture and sustainable development projects in tsunami affected countries. Work is coordinated and information shared through a Tsunami Task Force in the regional office and a Tsunami Technical Committee in FAO Headquarters.

FAO's regional tsunami forestry programme



The Finnish-funded "Forestry programme for early rehabilitation in Asian tsunami affected countries" has projects in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives and is also providing support to Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand.



WOOD SUPPLY FOR RECONSTRUCTION



The objectives of the regional Forestry Programme are:

- to provide forest and tree-derived benefits and income to address the needs of affected populations;
- to establish a sound foundation for long-term coastal forest rehabilitation and reforestation; and
- to improve Government capacity to ensure sustainable practices for supply of forest products and services.

In **Indonesia**, the project is supporting participatory planning and implementation of forestry activities in ten villages in Aceh Province. It is also assisting the government to address needs related to securing timber from sustainable sources for reconstruction (see right). FAO has been instrumental in facilitating improved coordination and cooperation among the main government agencies and groups concerned with forest rehabilitation and wood for reconstruction in Indonesia.

The project in the **Maldives** is supporting

a wide range of activities on six islands, from rehabilitating home gardens and mangroves, planting windbreaks and shade trees, and developing an island tree nursery. FAO is also assisting the government to develop a national forest strategy and strengthen its institutional capacity so as to provide a firmer foundation for forest management.

In **Sri Lanka**, the project is working through six district forest offices on the south and east coasts to assist villages in rehabilitating home gardens and planting coastal shelterbelts. The project is also providing support for increased coordination at district and national levels for forestry-related rehabilitation efforts.

At the regional level, the project is working to strengthen institutional capacities for forest rehabilitation and reforestation, providing technical advice, encouraging information sharing and improving coordination.

The programme will continue until the end of 2006. Further information can be found on the FAO tsunami website (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/tsunami>).

The Finnish programme is also assisting reconstruction in Indonesia by facilitating sourcing of wood for rebuilding houses, other infrastructure and fishing boats. The project has carried out assessments of wood demand and supply for reconstruction and identified various options for sourcing wood.

Guidelines for timber procurement, technical timber usage and legality standards have been developed, as has a list of wood suppliers.

FAO is currently providing technical advice to the Government of Indonesia on related policy issues and supporting development of a wood supply strategy.

Assessment of tsunami affected forests in Thailand

The project "In-depth assessment of mangroves and other coastal forests affected by the tsunami in Southern Thailand" is funded by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and executed by FAO.

The project is implementing an in-depth assessment of tsunami damage to mangroves and other coastal forests and their function in disaster mitigation to support integrated coastal area management in southern Thailand.

Work is also aimed at improving technical capacity in local government in relation to use of geographical information systems for integrated land use planning and forest

management and provision of information to improve public awareness on the ecological and economic functions of mangroves and other coastal forests. The project's duration is through June 2006.



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