

FAO FORESTRY

Finland supports FAO's tsunami rehabilitation assistance in the forest sector

In May 2005, the Government of Finland donated €3 million for a two-year programme implemented by FAO to assist the tsunami-affected countries of Asia with their forest-related rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. The programme will focus on the needs of the most affected countries – Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives – but will also promote cooperation among all affected Asian countries and strengthen their technical capacity through regional activities.

With the immediate relief phase behind them, affected countries are beginning to face the enormous challenges of restoring people's livelihoods and the resources on which they depend – including forest resources. Opportunities to maximize the contribution of forests and trees to local livelihoods and environmental sustainability can best be captured if they are adequately addressed in reconstruction planning from the outset.

The funding provided by Finland will be used to bridge the gaps during the transition from relief to longer-term development. The programme will assist countries with the development of forestry policies and plans for long-term reconstruction, and will provide comprehensive technical support in forest rehabilitation and reforestation, integrated coastal area management and wood supply for reconstruction.

Several affected countries have announced plans to establish forest greenbelts for coastal protection. Finding a balance among land uses and reconciling eventual greenbelts with existing land uses will be critical. FAO is advocating integrated coastal area management and a livelihoods approach. The Organization will assist with detailed land use planning, focused especially at the district and village levels, to ensure integrated and coordinated planning and implementation among the forestry, agricultural and fisheries sectors. FAO is encouraging rehabilitation and sound management of natural and planted forests, reforestation, replacement of trees in home gardens and re-establishment of live fences, in some cases to improve coastal protection and in others to provide a variety of benefits, including forest products for household use and income generation.

Reconstruction of houses and other infrastructure will require huge quantities of timber and wood products, and there is great national and international

concern that such wood come from legal sources. This concern is particularly heightened in Indonesia's Aceh Province, where great amounts of wood are needed, wood from local legal sources is limited and cutting of the local forest resources is difficult to control. The Government of Indonesia is aware of the problem and is taking measures to reduce the risk of illegal logging in Aceh, while encouraging the use of nationally produced wood from legal sources. In conjunction with the Government of Indonesia, industry groups and non-governmental organizations, FAO is developing wood procurement guidelines, technical specifications for wood products to be used for reconstruction and lists of suppliers of wood from legal sources in Indonesia.

The programme funded by Finland will also promote capacity building, regional coordination and information sharing among affected countries. Information on the extent and impact of damage to coastal forests and trees is still limited in many countries. The programme will support forest damage assessments in the affected areas as well as analyses of the contributions of forests and trees to coastal protection and the role of forests in integrated coastal area management. It will also help disseminate technical information on subjects such as mangrove and coastal forest rehabilitation and the scientific basis of using forests for coastal protection.