

Report of the Workshop on Fishing Communities and Their Livelihoods in the Tsunami Aftermath

Phuket Royal City Hotel, Phuket, 14-15th February 2005

¹Opening ceremony

Welcome address by the Governor of Phuket Province

The Governor of Phuket welcomed representatives of local, national and international organizations and thanked them their expressions of support. He stated that the two-day meeting would be an opportunity for all to share experiences and bridge gaps with communities. He remarked that all groups would need to work together for the objective of rebuilding the livelihoods of affected people to be met.

Remarks by Khun Sanchai Tandawanit, National Co-Director, CHARM

CHARM advised that the objective of the workshop was to allow donors to meet and exchange with concerned parties, which include community representatives, Tambon Administration Organizations (TAO), universities, local and international NGOs and donor organizations. DOF had been providing emergency assistance since 26 December, including in recovery of casualties, fishing gear and property. A coordinating center had been established by DOF to provide relief and support to local fisher communities, and plans established to meet their urgent needs as well short, medium and long-term rehabilitation.

Remarks by the Chairman: Dr Sitdhi Boonyaratpalin, Director General of Department of Fisheries

Dr Boonyaratpalin welcomed all participants to the workshop and thanked the organizers, and both local and international partners without whose cooperation the meeting would not have been possible. He advised that the Deputy Minister, H.E. Newin Chidchob was unable to attend and extended his apologies.

Preliminary damage assessments of affected areas were completed by 11 January. More than 1 billion baht had been earmarked to fund relief and compensation for fishing communities of which 210 million baht had already been issued among 433 villages in line with the financial regulations of the government. This funding was sufficient only to partially compensate people for their losses. Many people were unregistered at the time of the tsunami and had not been able to access compensation at all.

Many offers of assistance had been made. However, most donors did not have clear information on actual needs and lack mechanisms to deliver assistance directly. The workshop was intended to facilitate direct linkages between donors and affected communities and to foster partnerships between them. It would also provide an opportunity for organizations to share information and discuss preparation of a database to coordinate relief and rehabilitation activities. Dr Boonyaratpalin thanked all who had supported these initiatives, noting that he would consult with CHARM regarding expansion of the project. He declared the workshop open.

¹ This report is based on an audio translation of the original proceedings held in Thai language

Introduction to the workshop by the Moderator, Dr Bancha Pongpanit

Dr Pongpanit advised that the focus of the workshop was fisherfolk in coastal communities. The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Assess the damage and existing recovery initiatives, in particular those started by the villages and NGOs and TAO.
2. Help donors, TAO and NGOs to identify common solutions to channel assistance directly to the villagers.

Participants would strive to identify a common platform for medium and long-term cooperation, and mechanisms through which the different groups represented could collaborate. Importantly, the workshop would try and bridge the gaps between donors and affected villages. Dr Pongpanit noted that the workshop was the first major meeting that had given priority to communities to express their opinion. He advised that a meeting of the Federation of Southern Fisherfolk had concluded that the livelihoods of affected communities should be restored within three months, prior to the onset of the monsoon.

Fishery perspective and fishing community needs presented by DOF

Dr Waraporn Prompoj, Chief of International Collaboration, Department of Fisheries

Dr Prompoj presented an overview of the DOF Fisheries Rehabilitation Plan, which was broken into phases covering immediate needs (3 months), short-term rehabilitation (4-6 months), medium-term rehabilitation (6-12 months) and long-term rehabilitation (1-2 years onwards). DOF would make a database of assessment and needs information available on the web to provide facilitate coordination between donors and beneficiary groups.

Countries and international organizations that were currently involved or discussing possible assistance included:

Norway

- Offshore fish cage culture using modern technologies that withstand high wave action encountered in offshore sites.
- Planning for coastal zone rehabilitation.

Canada

- Chulaphorn research institute – 6.4 million baht in assistance pledged for three countries.

Germany

- Assistance to SME's in fisheries and aquaculture. Concept notes or outlines for projects were requested to be submitted to the German embassy.

FAO

- Assistance for direct fishery and aquaculture inputs through project assistance.
- Small-scale equipment and boat repair materials for around 700 people in six provinces.
- Aquaculture materials for 600 persons involved in cage culture.
- Other FAO involvement included: A regional meeting on tsunami needs in affected countries 28th February and subsequent meetings in Rome, eg. the Committee on Fisheries.

ARC International

- Assistance with vessels in a number of affected areas in Phang Nga and Ranong provinces – including around 300 for Ban Nam Kem. Vessels would be a mixture of wood and fiberglass, and constructed locally. Initial feedback from fishers had been that the design required some modification to suit local conditions. The operation of the project will be January-May, with further discussion on the 16th in the Ban Nam Kem village.

Briggs & Stratton Corp.

- Would provide 200 small boat engines. Follow up discussions will be held on the appropriate sort of engine.

California USA

- Assistance with fishing gear (2.4 million baht).

Czech Republic

- A wood company is willing to provide material to construct housing etc, and the embassy was considering provision of some engines.

NGO networks, local groups/organizations and TAO assessments on the tsunami impact as well as planned an ongoing support for coastal communities

Community Organization Development Institute (CODI)

Mr. Amporn Geawnoo advised that CODI was a social organization under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. CODI's initial efforts were on coordinating initiatives among NGOs and getting people into temporary shelters in the most affected areas. Eleven camps had been established in Tuk Kua Pa district, with about 1,300 families sheltering there. People from Koh Phi Phi were also living in mosques in Krabi. Some temporary housing had already been built, an important step in providing the security necessary for people to contemplate and plan their future. Construction of permanent housing was a sensitive issue that required careful planning with involvement of many agencies and active participation of the people, particularly for those who are cannot return to their original location. Issues of location and layout must meet community requirements. CODI's other assistance had been in helping provide reparations to people that had lost boats or needed repairs from craftsman. It was estimated that this work would take another two months or so to complete.

There were labour issues relating to the loss of family members and capacity to look after children or to seek work. Loss of elderly members who traditionally care for children allowing adults to work was another aspect of this.

Communities need to be encouraged to develop their own leadership, and to develop civic organizations that will enable them to solve their own problems as it is not sustainable for external agencies to provide support indefinitely.

Save Andaman Network

Mr. Parkpoom Vitantirawat advised that the network was an association of a large number of NGOs from throughout Thailand. The core group was based around NGO's active in the

affected provinces, with the wider network now also assisting. The basic operating principle of the network was to assist people to renew their livelihood and become self-sufficient in solving their own problems. The network has been active in about 100 affected villages.

Communities that were well organized prior to the tsunami have been better able to cope with the disaster. Some badly affected places such as Ban Nam Kem did not have strong community groups to lead recovery. Formation of such groups should be encouraged to strengthen local coordination and ensure that redevelopment is sustainable and carried out in a way that reflects the people's wishes.

The initial delivery of assistance was seen as haphazard and poorly coordinated. The selection of beneficiaries had been a difficult issue often given to the TAO or village headman and had created divisions within communities. Save Andaman recommended that affected communities be assisted to develop a working committee that is capable of making decisions that are equitable and reflect internal needs and priorities. Communities would initially require assistance to establish such groups. An important objective is to move communities as quickly as possible away from dependency on external aid to self-sufficiency.

A central coordinating system is needed to provide donors with information on needs and people requiring priority assistance, as they do not have mechanisms to gather this information. The Save Andaman network would perform this role. In terms of priorities, current needs could be categorized as follows:

Urgent needs:

- Support for food, schooling and financial assistance for people that cannot earn during the next three months.
- Repair and replacement of fishing boats, engines and gear to enable people to resume their livelihoods. Some 32 boatyards were engaged in repairs. Boat repairs and fishing-related assistance need to be completed by the end of May.
- Temporary shelter for the first few months.

Medium term needs:

- Permanent accommodation - the location and design of the housing must be acceptable to the beneficiary. There had been some problems in that builders want to construct houses in their own way, rather than according to the wishes of the residents.
- Land rights are a key issue to the security of many Muslim communities and indigenous tribes that historically have not registered land claims with the government. State land could be leased to affected people that have no documented claim on a long-term basis.
- Freshwater supplies must be rehabilitated in areas in which they have been salinized.

Long term needs:

- Restoration of livelihoods and rehabilitation of the natural resource base.

The Save Andaman representative closed noting that media reports had been creating a false impression that the situation in affected communities is now stabilized and that immediate assistance requirements had now been met. In many cases the assistance that had been

pledged had not yet reached communities. There were still urgent requirements for assistance including for critical needs such as emergency housing.

Mr. Anake Pansakul – Chairman Fishermen’s Association & TAO Satun

Mr. Anake informed the workshop that the federation had been visiting affected communities and compiling information to guide immediate relief efforts and planning for recovery. The Federation was coordinating with the TAO and provincial authorities, with other NGOs and with the private sector to raise essential supplies, and with different state agencies providing assistance and compensation.

The most immediate need was the restoration of fishing equipment to enable people to work. The federation had been cooperating with the Siam Cement company, which was building shipyards to be operated by local boat builders, and coordinating craftsman from different villages to gather resources and wood for boat repair. The federation were relying heavily on the traditional knowledge of the villagers and craftsman as different construction techniques are used in different areas. Two model floating shipyards had been built in Satun and some 119 boats repaired.

Mr. Phanya Anuntakul – fisher from Ban Nam Kem

Mr. Phanya informed the workshop that a number of community groups have been established in relation to issues such as construction of shipyards, repair of fishing equipment and aquaculture cage farms. Boat and gear repairs were in progress though constrained by financial resources. There was a shortage of basic equipment and cash to meet operational expenses for supplies such as fuel and ice. He advised that direct financial assistance is the most practical way to help civil society groups engaged in recovery as it can be put to use immediately, with revolving funds providing a useful mechanism to sustain these activities in the long term. He indicated that the channel required dredging to allow boats passage out to sea.

The Chair observed that every village is different and these differences should be respected. Each village has a different situation and needs and preferred ways of working. Those seeking to provide support should not seek to impose a universal format of work, as different communities will require different solutions.

Compilation of relief efforts and support requirements for coastal communities by working groups

The workshop divided into six working groups according to province, each with a facilitator and rapporteur. Groups were asked to categorize issues and potential responses according to the level of impact to assist donors to target assistance efforts. On return, each working group made a brief presentation summarizing needs within affected communities in each province.

The outcomes of the working groups, which constitute a major output of the workshop, are summarized in table form in Annex 1.

Additional issues raised in the discussion were as follows:

The TAO informed the workshop of arrangements for issuing compensation / financial assistance. Different categories of assistance are available depending on whether individuals have received prior support for previous occupational projects, for people that run small beachside business, and for those with larger businesses.

A soft loan scheme had been announced the Department of Local Authority and Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, for people that would like to engage in their own businesses, via the Government Savings Bank. This scheme would be available from 18 February onwards.

Cabinet had approved 1.2 billion baht for public works and repairs to infrastructure. Implementation of this work will be by Tambon Authority Organizations, with funding likely to arrive by the end of February. Those groups with particular interests in environmental restoration were requested to discuss the issue with the TAO, to identify communities requiring this kind of assistance.

The Chair of the Ranong Fishermen's Society informed the workshop that revolving community funds were necessary to provide startup capital for many activities. For example, fish farmers must purchase feed and other inputs for many months before they can sell their crop and recoup their investment. The issue of illegal fishing gear was also discussed. With large-scale replacement of gear underway there is a need to ensure that the new gear complies with fisheries regulations.

Day 2: Introduction by the Chairman: Dr Jarantada Kanasuta, Deputy Director, DOF

Dr. Kanasuta informed the workshop that the first round of compensation for fishers had been completed with a second round to be released shortly. The government had also given special approval for currently unregistered fishers to register themselves in order to gain access to the next round of compensation, and receive assistance in the event of a future disaster. DOF was negotiating availability of soft loans to assist medium- and large-scale fishing operators and shrimp hatcheries, which would likely be on the order of several million baht.

With regards to donor assistance, DOF's primary role was as an intermediary to help donors coordinate and deliver appropriate assistance directly to affected communities. DOF would compile a comprehensive database of damage to fishing communities by the end of the month. The database will detail assistance offered and rendered to help avoid duplication of effort. It will include information from the TAO, NGOs and other local groups.

Dr Kanasuta advised that DOF, in collaboration with CHARM and FAO, would establish an information center to assist organizations involved in relief and rehabilitation activities to coordinate their activities, identify vulnerable groups and target delivery of assistance. The information center would be based in the Fishery Research Centre in Ao Makham, Phuket. DOF would provide office facilities, a computer and database system and internet access. Support would also be provided through the Foreign Relations Department of DOF in Bangkok (focal point Dr. Waraporn Prompoj).

Remarks by EU: Erik Habers, Counsellor

Mr. Habers informed the workshop that EU had been active in relief efforts throughout the region and that members of the public had also raised substantial funds. He remarked that finding ways to ensure that funds reach affected people directly was a challenge, and welcomed the workshop as an important step in bringing donors and stakeholders together.

Reporting from NGOs, local groups, networks and organizations with TAO support

Save Andaman Network

An overview of the formation of the Save Andaman Network and its activities in response to the tsunami was presented by Dr. Bancha Pongpanit. He advised that the network was an alliance of six core local government and non-profit organizations and 44 national organizations formed specifically to provide assistance to coastal communities affected by the tsunami. Save Andaman's goals are to:

- Facilitate the villagers to organize themselves through direct participation
- Facilitate community revival
- Assist with sustainable long-term development
- Turn crisis into opportunity

The scope of Save Andaman's assistance is support to local communities and restoration of the environment. The network was currently focused on providing basic necessities and tools essential for emergency relief, restoration of livelihoods and redevelopment.

The network had surveyed around 400 villages, some 40 of which had been badly affected. The survey work still had some gaps, with the plight of some small or remote communities still not adequately recorded. The network had been active in around 100 affected villages. It's short- and medium-term plan was to assist with restoration of housing, boats and fishing gear, aiming for completion prior to the onset of the monsoon in May. Estimated funding required to complete the workplan was estimated at around 150 million baht of which around 30 million had already been received. Revolving funds were seen as a useful mechanism for sustaining recovery activities for the long term. Donors were encouraged to allow flexibility in the use of funds so that they could be used in the most appropriate manner and according to current need, rather than requiring that funds be spent on specific activities.

The Siam Cement Company had assisted with the establishment of seven shipyards, benefiting 31 villages throughout four provinces. Some shipyards had now completed their work and would be moved to new locations. The network was seeking assistance to establish 30 more, as at least 1,500 boats still required repair. ARC International had agreed to provide materials to build around 800 new boats.

Total damage to housing was estimated at around 5,000 houses. Save Andaman aimed to rebuild approximately 500 houses, about 50 of which had been already been completed.

FAO/NACA/SEAFDEC consortium and EU/RTG-CHARM co-strategy

Consortium to Restore Shattered Livelihoods in Tsunami-Devastated Nations (CONSRN)

Dr Simon Funge-Smith outlined the establishment of CONSRN, which has endeavored to provide a common information base on impacts in fisheries following the tsunami. The core consortium partners are the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Network of aquaculture Centres in the Asia Pacific (NACA), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC), the Bay of Bengal Programme and WorldFish Centre. CONSRN is now moving away from assessments, which are now being conducted more thoroughly at the national level, towards providing advice to development organizations on the most appropriate support for the fisheries and aquaculture sector in affected countries. In

Thailand, CONSRN is working with national partners to provide a forum for the rehabilitation effort.

Coastal Habitats and Resources Management (CHARM Project)

Dr Yve Henocque provided an overview of the CHARM Project's National Co-management Initiative in Thailand, a five-year partnership between the Government of Thailand and the EU. CHARM had adopted both a top-down and bottom-up approach, with local government (TAO) and provincial level governments (PAO) playing a key role in the decentralization and co-management approach. CHARM promoted governance and knowledge as the two pillars of co-management. Dr Henocque indicated that the CHARM project was willing to support the concept of an Andaman Forum and will contribute to the establishment of the information centre proposed by DOF.

The information center will perform four roles:

- i) Compile information on what assistance that has been given, to where and to whom.
- ii) Assist donor organizations from abroad to identify needs, vulnerable groups and mechanisms for delivering assistance directly to those who need it.
- iii) Follow up monitoring of recovery in affected communities.
- iv) Evaluating the effectiveness of assistance with a view to improving future delivery.

CHARM would provide staff and play a supporting role in the operation of the center, which would be hosted by DOF in the Andaman Fisheries Research Centre. It was stressed that the center would play a facilitation role in bringing groups together to share information and work collaboratively. It was requested that development partners share information on their activities with the center.

Discussion on proposals and mechanisms to support them

The moderator requested that more detail be provided on the community needs and activities, to facilitate action from donors. The CHARM National Coordinator undertook to assist in adding further detail to the tables where they do not adequately reflect the needs of communities. She suggested that further consultations should be undertaken at the local level to ensure that detailed and accurate information on the community needs is available. The moderator requested that participants actively contribute further information to the tables about the communities.

The workshop noted that the key actors in the recovery process are the affected people themselves, and that they must be engaged in decision-making processes relevant to their livelihoods and welfare. It was suggested that government agencies should try to make the criteria for receiving assistance as flexible as possible, for example in regard to those who are currently unregistered. It was noted that NGOs could play an important role in bridging gaps in these areas.

The Moderator advised the workshop that community views on the issue of adoption of orphans was generally that they prefer relatives to look after the children, or where this is not possible, that they be fostered only to well-respected and trusted families. Further comments from participants were as follows:

Phuket Community Radio

Suggested that shelters or temporary accommodation for fishing communities should be constructed in areas with ready access to the sea. It was also suggested that land should be appropriately zoned with regards to safe placement of residential areas and with due regard for conservation of the environment.

Mangrove Action Program (MAP)

Mr Jim Enright noted that there had been little discussion on the state of the supporting natural resources such as seagrass beds, coral reefs and mangroves, which may have been damaged. He advised that mangrove rehabilitation programs should be carried out with due regard for the species endemic to the area, preferably using natural hydrological restoration techniques. He indicated that MAP would be pleased to share information and cooperate with groups interested in mangrove restoration.

DOF responded that the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources had taken the lead on issues relating to coral reef and coastal habitat, through Task Force No. 1. The Save Andaman Network advised that they were taking environmental factors into consideration, for example by sourcing timber for boat repairs responsibly.

Norwegian Embassy

The representative appreciated the Save Andaman Network's coordinating activities and contribution to efficient use of resources. He advised that the capacity of communities to coordinate and manage their own problems must be further developed, and remarked that Thailand was fortunate to have a proactive Fisheries Department concerned with development issues.

USAID

The representative advised that USAID would focus on livelihoods and income generating activities for affected communities. He suggested that rehabilitation efforts should aim to improve the sustainability of communities and to rebuild the natural resource base on which they depend. He welcomed proposals with regards to improving the sustainability of livelihoods or creation of alternatives to reduce pressure on natural resources. He further advised that the United Nations Environment Program would shortly convene a meeting in Cairo to develop a set of key principles to guide the sustainable reconstruction of coastlines.

Canadian Embassy

The representative welcomed the workshop's focus on giving affected communities the opportunity to participate in discussions on relief and rehabilitation. She advised that the Canadian Government would prioritize some of its contribution towards restoration of coastal environments. There would also be a small projects fund to support activities within communities.

ARC International

Mr Gary Dahl noted that the Andaman Forum would provide a valuable opportunity for donors to coordinate activities with affected villages. He indicated that ARC would be pleased to work with the forum and other groups involved in the rehabilitation activities.

Small Fishers Association of Thailand

The representative welcomed the workshop as an opportunity for local groups to meeting with national and international organizations, and representatives from other affected

communities. He advised that the association represents both small and large-scale fishers, and that it was willing to coordinate with government agencies and other organizations to help deliver direct support. He advised that many small-scale fishers have been unable to access assistance, and that a local fishers group would be formed in Ban Nam Kem village.

United Nations Development Program

An overview of UNDP's response was given. Actions have included surveys of affected areas, remove of marine debris, and assistance to affected communities in Koh Patom, Kuraburi District. The representative noted that there is a tendency for the tourism industry to displace the livelihoods of indigenous groups as it grows. Work is underway with Chulalongkorn University to develop a strategy for sustainable management of the marine environment, and also with CODI to develop a co-management strategy of natural resources on Koh Lanta.

Fishers group from Krabi

The representative advised that the intrusion of large-scale trawlers fishing into zones reserved for small-scale users is a concern. He indicated that replacement of fishing gear would be of no use if the fisheries resources are not managed sustainably.

The Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute Foundation (GSEI)

The representative advised that this was an NGO working in Krabi to develop an educational curriculum with the government. A database had been prepared of children who are not currently supported and need surrogate care. Donors willing to support orphans were requested to make contact. The group will bring children from affected provinces to a youth camp in March this year to provide a platform for young people to come together and share their views. Support was requested for the activity, which is intended to aid in the mental rehabilitation of the children.

Koh Yao representative

The representative advised that loss of fishing gear and economic necessity had forced fishers to take up older, illegal equipment. Financial assistance was requested while repairs were underway and to replace illegal gear to comply with fishing regulations. The need to protect the natural resource base, and the assist communities to organize to manage their own resources was stressed.

Malteser

It was advised that Malteser was an NGO providing health services, mainly in Phang Nga Province but with some projects in Phuket. The group expressed concerned that the needs of widows who, as a result of their vulnerability, are not necessarily able to access compensation schemes and assistance should not be overlooked.

Moo 5, Koh Sai Dum

The workshop was advised that two communities with around 119 medium-large vessels engaged in push-net fishing activities are not represented in the list prepared by the workshop, and have not received much assistance. It was requested that they be included in the tables so that donors are made aware of their needs. Funding was requested to assist the fishers of these communities to modify their fishing gear to comply with the law.

Fisher representative

The issue of unlicensed vessels was most serious among the small-scale fishers. It was acknowledged that large-scale vessels have suffered as well, though these operators tend to have greater access to credit and savings that may permit them to sustain themselves through the initial period. Many families had not yet received compensation from state agencies and acceleration of assistance was requested.

Trang Federation of Fisherfolk

The federation advised that assistance could be used most effectively in revolving funds to support ongoing repair work in shipyards and other direct mechanisms to restore livelihoods.

Ban Nam Kem District

A fish farmer advised that compensation arrangements for fish cages were inadequate. Many farmers had already been in debt prior to the tsunami and now face serious difficulties. The Save Andaman Network explained that their current resources are only sufficient to meet the basic needs, and that the cost of replacing cages is very high particularly when stock loss is considered.

Wrapping up and conclusions

Ms. Rewadee Prasertcharuensuk, Save Andaman Network, summarized the discussions as follows:

The needs of survivors varies between areas although there are many basic needs in common. Immediate priorities were:

- Basic necessities (food, housing and water supply).
- Fast and equitable compensation for the repair or replacement of boats, engines and fishing gear for small-scale fisherfolk.

Additional needs and issues included:

- Accurate information in order to coordinate the effective and timely delivery of the considerable relief and support resources that were available.
- Support for orphans and widows that may have lost the major income earner for their family, or have difficulty in working and looking after their children.
- Legal issues regarding fishing gear, land rights and ownership of property, registration of fishers and vessels and access to compensation.
- Indirect impacts on people who may not have lost property, but whose lives have been disrupted in other ways.
- Using the widespread need for gear replacement as an opportunity to shift fishers to legal / more sustainable equipment.
- Development of alternative and sustainable livelihoods for people.

There was a need to address the root cause of these issues, some of which had existed before the tsunami. It was essential to ensure that assistance did not weaken recipients or make them more vulnerable. Assistance should empower people to become more independent and solve their own problems. Strong community leadership should be encouraged in areas where it is lacking and decision-making undertaken in a participatory manner involving the communities and other actors in the process.

Problems must be addressed on a variety of scales from local to national. There were many networks and other mechanisms for delivering assistance, and a partnership approach was needed with groups working together. Development of a database was required to manage allocation of resources in an efficient and equitable manner. The Andaman Forum would provide a mechanism for coordinating rehabilitation efforts and pursuing partnerships, and also to turn proposals into concrete actions.