

Proceedings

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

The tsunami that struck countries in the Indian Ocean region on 26 December 2004 caused severe damage to life and livelihood. The impact on fishing communities in affected countries was particularly severe. Apart from loss of life and injury, many households dependent on fisheries lost their houses, craft, gear, equipment and other means of livelihoods. Estimates indicated that damages to the fishing and aquaculture industry were substantial, to the order of US\$568 mn in India, US\$511 mn in Indonesia, US\$335 mn in Sri Lanka, about US\$139 mn in Thailand and about US\$25 mn in Maldives.

It is well known that while natural disasters make no distinction, the ability to face them and recover from them differs substantially, depending on the social, economic, environmental and political reality. Clearly, the damage from the Indian Ocean tsunami was much greater than it should have been, because of certain underlying realities facing fishing communities along the coast.

If longer-term resilience to natural disasters has to be increased, rehabilitation interventions would need to take into account, and address, issues requiring interventions of a longer-term nature.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the interventions that have taken place to rehabilitate the fisheries sector and communities dependent on fisheries and to identify the emerging issues/challenges, ICSF commissioned studies in four countries, namely, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India, in October 2005. In addition to these four studies, ICSF also commissioned a study in India on “The Role of Traditional *Panchayats* in Coastal Fishing Communities in Tamil Nadu, with Special Reference to their Role in Mediating Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation.”

These studies were presented at the *Regional Workshop on Post-tsunami Rehabilitation of Fishing Communities and Fisheries-based Livelihoods* held in Chennai, India on 18 and 19 January 2006. The workshop provided a constructive space for dialogue between fishworker organizations, NGOs, policymakers and representatives of multilateral agencies, from India,

Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Maldives. It was aimed to:

- analyze the status of rehabilitation efforts in the fisheries sector and fishing communities; and
- identify issues that need to be addressed in ongoing rehabilitation projects vis-à-vis the fisheries sector for sustaining livelihoods in the longer term.

A one-day meeting of fishworker organizations and NGOs working with fishing communities in tsunami-affected countries was held on 17 January, prior to the regional workshop. The meeting was meant to:

- provide an opportunity for participants from various countries to share experiences and learn from one another; and
- enable participants to agree on basic issues that need to be addressed by ongoing rehabilitation interventions, some of which are likely to be country-specific.

NGO Meeting

The one-day NGO meeting was held at the YWCA Conference Hall, Chennai. The programme for the meeting can be found in Appendix 2 and a report on the meeting is in Appendix 3. A total of 50 delegates participated in the meeting. The meeting enabled organizations working with fishing communities to share experiences and to learn from one another. It also took stock of rehabilitation interventions and agreed on some basic issues that need to be addressed by ongoing rehabilitation interventions, keeping in mind the fact that rehabilitation initiatives by NGOs, multilateral agencies and governments are still underway. These recommendations were presented to the workshop on 19 January 2006.

Regional Workshop

The regional workshop was organized at the IMAGE Auditorium, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. A total of 90 persons, primarily from the tsunami-affected countries of Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Thailand, participated in the workshop. They included representatives from fishworker organizations, NGOs and multilateral organizations such as the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Government representatives from all the above countries also participated in the workshop. The complete list of participants can be found in Appendix 5.

The workshop programme (see Appendix 1) included presentations of the country-level studies, followed by discussions in the plenary. Multilateral agencies present provided an overview of their work and proposed future interventions. In a panel discussion, representatives of governments and NGOs highlighted their future priorities for tsunami rehabilitation work. The recommendations from the NGO meeting were also presented.

Field Visit

The programme for the three-day field visit, from 20 to 22 January, is in Appendix 4. The field visit provided participants with an exposure to post-tsunami interventions as related to house construction, habitat restoration, appropriate technologies, alternative employment and co-ordination of aid, taking place in the districts of Nagapattinam and Villupuram in the State of Tamil Nadu, India, through interactions with government officials, women's self-help groups, NGOs and fishing communities.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Welcome: **Chandrika Sharma**, *Executive Secretary, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)*

Welcoming the participants to the workshop, Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary of ICSF, gave a short background about the organization, which was formed in 1986 to defend the interests of the small-scale fisheries sector, particularly in the developing world, and to ensure their participation in important decision-making processes affecting their lives. An important part of ICSF's work is to make available information for, and about, small-scale fishworkers to bring greater visibility to the sector, through its Documentation Centre. Towards this end, ICSF brings out various publications, such as *SAMUDRA Report*. A more recent initiative is the *SAMUDRA News Alerts* that go out free to subscribers all over the world on a daily basis. The Documentation Centre also maintains

active links with other such centres in the French and Spanish-speaking regions. ICSF has also been organizing workshops for small-scale fishworkers and NGOs, providing a constructive space for dialogue between fishworker organizations, NGOs, scientists, governments, researchers and others. The present workshop was in line with this, Chandrika Sharma said in conclusion.

Chairperson's Address: **R. Santhanam**, *Special Commissioner and Commissioner for Revenue Administration and State Relief Commissioner, Government of Tamil Nadu, India*

R. Santhanam said the workshop was being organized at the right time, just over a year after the tsunami disaster struck the State, which is a good time to take stock of the situation, review the state of rehabilitation efforts, identify issues that need to be addressed, and chalk out issues for the implementation of projects that are sustainable in the long run.

Santhanam congratulated ICSF on the reports brought out. He complimented, in particular, the author of the India study for covering the entire gamut of fisheries rehabilitation, and for the indepth analysis of significant issues in the rehabilitation process, namely, relief and compensation, livelihood restoration, relocation, role of institutions like fishermen's *panchayats* in India, the problem of surplus boats, the dilemma of workers-turned-owners, and the rights of fisherwomen in the changed structure and scenario.

Santhanam also referred to various other studies, including those brought out by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), the Fritz Institute, the South India Producers' Association (SIPA) and others, pointing out that such studies undertaken by independent organizations, made useful and important contributions towards providing directions to the rehabilitation processes, and identifying corrective actions, wherever necessary.

He drew attention to the fact that the tsunami disaster was the worst in living memory with the largest proportion of the damage concentrated in fisheries, housing and infrastructure. He said that it was not surprising that there was a greater focus on fishers during the relief and rehabilitation process. The Government of Tamil Nadu not only concentrated

on fishers but also took into account the requirement of other affected sections like small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, businessmen, petty traders, orphaned children, adolescent girls, students and various other categories of people, and provided relief packages to every category. Just as ICSF has commissioned studies for improving the lot of fishers, similar studies by others on other affected groups would be appreciated, as the common objective is to strive for a safe and secure future for all those who are affected by the tsunami in some way or the other.

Santhanam stressed that the Tamil Nadu government's response to the tsunami disaster has been characterized by a willingness to provide adequate space for civil society organizations (CSOs), to remove bottlenecks for their functioning, and be accessible and receptive to feedback and act upon them promptly. The State Relief Commissioner then proceeded to flag three main issues that are the main areas of concern:

(i) Proliferation of boats after the tsunami

In the post-tsunami period, the Coromandel coast saw the presence of a large number of NGOs and their desire to do something quick and visible in the tsunami-affected areas. This resulted in a large number of people who previously had no boats now getting boats. This is likely to result in a chain of other events such as shortage of people working as crew; increased dropouts from schools due to fishers taking their children to sea; competition by more boats from the same village for finite fishery resources in the same fishing area, causing tensions both at sea and on shore; and finally, an aggravation of tensions resulting from the changed social structure of workers-turned-owners.

Santhanam also pointed out that beneficiaries who have received boats have expressed concerns over the quality of boats built in a hurry and supplied by the NGOs. This, in turn, raises safety concerns. The other issues include a surplus of boats, alongside a shortage of nets and other equipment required for fishing; the high cost of maintenance; the unsuitability of boats to local conditions or requirements; and variations from the preferred design and make of engine. These are very serious issues that have to be dealt with and for which solutions have to be found, said the Commissioner.

(ii) Relocation

The State Relief Commissioner said that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had announced a well-thought policy on housing in March 2005. The fishing communities in the tsunami-affected areas were faced with a difficult situation of deciding between safety and livelihoods. He said that while the safety concerns required them to go inland, their livelihood interests forced them to be at the shoreline.

The governments' housing policy is in accordance with the coastal regulation zone (CRZ) notification, and gives the option to the fishers to relocate beyond 200 m from the high tide line (HTL) if they so wish, reiterated the Commissioner. There is no compulsory relocation. Those who are willing to relocate have been assured of a house worth Rs150,000 (US\$3,388), along with land. Those not willing to relocate would be allowed to repair, without government's assistance, if the structures are authorized and were in their current plots prior to 1991.

The Commissioner said that the government's policy is driven purely by safety considerations. There is a misconception among some people that the space vacated by fishermen who chose to relocate would be given to some other industries, which would totally destroy the fishers' livelihood. The Chief Minister had already assured the State Legislative Assembly that the vacated land would be entered in the Prohibitory Order Book (POB) and would be maintained for public purposes, which include the occupational use of beach by the fishing community. The community would be allowed to keep their boats, nets, etc. in this area. Since new houses are to be built as per the technical specification of the government for safety and durability, it is in the interest of the community to look at the relocation issue in the right perspective, he stressed.

(iii) Alternative livelihoods

Santhanam said that the issue of alternative livelihoods was important in the current situation where the tsunami has brought to the fore the risks involved in coastal lives. The limited nature of the aquatic resources has added another dimension. The government has addressed these needs in right earnest, and a dedicated programme of alternative livelihoods is being formulated in consultation with the affected communities. Recognizing the advantages of group-

based activities, special attention is being paid to ensure that these opportunities are delivered through self-help groups. Initiatives such as seaweed farming, crab and lobster fattening, etc. are being looked at as options. Generally, all these have got very good export markets, and can make a lot of difference to the fishers. The State Relief Commissioner emphasized the importance of establishing forward linkages if such activities are to be done in a sustainable manner.

He said that the coastal economy supply chain could be substantially altered through the identification and implementation of alternative livelihood opportunities. These will not only supplement the income gained but also provide for substantive risk diversification for the fishing communities. There is a provision of nearly US\$50 mn for livelihood promotion in the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Tsunami Emergency Assistance Project, which is now being implemented in Tamil Nadu. Similarly, the post-tsunami sustainable livelihood programme funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) focuses mainly on community resources management, community institutions, micro- and rural financial institutions and micro-enterprise development. He hoped organizations working with fishing communities, such as those present at the workshop, would help in the identification and implementation of projects, as that would go a long way in the restoration of the community that was the worst affected in the tsunami.

Background to the Workshop: V. Vivekanandan,
Chief Executive,
South Indian Federation of
Fishermen Societies (SIFFS),
India

Vivekanandan provided the background to the workshop. He said that one year on, it was a good time to take stock and reflect on post-tsunami relief and rehabilitation processes. ICSF had been, from the very beginning, monitoring and trying to follow up on the tsunami relief and rehabilitation process. He pointed out that, even though coastal areas are disaster-prone, many present at the workshop did not have much previous disaster experience. The experience that has been gained in the post-tsunami period will help us to be better prepared for future disasters. There have also been amazing opportunities

for comparison due to the vast diversity of the affected areas/countries. Areas and countries seen as distinct geopolitical entities, which previously had rarely come together to think of common approaches and programmes, were united by the indiscriminating tsunami. This has also given an excellent opportunity to look at fisheries issues with a common perspective.

Vivekanandan pointed out that Southeast Asia, for example, is way ahead of south Asia in terms of community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM). It is with this kind of a regional perspective that ICSF decided to take stock of the situation one year after the tsunami by launching country-level studies in India, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. It was decided to present these studies and organize a discussion and debate around them. The Fisheries Department of the Maldives had also expressed its interest in the workshop even though ICSF itself has not been able to commission a study in the Maldives. The workshop thus offers the opportunity to discuss the post-tsunami situation in five tsunami-affected countries in Asia.

Vivekanandan then proceeded to give the schedule of the workshop. He pointed out that this was the time that multilateral agencies, with large funds at their disposal, were starting their longer-term interventions. It is important to know their plans for tsunami rehabilitation, with the aim of coming out with the best way to take the whole process of rehabilitation forward. Therefore, following the presentations of country studies and inputs by government officials present on the country situations, multilateral agencies would present their plans for the coming period. And finally, the fishworker perspective would be presented in the form of a set of recommendations that had been drafted during the NGO meeting prior to the workshop. The recommendations, he said, were based on issues that emerged during country-level processes and consultations with affected communities.

Inaugural Address: A. Vaidyanathan, Former Director,
Madras Institute of Development Studies
(MIDS), India

Vaidyanathan started his address by complimenting the authors of the studies that had been commissioned. He stressed that the reports had been written not just to look at the success and failures of rehabilitation

programmes and processes but also to raise concerns and questions on longer-term issues.

He pointed to two underlying areas of concern. The first was the fragmented response to an immediate problem that often lacked a co-ordinated or comprehensive understanding of the nature of the disaster. The second and more important issue related to what the disaster meant to the fishing community—not only those directly dependent on fisheries but also those indirectly dependent on the resources for their livelihood.

Vaidyanathan stressed the importance of understanding the many changes that have been taking place over a period of time in the fisheries sector as related to technology, the resource base and demography, as what we see today is the cumulative effect of these changes. He delved briefly into the history of the development of the fisheries sector in India, and the impact of modern technology on the artisanal sector and fisheries resources. He spoke of the growing concern, even consensus, among experts that the rate of exploitation of fishery resources has exceeded sustainable limits. This, together with ecological damages in the estuarine areas and the coastal ecosystems, compounded in some areas by the advent of unregulated aquaculture, has aggravated the resource situation.

He pointed to some key issues facing the sector today, particularly the differential access to resources that has led to conflicts between the traditional sector and the modernized sector in inshore waters. Traditional fishermen often end up being marginalized and become sources of cheap labour.

Vaidyanathan stressed that interventions should be undertaken taking into consideration all such complex processes in the sector. There is, at the same time, need for good research on the potential of the available resources, which is still a grey area, where there are many opinions but no hard, well-documented answers. Much more information is needed to convert facts into actual knowledge. He reiterated that even the issue of diversification could be dealt with only after knowing and understanding the larger context of constraints and opportunities.

He emphasized the need to understand and document local knowledge, both in the collective memory and the experiences of the fisherfolk. Their ideas and interpretations, different from that of the

experts, should be documented, and efforts should be made to increase their interaction with the knowledge, technology, competence and expertise of the modern scientific community.

Vaidyanathan strongly urged the participants to look beyond the success and failures of rehabilitation, and develop a much richer understanding of the interaction between the resource, technology and institutions. Addressing problems in a fragmented manner may otherwise lead to outcomes very different from those expected and might indeed turn out to be disappointing. He, therefore, urged the participants to have a larger and longer-term perspective to streamlining rehabilitation efforts.

COUNTRY REPORTS

INDONESIA

Author and presenter: **Hilde Janssen**, *Independent Journalist, Indonesia*

Chairperson: **Y. S. Yadava**, *Director, Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO), India*

Hilde Janssen presented the study on Indonesia. She said that the study was based on field surveys conducted in Aceh and Nias, the most severely affected provinces in Indonesia. Briefing participants on the pre-tsunami situation vis-à-vis small-scale fisheries and fishing communities in Aceh and Nias, Hilde elaborated on the role of various peoples organizations in the pre-tsunami context such as the *toukay*, the merchant-trader, also the main informal money-lending institution; the *panglima laot*, a traditional institution in fishing communities responsible for dispute settlement and checking illegal fishing; and the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), or the Free Aceh Movement.

After providing a detailed overview of the damages in the fisheries sector, Janssen said that in the rehabilitation phase the efforts or interventions vis-à-vis livelihoods in the fisheries sector could be classified into: interventions in the harvesting sector; interventions in infrastructure; and interventions in the post-harvest sector. A major issue identified in almost all phases of rehabilitation was the non-inclusion of women in the process of relief and rehabilitation.

Janssen said that there was no particular target quota for women, as fisheries was considered to be the domain of men.

In the context of land and shelter, relocation is a major issue. There are debates still going on in communities on whether to return to their original settlements or to relocate. There are also concerns on whether minimum standards, as on safety, are being followed in housing and reconstruction, given the wide variety in type, quality, size and package of interventions by different players in the field.

Janssen presented what she saw as cross-cutting issues in rehabilitation:

- The quality of aid and difficulty in ensuring good aid
- The quantity of aid, and problems arising while dealing with the issue of oversupply and depletion of resources
- Co-ordination
- Identification of beneficiaries in the rehabilitation process
- The issue posed by problematic ideas, like cutting out middlemen from the fisheries sector, which could be viewed as either utopian or feasible

In conclusion, Janssen stressed the following as essential needs:

- Finding a fine balance between quick, good and participatory solutions to meet the challenges of post-tsunami rehabilitation
- Formulating effective mechanisms for monitoring, co-ordination and control of relief and rehabilitation effort
- Finding a way out of the mode of competition among different players in the rehabilitation processes
- Finding solutions to genuine complaints of stakeholders

Comment: **Saut P. Hutagalung**, *Director of Planning and International Co-operation Bureau, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia*

Saut Hutagalung commended the study for its informative and comprehensive coverage. He said that it was a useful input for the Indonesian government as well as for all those who have committed to support the rehabilitation of Aceh and Nias.

Hutagalung then proceeded to inform the participants about the priorities of the Indonesian government in the rehabilitation phase. Housing tops the list of priorities as seen by the Government of Indonesia and the effort is to complete housing by the end of 2007. In the second phase, infrastructure development would be the top priority and this focus would continue till mid-2008. The year 2008-2009 would see institutional, social and human resource development leading the list of activities. Cutting through all these phases will be the effort to ensure economic activities to supplement the income of the tsunami-affected.

Hutagalung further listed the following rehabilitation priorities identified by the Government of Indonesia:

- Promoting effective co-ordination mechanisms between the provincial government Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi (BRR), the district government, donors and NGOs
- Promoting district-level teamwork among players/stakeholders (and encouraging community representatives/*panglima laot* to participate)
- Accelerating implementation of rehabilitation programmes
- Finalizing spatial/zoning plans for infrastructure, aquaculture, housing, markets, etc.
- Ensuring good quality of goods/services delivered to the communities
- Strengthening capacity of the provincial government to implement and monitor programmes
- Supporting the anti-corruption campaign, which was launched by the Governor of Aceh on 12 January 2006
- Supporting interventions that go beyond just replacement of losses/damages (in fisheries, for example, aim not just to replace lost craft and gear but also to improve fisheries and resource management)

Discussion

In the discussion that followed, a question on the role of traditional institutions like the *panglima laot* in the post-tsunami scenario was raised. Janssen said that post-tsunami, local leaders of fishing communities, apart from playing their traditional role of dispute

management and safeguarding traditions, were also involved in managing the aid coming in from different donors and in providing boats, gear and nets for the community. Traditionally, leaders of these institutions are respected for their knowledge and seniority. The influx of money post-tsunami has led to some distrust of the leaders, as people suspect them of corruption with respect to the aid coming in. Janssen said that even though traditional systems are the best vehicles to reach the community at large, involving them in money transactions can erode the respect and the trust that people have in them. She cautioned that while donor agencies should work with the *panglima laot* for their knowledge and their strong networking, there is need to be careful in not putting in too much money into the system. Rather, there should be involvement with the larger community, with clear controls and transparency in the use of money.

A discussion followed on the changed situation in Banda Aceh and the peace process underway in the post-tsunami period, with the civil unrest waning and talks being held between the Indonesian government and the Aceh separatist movement. It was pointed out that all signs on the peace settlements were positive. People are, however, watching the developments carefully as there was a similar peace settlement in 2002 with the separatists, which failed after a few months. The difference now is that the tsunami has made people aware that there is a lot at stake as they have lost much, and people are keen to move forward. There is also a lot of political support and will from the government, particularly after it became clear that the internal conflict was actually hindering the aid process. The tsunami has brought peace to this earlier conflict-ridden area, even though there are some stumbling blocks to be crossed, such as the new legislation required. Reports from the ground are also positive, indicating that former GAM fighters are returning to their villages. It was pointed out that the positive processes in Indonesia were in contrast to the situation in Sri Lanka where the peace process has been under stress post-tsunami, with consequent severe impacts on the livelihoods of fishing communities, especially in the conflict-ridden north and northeast of the country.

Another question was on the efforts in Aceh to move fishers towards deep-sea fisheries. Was this an initiative coming from the people or from the

government? Was it sustainable? In response, it was said that Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI), the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, had undertaken a survey on the impact of the tsunami on the coastal region. It had collected data on stocks in the coastal areas but the survey had not included offshore waters. The Government of Indonesia is also interested in knowing the status of deep-sea fish stocks. Janssen said that some caution was needed before promoting such diversification.

Saut Hutagalung said that the Indonesian government has a policy designed to stop the operations of foreign fleets in the Indonesian exclusive economic zone (EEZ) under licensing arrangements, unless it is through joint arrangements. In such a situation, he stressed, there is an opportunity for the national fleet to develop gradually. There was also an opportunity for Aceh fishermen to develop themselves in such a context. At present, there are only five boats in the area, a very small number. By developing the deep-sea fishery, the pressure on coastal waters and their resources can be reduced considerably, at least along the east coast of Aceh. He said that the views of local communities are being taken into account while formulating these policies. He further clarified that the government was not referring to deep-sea vessels in the range of 100 gross tonnes (GT), but was planning for vessels not exceeding 10 GT in the initial trial phase.

There was also interest among the participants to know the stand of the Government of Indonesia towards the offer by the European Union (EU) on decommissioned vessels. Hutagalung said that to date the government has not actually accepted the offer. However, the government is now starting discussion with EU on the offer. Any decision taken will be based on a complete stock assessment, and discussions with the local government and the *panglima laot* on how the EU boats can be put to use and on how to develop the local capacity to utilize them.

THAILAND

Author and presenter: **Duangkamol Sirisook**,
Sustainable Development Foundation
(SDF), Thailand

Chairperson: **Muhammad Adli**, *Panglima Laot, Indonesia*

The presentation started with a slideshow of photographs showing the damages and losses Thailand suffered due to the tsunami. After a brief description and statistics on the damages and losses, in general, and in the fisheries sector, in particular, Sirisook proceeded to enlist the relief measures given in the fishery sector. These mainly comprised compensation for damage and loss of assets; aid for occupational development; assistance for housing and settlement; and relief measures for women and children.

The Thai team identified the following key issues in the relief and rehabilitation process:

- **Lack of clear and accurate data:** This problem was common to all countries, and had also resulted in widespread duplication of work. From the data available from the Department of Disaster Mitigation, for example, a total of 4,807 small vessels had been damaged in the tsunami. According to the data from the Department of Fisheries, however, 6,000 boats have already been replaced. Can it be concluded that there is an obvious oversupply of boats, or was there misinformation on the number of boats damaged in the first place? In the initial period after the tsunami, people were working with varying information, and lack of co-ordination. Hence a lot of the relief and support that was given did not go to meet actual losses.
- **Lack of co-ordination:** Relief and rehabilitation have been marked by poor co-ordination and lack of local mechanisms to manage relief operations. Additionally, diverse approaches and strategies have been used to disburse aid, depending on the underlying philosophies of organizations. For example, the Save Andaman Network (SAN) worked with the philosophy that communities should pay back what they had received, towards a common fund that could be used to further develop and strengthen the community and its organizations. SAN was wary of the problems, conflicts and the dependency that could be created by giving aid for free. Other organizations, however, believed in giving “free” aid.
- **Inadequate/inappropriate fishing gear:** Several organizations that had little experience of working with fishing communities, either supplied only the boats with no gear, or supplied gear that was inappropriate, and even destructive.
- **Compensation for damaged boats:** The compensation amount announced by the government for damaged vessels differed for registered and unregistered boats. For a registered boat, the compensation amount was THB50,000 (US\$1,289), while for an unregistered boat, it was THB30,000 (US\$771). This amount was, in any case, inadequate for even registered fishers to purchase new boats. SAN argued that relief should be on a humanitarian basis and not on the basis of whether you are inside or outside the system.
- **Damage assessment:** The principles and guidelines for assessing the scale of damage were problematic. The guidelines required that a committee be appointed to assess the damage. However, there were no common standards to assess damages. Further, only committee members knew the methodology for assessment—those who were actually affected were not consulted or informed. Many community persons were, therefore, dissatisfied with the assessment and compensation, and the lack of transparency in the functioning of the committee.
- **Lack of compensation for workers:** No compensation was provided to those working on fishing vessels and as workers on shore. Each boat lost affected those who worked as crew and on shore in post-harvest operations. However, compensation was given only to owners of fishing boats.
- **Migrant workers and ethnic minorities:** Ethnic groups, such as the sea gypsies, did not receive adequate compensation, even though they had lost their boats and houses, and were economically marginalized, in the first place. The sea gypsies are also faced with the issue of insecure title rights to their land, and claims by private landowners, even though the sea gypsies

have occupied much of the land for 60 years. Migrant workers, mainly from Myanmar, also faced the same problem. Estimates suggest that there are about 120,000 migrant workers, both legal and “illegal”, constituting the largest workforce in the commercial fishing sector. Even though the Ministry of Labour did provide an opportunity to these workers to register, many of them went into hiding for fear of arrest, especially those who had lost their identification documents in the tsunami. Little information about their numbers or whereabouts is available even today. According to the government, nine migrant workers died in six provinces. However, studies by the NGO network indicate that at least 270 migrant workers have died in one village alone.

- **Land conflict:** In the post-tsunami period, many simmering land conflicts have come to the fore. There are about 81 tsunami-affected villages where there are conflicts over land, both with private landowners, and with the government (in cases where communities are on “public land”).

On the matter of long-term rehabilitation, the following were identified as the major programmes:

- **Seafood Bank project:** As part of this programme, the government plans to give entitlements to coastal waters to promote aquaculture. It is being seen as a long-term rehabilitation measure in the post-tsunami period, and will be backed by various types of support, such as training and credit. Fisherfolk organizations, however, are very concerned about the project, as it is feared that, among other things, it will privatise what is a common-pool natural resource.
- **Special economic zones (SEZs):** The government is moving to set up SEZs to revive the economy of the Andaman coast. Various incentives are being offered to those who invest in this region, including relaxation of tax laws, and laws to facilitate acquisition. This development is linked to the larger process of stimulating free trade as part of the globalization process. The impact on local people, particularly in terms of displacement, and on natural resources is likely to be high.

The Thai presenters concluded their presentation by sharing with the workshop participants some of the best practices in the rehabilitation process. These included case studies of rebuilding houses with community participation, setting up of a community-run and managed boatyard, and the formation of women’s occupational groups.

Comment: **Waraporn Prompoj**, *Chief, International Co-operation Group, Fisheries Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Fisheries, Thailand*

Waraporn Prompoj said that damage assessment centres were set up in every affected province in Thailand to assess the damages and losses, particularly with reference to the fisheries sector. Compensation was provided for loss of boats and gear, and for losses in aquaculture. The government continues to ensure coverage of those who received inadequate or no relief. There have been some problems with respect to the damage assessment guidelines, but lessons were also learnt. Prompoj stressed that the difference between the numbers of boats damaged and those replaced pointed out in the presentation earlier, needed clarification. The figure referred to the number of people who received compensation and not the number of boats replaced.

Prompoj also outlined other initiatives that had been taken by the department. Traditionally, boats used in Thailand have been made of wood. However, timber has been a constraint and the use of FRP boats is being considered. Assistance for this has been requested from international and other technical organizations, including the FAO.

Prompoj also provided information about the assistance received from the Thailand King’s organization, USAID and the Norwegian government. Initiatives are underway for mapping of fisheries resources to improve fisheries resource management. Sea farming using cage culture is being considered, including a pilot project for sea farming in deeper waters.

The government has been sensitive to the issue of oversupply of boats, and after consultation with the NGO network, has discouraged supply of boats by other organizations/governments. For instance, the French government was requested to provide, instead of boats, gear, post-harvest technologies and facilities at the fish-landing sites. The government is also

exploring models for sustainable aquaculture, and is working with farmers to provide training and support for market linkages.

Prompoj said that the poor quality of data was a problem. There were attempts to arrive at a reliable set of data, by combining all available information, but this had not worked out. However, the effort is to work towards good baseline data for future work. On the issue of co-ordination, she said that a co-ordination forum that acts as a clearing house for post-tsunami rehabilitation was set up in February 2005, together with the NGOs. A post-tsunami rehabilitation co-ordination unit has also been set up by the FAO to co-ordinate information and the parties involved.

There are also plans for further work on livelihood rehabilitation and management of coastal and fisheries resources. Studies to assess fishing capacity have been planned, and based on them, the government will propose improved fisheries resources management and aquaculture for sustainable development. It is planned to support culture activities in terms of markets, post-harvest technology, credit, etc. The department will also be insisting on registration of boats, while a boat-marking system is also being considered. There will be greater emphasis on safety of boats through reassessment of boat safety and training programmes on safety at sea for Thai fishermen. Another very important element is the early warning system for fishing communities—a computerized early warning system that is very simple and can be used by fishermen.

Rehabilitation and management of coastal and fisheries resources is a major focus area. Areas of intervention will include capacity building, as one way to protect resources is to train people—government, scientists, NGOs, village heads—about them.

On the Seafood Bank programme, Prompoj said that the intention is to provide alternative means of livelihood to fisherfolk, particularly those engaged in aquaculture. The programme would be undertaken only after taking various issues into consideration.

Discussion

A question was raised seeking clarification on the shelter and relocation policy of the Thai government. It was clarified that the government has undertaken to build houses for affected families/communities in various

locations. However, if families do not wish to take this house, the government will pay them an amount of THB 30,000 (US\$771).

Questions were also raised about the role being played by NGOs in a context where the government was already providing compensation, for example, for lost boats. In response, it was said that in many cases the assistance provided by the government was not sufficient. NGOs have taken on the role of topping up this support, to enable, for example, a family to replace its boat and buy gear. This has been the approach adopted by SAN, and duplication has been avoided. However, many other NGOs have provided FRP boats independently to communities irrespective of loss or damage incurred.

Another question was on the issue of migrant workers. Which are the areas in Thai fisheries where migrant workers are employed, and is such recruitment legal or illegal? What are the mechanisms in place for providing identification papers to workers who have lost their papers? In response, it was informed that most migrant workers seek employment mainly in the commercial fisheries sector. There is a dynamic and fluid movement of workers entering and leaving the Andaman coast. Some have identification papers, some do not. After the tsunami, the Ministry of Labour set up camps for migrant workers to register in cases where they had lost their cards. However, many workers stayed away for various reasons, including fear of harassment, or because all the notices were in Thai.

There was a doubt on the high number of villages (81) reported as facing land conflicts. It was clarified that most of these were conflicts that existed pre-tsunami. Post-tsunami, an additional four or five villages reported conflicts. Conflicts are mainly between communities and government, and between communities and private landowners. The government has set up a committee to look into these disputes.

To a question on the Seafood Bank programme, Sirisook explained that the programme aimed at producing more seafood, as the Thai marine resources were considered overfished. The plan is to give individuals entitlement to sea areas, similar to land entitlements. Those in the poverty register of the government can apply to farm species such as shellfish and cockles, mainly for the export market, after

receiving training in food safety. However, fisherfolk have objected to the programme. The sea is a shared common resource, and the programme will disrupt or restrict access to fishing grounds and thus contradict the way of life of their communities, they argued. There is also little understanding about the potential environmental and other impacts of the activity. Prompoj said that the objective of the programme was to improve alternatives for those in aquaculture. There was a need to balance fisheries and aquaculture, she stressed.

SRI LANKA

Author and presenter: **Oscar Amarasinghe**, Senior Lecturer, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

Chairperson: **Harekrishna Debnath**, Chairperson, National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF), India

Oscar Amarasinghe started his presentation on the Sri Lanka country study by giving a brief description of the pre- and post-tsunami situation in the fisheries sector. He classified the issues relating to the distribution of craft and gear under three main heads: oversupply (in some areas), undersupply (mainly in the north and the north east) and "malsupply". Malsupply occurred mainly because of the low quality of craft and gear supplied.

There are other issues pertaining to the distribution of craft and gear, including their provision to "non-genuine" fishers; supply of more than one craft per person; corruption; the absence of a package approach to rehabilitation, which resulted in fragmented relief and rehabilitation; and a bias towards replacing FRP boats rather than traditional craft.

The following recommendations were made:

On the malsupply of fishing equipment:

- The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (MFAR) should prescribe standards for the fishing craft and gear to be distributed.
- Fishing equipment issued to "non-genuine" fishers should be bought back and redistributed among "genuine" fishers.
- There should be no further issue of fishing equipment to areas where malsupply is noticed

until the redistribution is carried out as described above.

- Community organizations should be consulted on the distribution of fishing equipment.
- Issue of multi-day boats should be done only after the compulsory signing of a work contract between the owners and the crewmembers that include satisfactory employment conditions, including those relating to insurance and safety issues.

On the overexploitation of coastal resources:

- Laws on fishing gear must be enforced.
- Fisher People's Councils must be established, and powers delegated to community-based organizations (CBOs) to ensure the enforcement of State laws on fisheries management.

On the set-back areas (buffer zones):

- Permission must be granted to beach-seine fishers to settle close to their respective seine-laying areas.
- Fishers must be allowed to settle along the coastal belt if they so wish.
- Reconstruction of houses in coastal areas must be allowed only after taking into consideration the elevation of the area or the possibility of constructing houses on stilts.

On sustainable livelihoods:

- Assistance must be given to families to sustain their livelihoods.
- Training for skill development must be imparted.
- The capacity of CBOs must be strengthened.
- The important role played by women in fisheries should be recognized and women should be given opportunities to engage in income-generating activities.
- Alternative sources of livelihoods must be explored.

On rehabilitation in the north and northeast of the country:

- The Government of Sri Lanka should provide necessary facilities and assistance to NGOs who are interested in providing assistance in the north and the northeast region.
- Assistance given to the war-affected areas should be on a par with that given to other areas.

Additionally, it was recommended that the construction of permanent houses should take into consideration the regulations laid down by the Urban Development Authority with respect to environmental considerations, designs, facilities, etc. Rainwater-harvesting tanks should be incorporated into house designs in water-deficient areas.

Community participation was recommended in decisionmaking on rebuilding the fisheries sector. There should be better co-ordination between NGOs and State institutions, and alliances among NGOs aiming for similar interventions.

Amarasinghe reiterated the need for the State to accelerate the formulation of a long-term national fisheries policy. He concluded by strongly emphasizing the tsunami survivors' rights to gender equality and a dignified livelihood, conditions that must guide all rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Comment: **Ranepura Hewage Piyasena,**
*Additional Secretary (Development), Ministry
of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (MFAR),
Sri Lanka*

Ranepura Hewage Piyasena commented on the situation in the strife-ridden north and northeast of the country, saying that the restoration of peace could be achieved only with the support of the community. He added that, compared to many other countries, Sri Lanka has very good rules and regulations for fisheries and their management, but the problem lay in enforcement.

The main stumbling block in rehabilitation is the absence of authentic data. Data collection in the aftermath of such a massive disaster has proved to be difficult. Most people, affected and unaffected, expect the government to do something or the other for them. For a country like Sri Lanka, where a third of the population lives below the poverty line, the number of beneficiaries could be unmanageably high, making compensation very difficult. The Government of Sri Lanka is trying to rope in NGOs to come up with reliable data.

The government is also concentrating on assistance to multi-day boats, a sector neglected by the NGOs, probably due to the fact that it involves the comparatively better-off fishermen. Even though they constitute only 10 per cent of the fisher population, the government considers this group as

important since they account for half the national fisheries production. If they are not supported, the Additional Secretary said, Sri Lanka might end up importing fish products.

About LKR6 mn (US\$58,532) is the estimated cost for the replacement and repair of one multi-day boat. However, the government has set aside only LKR2.5 mn. The Government of the Netherlands is supporting the project. The Additional Secretary added that the list of beneficiaries in the multi-day sector was published in the newspapers in all three languages – Sinhala, Tamil and English. It was also clearly mentioned in the newspaper notices that assistance would be withheld if the information given was found to be wrong. Efforts have been made to keep all transactions transparent. The fishermen are allowed to inspect the construction of their boats. Government functionaries are also in place to check the quality of the construction.

According to the Additional Secretary, the frequent changes in MFAR — the current Minister is the third in a row to be put in charge of tsunami rehabilitation — have also affected the rehabilitation efforts. Piyasena agreed that much more could have been done with better co-ordination and co-operation. Efforts for better co-ordination with NGOs are now in the pipeline, with FAO collaboration.

Piyasena added that until the tsunami, the fisheries sector did not attract much attention. Only around a third of the craft had been registered. After the disaster, it was politically difficult to decide whether to give compensation only to those who had registered their boats. The preparation of the beneficiary list thus proved to be problematic, especially when there were more beneficiary claimants than the number of fishermen. Though initially the government tried to work in a centralized manner, it later realized that the bottom-up approach would be more effective.

Discussion

The FAO representative, Derek Staples, made clarifications on the data provided by FAO, the reported unreliability of which kept recurring in Amarasinghe's presentation. He said that information collection and collation was one of the several projects funded by the UN. Later FAO was asked to spearhead efforts for better co-ordination among the major players in the rehabilitation process in Sri Lanka.

Staples said that FAO had attempted to identify and define “genuine” fishers. Information collection involves several people and, consequently, large biases. The definition of “destroyed” and “damaged” boats also changed dramatically as relief criteria changed. Such a continuous change in the nature of the data being collected called for a great deal of thinking and reasoning, Staples added.

“Genuine” fishers did not object to the distribution of craft to non-fishers, even though their very own livelihoods were threatened, because they knew that these boats would not be finally utilized. The non-fishers took the boats in the hope of selling them. But with oversupply, there are few buyers now. Buyback schemes would solve many such problems, it was pointed out.

Sebastian Mathew suggested two kinds of buyback schemes: buyback for redistribution and buyback for retirement. In the first instance, good-quality boats can be bought from fishermen who want to retire, and the boats procured thus can be redistributed to those interested in continuing fishing. In the second instance, all poor-quality boats that compromise the safety of fishermen at sea can be bought back and permanently retired from the active fishing fleet.

More institutional support should be requested for such programmes from multilateral agencies to evolve a well-thought strategy to deal with redistribution and thus oversupply. A rational programme on the quality of the craft and their distribution could be tied up with the idea of a fishing unit that combines good engines with appropriate or sustainable fishing gear. Such programmes could be supported with better resource surveys as well.

MALDIVES

Presenter: **Fathmath Shafeega**, *Assistant Director Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, Maldives*

Chairperson: **Herman Kumara**, *Convenor, National Fisheries Solidarity (NAFSO), Sri Lanka*

Fathmath Shafeega classified the tsunami assistance programmes of the Government of Maldives under the following heads:

- Provision for new long-range fishing vessels (inclusive of engine, equipment and gear)

- Provision for mechanized artisanal fishing vessels
- Repair and commissioning of damaged fishing vessels
- Replacement of lost and damaged equipment and gear
- Replacement of damaged facilities in the fishing industry
- Micro-credit facility to support fish processors
- Rehabilitation of damaged or destroyed boatsheds
- Repair of fish aggregating device centres
- Repair of mariculture stations
- Assessment and monitoring of the impact of the tsunami on coral reefs and other marine resources
- Infrastructure support
- Financial support
- Capacity building in fisheries

The main issues pertaining to the rehabilitation process were:

- Lack of co-ordination amongst donor agencies
- Delay in finalizing implementation arrangements
- Delay in finalizing the list and category of beneficiaries
- Faulty identification, resulting in inequality in the community

Discussion

To queries on contaminated drinking water supplies, it was pointed out that with aid from the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), 2,500-litre rainwater collection tanks were provided to each house in the islands. With good rains reported in 2005, people are able to meet their water demand with the help of these tanks.

To a query on the absence of NGOs in Maldives, it was said that even though some NGOs are present, none was working exclusively in the fisheries sector. In the case of existing NGOs, there have been no consultations with the government, leading to overlapping of assistance.

On the issue of co-ordination, the government representative clarified that even though there was no overall mechanism to co-ordinate the assistance given by the donors, different departments were making their own efforts. Efforts by the World Bank and FAO to co-ordinate the supply of equipment proved to be quite meaningful.

While other tsunami-hit Asian countries were able to raise more than enough money for rehabilitation, the Maldives, though severely affected, had to struggle for lack of funds, and only half the requirements could be raised. Most of the funds — grants or loans — came with conditions, sometimes acceptable and sometimes not, the Assistant Director pointed out. The Maldives government looks through each project and takes two to three months to negotiate and come up with terms and conditions acceptable to all. Grants are accepted without any hesitation, while loans involve some processing time. Assistance in kind has to be discussed and co-ordinated with other agencies, to avoid duplication. One participant pointed out that in most other countries, the funds came in through the NGOs, and Maldives' lack of NGOs meant a lack of funds as well. It was clarified that the European Union (EU) had not extended any assistance for the fisheries sector, except to propose the handover of decommissioned fishing vessels.

INDIA

There were two presentations in the session on India. The first was a country study that examined the tsunami rehabilitation efforts in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, the three States of India that were affected by the tsunami. The second presentation dealt with the role of fishermen's *panchayats* (village councils) in the distribution of relief and rehabilitation post-tsunami.

Author and presenter: **Venkatesh Salagrama**,
*Director, Integrated Coastal
Management (ICM), India*

Chairperson: **Pisit Charansnoh**, *Yadfon
Association, Thailand*

Venkatesh Salagrama outlined the principal objective of the study as attempting a snapshot of the State-wise and sector-wise damages and losses inflicted by the tsunami in India (excluding Andaman and Nicobar Islands), and the rehabilitation packages given for fisheries-based livelihoods and shelter.

Salagrama highlighted some new post-tsunami arrangements, like the group ownership of boats, supply of boats through women's self-help groups (SHGs), and the granting of asset ownership to women's groups, which would then rent out the craft and gear to the men for fishing. Other emerging trends

include an increased preference for FRP *kattamarams* (catamarans) to wooden ones, and disinterest among NGOs to supply or reinstate the mechanized sector, thus leaving the government as the only player in rehabilitating the sector.

The major issues identified in the rehabilitation of the fisheries sector are:

- **pitiable quality of the boats supplied**, characterized by the author as “use-and-throw boats”, which causes concerns about safety at sea
- **low degree of community participation** in the replacement of boats
- **sporadic and patchy nature of the assistance provided to the post-harvest and ancillary workers, mainly women**. This may be due to the lack of understanding about their roles in production and trade, as well as a lack of interest in supporting the mechanized sector, which employs large numbers of dependent labourers. Women were better targeted only in areas where NGOs have a history of working with them. Non-membership in the *panchayats* played a part in restricting their access to support. With interest waning to replace and rebuild boats, interest is waxing on women and other marginalized groups. Salagrama pointed to the increased possibility for the entry of widows or dependents of dead fishers into fish trade and processing.
- **poor distribution of credit**, which was also done in an inequitable fashion across communities and work categories
- **non-registration of new boats**, which raises major concerns about fisheries management. Trends like replacing wooden *kattamarams* with FRP *kattamarams* add to the problem of overcapacity.

Salagrama said it was unlikely that all new boats had entered fishing. There were enough deterrents in this regard, namely, the high cost of operation, the absence of adequate crew, and the poor quality and inappropriate design of boats, all of which might actually reduce the threat of overcapacity. The double entry of the same boat in official records might also have caused the inflation of the number of boats replaced. Salagrama did not expect all the promised boats to be delivered.

Two other long-term issues were identified, namely, the need for disaster preparedness and safety at sea, and livelihood diversification and migration.

According to Salagrama, the response of the Tamil Nadu government to the tsunami was the most commendable. He also highlighted the near-complete absence of the political class in the rehabilitation efforts in the State. Expressing concern over the government's compulsion of non-interference with rehabilitation efforts, Salagrama said that could have contributed to the failure to curtail the overenthusiasm of some of the civil society organizations.

Venkatesh Salagrama expressed concern about the "show quick results" attitude of the new NGOs, who completely lacked understanding of the ground reality. This mentality also threatened the existence of local NGOs that had been working in the area for a long time and forced them to make compromises.

The author pointed out that the formation of co-ordination bodies like the Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre (TNTRC), the NGO Co-ordination and Resource Centre (NCRC), and the Kanyakumari Rehabilitation Resource Centre (KRRC) had some positive impacts on rehabilitation efforts. All of them were good examples of government-NGO partnerships. Salagrama called for steps to legitimize and institutionalize such links on a firmer footing. Such partnerships could play a co-ordinating role in future development and rehabilitation activities, as well as a self-regulating role in curtailing the overenthusiasm of fly-by-night NGOs. He suggested that efforts be made to make these bodies viable and independent in the long run.

Salagrama concluded by saying that one year after the tsunami, much remains to be done — and equally importantly, undone.

INDIA SPECIAL STUDY

The role of traditional Panchayats in coastal fishing communities in Tamil Nadu, with special reference to their role in mediating tsunami relief and rehabilitation

Author and presenter: **N. B. Gomathy**, *Freelance Documentalist, Mumbai, India*

Chairperson: **Pisit Charnsnoh**, *Yadfon Association, Thailand*

The study was conducted along the Coromandel coast of Tamil Nadu, from Nagapattinam to Chennai. It

was specifically designed to determine the changed role of the traditional institution for conflict resolution – the fishermen's *panchayat*. It was seen that with the flow of aid, the villagers depended on the *panchayat* system for equitable distribution. The *panchayat* institution thus helped prevent conflicts that would have arisen from the large amounts of aid entering the area in the form of relief. Where a traditional *panchayat* existed, most of the aid that came into the village was distributed through it.

The traditional *panchayats* also dealt with enumeration of aid beneficiaries; distribution of compensation; and redistribution for goals of equity. Most of the *panchayats* displayed high levels of accountability and transparency in the distribution of relief.

Community trust, however, could be an issue. When large amounts of money are floating around, there are chances for corruption and the loss of trust, and consequently, credibility, among the villagers. A great deal of sensitivity and effort must precede the involvement of such institutions in fundamentally new areas.

Comment: **P. Sundara Kumar**, *Commissioner of Fisheries, Government of Andhra Pradesh, India*

Agreeing with the findings of the India country study, Sundara Kumar stressed the following aspects of the post-tsunami rehabilitation in Andhra Pradesh:

- supply of quick relief to the affected people for two to three months
- entrusting of relief distribution to village communities. This is particularly worth noting in the face of such a big disaster, where everyone clamours for benefits.
- an overemphasis on repair of boats, rather than replacement
- problems in replacements, due to the paucity of wood to build boats
- evolution of a new system of group ownership

Discussion

V. Sampath, Senior National Consultant, Fisheries Project, UNDP, said that the India country report was incomplete without the inclusion of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as the Union Territory was very near to the epicentre of the earthquake and had suffered huge damages and losses. Sampath said a study

conducted by the Department of Ocean Development (DOD) found that land subsidence to the scale of 0.9 m has taken place in Andaman and Nicobar group of islands and would impact the coastal lands in an unprecedented manner. It was also suggested that the author of the India study refer to the documents brought out by DOD, particularly those related to coastal demarcation and vulnerability mapping.

Several participants were curious to know if there were co-ordination problems in the tsunami rehabilitation efforts in India, as they did not figure in the country study, while all other studies referred to co-ordination as an area of grave concern. How did India manage to do better in the post-tsunami rehabilitation phase?

It was answered that co-ordination was indeed a problem in India as well, and there were gaps as well as duplication of effort. However, from the very beginning, there was also awareness about the lack of co-ordination. This led to the formation of co-ordination units like TNTRC, NCRC and KRRC. These organizations played a very crucial role in the post-tsunami rehabilitation phase, and they could well grow into much stronger and more meaningful organizations of co-ordination in the development sector at large, it was said.

Herman Kumara, Convenor of NAFSO, said that in Sri Lanka, efforts are being made to buy back trawlers and replace them with appropriate technology, considering the rate of overexploitation of the fragile ecosystem of the Gulf of Mannar by bottom trawlers. It is unfortunate that such an opportunity is not being grabbed to retire such trawlers. In the absence of a policy perspective, donors and NGOs were looking at replacing rather than retiring the vessels.

Elmer Ferrer of the CBCRM Resource Centre, Philippines said that the tsunami has linked south Asia and southeast Asia and, for that matter, the whole world. It was the first natural disaster in which funds were mobilized from all around the world. The question of being able to generate the same amount of generosity in future disasters also depends on how well the issues in this disaster are addressed, he added.

It was pointed out during the discussions that both the Indian studies focus more on equitable distribution of relief and rehabilitation, with no

reference to the sustainability of the resource base. The relief and rehabilitation agencies did not seem to be necessarily bothered with these concerns. They were all aiming to replace or reinstate the status quo.

It is also unfortunate, it was said, that the communities heavily dependent on fish resources are not bothered about the impact on resources of the distribution of fishing assets. In the context of oversupply and overcapacity, there should be the possibility of looking at distributing equitably the opportunities, keeping in mind the sustainability of resources. Concepts like rotational access to the sea could be worth exploring. From the accounts of traditional knowledge and practices, it is apparent that such concepts were prevalent in earlier times. In planning rehabilitation exercises, there should be efforts to make such connections, it was stressed.

It was pointed out rotational access practices have been documented in one of the villages in Nagapattinam, which saw the influx of a large number of boats post-tsunami. It was clarified that this practice might not have resulted from concern for resource depletion, but rather from a lack of crew, as most of crew members got boats and turned into owners after the tsunami.

PRESENTATIONS BY FAO, WORLD BANK AND ADB

Chairperson: **C. V. Sankar**, *Officer on Special Duty-Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of Tamil Nadu, India*

C. V. Sankar initiated the session on presentations by multilateral agencies. He said that the fishing population of Tamil Nadu is only 1-1.5 per cent of the State's total population. Before the tsunami, the level of attention given to the sector was considerably less. The disaster focused all attention on the sector, as it was the most affected. The tsunami thus provided an opportunity to look at the sector in a scientific and standardized fashion. The disaster also made the outside world realize that there is much to be done in the sector. This happened by bringing into focus the actual living conditions of the fisher people, the technologies they use, the various subsectors in fisheries, and the risks fisherfolk face due to the nature of their livelihoods. Initially, the State government put in place a policy of replacing what is lost or damaged.

That policy had its own strengths and drawbacks. While there was no sense of injustice in merely replacing what was lost, the opportunity to rectify some of the ills in the sector was missed.

The type of replacement that happened was, by and large, productive. The fisherfolk, who were thoroughly shaken in the initial months after the tsunami, quickly got back to their vocation. It is not very clear whether all fisher people happily returned to what they were doing earlier out of choice or due to the compulsion for survival. Two challenges exist at present: to evolve alternative livelihoods for people who wish to do so; and make fisheries safer for fishers. These are linked to other issues like housing and education. Education is one aspect that the government would like to focus upon, said Sankar. A lot of effort in terms of psychosocial support was given through trained local people. Such efforts prove to be sustainable in the long term. The workshop deliberations are very important, added Sankar, as the State administration is in the process of putting together policies for the tsunami-affected, in general, and fishers, in particular.

Presentation I: FAO and the Tsunami

Presenter: **Derek Staples**, *Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand*

Derek Staples started his presentation by describing the aim of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as alleviating poverty and reducing hunger in the world. This aim is achieved through raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of people, improving efficiency of production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, disaster emergency assistance, and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters.

Staples stressed that the key role played by FAO in the post-tsunami phase was to help rural communities become self-reliant and more resilient. The approach adopted by FAO for this was to:

- extend support through the government;
- give direct support to affected communities (through UN and NGO partners and governments); and
- support sector-wise co-ordination and planning at national, regional and international levels.

Staples gave brief reports on the FAO activities in the tsunami-affected countries of India, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Myanmar, in the Asian continent, and Seychelles, Yemen and Somalia, in the African continent.

The future plans of FAO to realize the aim of “build back better” put forward by the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery would be to:

- target better, so as to involve all the categories affected;
- improve fisheries infrastructure;
- address issues like oversupply of boats by evolving better systems of co-management;
- encourage good aquaculture practices;
- concentrate on issues of sea safety by coming up with standards for boats;
- work towards early warning systems and concentrate on communication at the village level; and
- work towards evolving more resilient communities by evolving risk reduction strategies

Presentation II: World Bank Priorities for Post-tsunami Assistance to Fisheries

Presenter: **Grant Milne**, *Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, Agriculture and Rural Development, South Asia Region of the World Bank, Washington D.C., United States of America*

Grant Milne listed the World Bank’s response to the tsunami and the principles it followed, adding that the general support plan was drafted in five days’ time.

The principles of support were:

- Governments would lead and own the programmes.
- Communities should identify their needs and responses.
- Aid should be equitably distributed.
- Strategies should be linked to growth and poverty reduction.
- Responses must be co-ordinated with other donors.
- There should be a transition from emergency to reconstruction.

Milne gave a brief report on the World Bank’s response and financial assistance to the tsunami-affected

countries of Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Thailand. He summarized the presentation by giving three main areas of focus for the Bank's future tsunami-related activities: housing, public infrastructure, and rural livelihoods. Direct support for fishers is relatively insignificant. The priorities arrived at by the World Bank were an outcome of discussions between the governments and stakeholders. Milne said that there seems to be a growing interest in improving fisheries management in the tsunami-affected parts of the world. He added that the aim would be to evolve a policy framework to achieve this and thereby improve the livelihoods of fishers and processors.

Among the other steps envisioned by the World Bank are scaling up inhouse fisheries expertise, and evolving a targeted sector work that underpins support for capacity building, legal and policy framework, improving marketing systems, and other institutional reforms. Such sector work could guide longer-term sector lending, Milne added.

He concluded by remarking that such workshops are an important platform and a unique opportunity for NGOs to give feedback on the World Bank's programmes by identifying areas where it is doing well, and other areas where there is scope for improvement, especially in better targeting and delivery. Such interactions and deliberations would also help the World Bank chalk out its long-term priorities, he said.

Presentation III: Asian Development Bank – India Resident Mission: Tsunami Emergency Assistance (Sector) Project (TEAP)

Presenter: S. V. Anil Das, Livelihood Specialist, Extended Mission in Chennai, Asian Development Bank (ADB), India

S. V. Anil Das' presentation focused on the ADB's programme for tsunami rehabilitation in India, the Tsunami Emergency Assistance (Sector) Project (TEAP). It aims to restore the livelihoods and economic activities of the tsunami-affected populations, to accelerate poverty alleviation in the tsunami-affected areas and rehabilitate and reconstruct public and community-based infrastructure that are vulnerable to natural disasters.

Detailing the project cost and financing plan, Das went on to list the project components, namely:

- *Livelihoods*: restoration of income-generation activities and alternative livelihoods of affected persons
- *Transportation*: building roads/bridges and ports/harbours
- *Water supply and sanitation and rural/municipal infrastructure*: rehabilitation and upgrading of damaged water supply systems, village/municipal roads, drainage and public building
- *Capacity building and implementation assistance*: providing support in assessment of damage, preparation and prioritization of subprojects, supervision/monitoring of works, and incremental administration

Discussion

Before opening the floor to discussions, C. V. Sankar added some points to supplement the presentations made by the World Bank and ADB as well as a short description of the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in tsunami rehabilitation in India.

The chair gave reasons why the World Bank's response to the fisheries sector was not up to the same level as in other sectors. He said that after much discussion, the Government of India came up with a rehabilitation policy that emphasized replacing lost assets. For this, the government announced the Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package, which was to be implemented with subsidies from both the Government of India as well as the State governments, with substantial financial assistance from institutions like the World Bank and the ADB. Even though money was needed for new fish-landing centres and other similar facilities, the initial focus was on the restoration of damaged and lost assets.

A grant fund available with the World Bank for fisheries policy would take stock of what has taken place and what needs to be done before its formulation. The Director of Fisheries would implement this programme. A portion of the grant fund would be allocated for studies on further livelihood options, pilot studies, and so on. Sankar said that such efforts are very important to take the "build back better" concept forward.

Another important programme of the World Bank is the cyclone-mitigation project, not only for

Tamil Nadu, but also for other coastal States. This project again is aimed at ensuring the safety of coastal communities by building more evacuation shelters, training the people to manage them on a day-to-day basis, clubbing them with early warning centers, and so on. This would prove extremely useful especially the Coromandel coast, which is often plagued by cyclones and supercyclones. Sankar said that the cyclone shelters that were built after the disastrous cyclones of the 1970s with the funds from the EU, Red Cross and other such organization have stood the test of time. These structures, built around 25-30 years ago, can handle large population, ranging to a thousand.

Yet another aspect of World Bank funding is related to the environment. Funds are available to put up bioshields in the form of shelterbelts and mangrove plantations, which have proved extremely useful in decreasing the effect of the tsunami in many areas. Sankar felt that the shelterbelts are helpful in creating sand dunes and holding the soil, thereby protecting the community.

The World Bank also funds the coastal zone management plan for the whole State. This involves activities like the demarcation of the high-tide line (HTL) so as to take note of the coastal zone regulation of the Government of India. More important is developing an integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) plan. All the above would depend crucially on developing a legal framework. These programmes should involve the community in a big way. The stakeholder consultation would be done by the State government's Department of Environment.

Sankar said that ADB's TEAP includes a huge and flexible grant focused on livelihoods. IFAD also has a post-tsunami sustainable livelihoods programme. Sankar also commented on the study done by ICSF for IFAD, which made a lot of perceptive comments on the status of the fisheries sector and what needs to be done in terms of innovative activities.

On UNDP, Sankar said that it is mandatory for UNDP to assist the governments in terms of disaster preparedness. An ongoing project funded by the UNDP is the disaster risk mitigation project already in operation in six districts of Tamil Nadu. The main focus of the programme is disaster preparedness for earthquakes. After the tsunami, the Government of Tamil Nadu requested UNDP to extend the programme to all the coastal districts of the State. Its

main focus is to make the community better prepared to face disasters. One village in Cuddalore district, where fisherfolk were given training on disaster preparedness before the tsunami, recorded the least number of deaths. The bottom line, Sankar said, is that communities need local solutions, and training in administering first aid, evacuation, and so on.

The district of Nagapattinam has taken these efforts a step further by coming up with a task force plan, which gives detailed listings of the resources available, like medical facilities, sturdy buildings, and cyclone shelters and their distances from particular locations in the village. Such plans need to be propagated at the village level. There is also a need for continuous interactive sessions with the villagers, to make these plans living rather than exist as mere booklets.

Answering a question on the impact of tsunami on fish stocks, Derek Staples said that FAO has indeed undertaken post-tsunami studies on the impact on fish habitats like mangroves. Even though there is no evident change in the fish stock, the impact would really be visible only after a couple of years, he added.

B. Subramanian of SIFFS, reacting to the greater emphasis given for fisheries management by all the three multilateral organizations that made presentations, said that the problems of management could not be solved unless the burgeoning population of fisherfolk was brought under control.

Reacting to the ADB plan for skill development, Subramanian said that fishermen do not want to be trained in activities like sewing. What they now need is good education. Most of them would opt for education and better employment than opt for a boat, if given a choice. NGOs are forcing the community to accept boats that are unable to give them a profitable livelihood anymore.

In response, Derek Staples of FAO said that fisheries management is a process, not a recipe. The process involves all the stakeholders, namely, the government, the NGOs and the fishing communities. He said that FAO and similar organizations are striving for a balance between social benefits and economic benefits with minimum impact on the sustainability of resources. The question that needs to be answered is "Where do we want ourselves to be?" The alternatives of better education, better employment, and better and more opportunities are what we should

be working for on a much more determinate basis, he said. The Joint UN-FAO mission is marking a start for some such processes. Many of those working in tsunami rehabilitation are looking for quick results, but it has to be understood that all these processes take time.

Responding to Subramanian's demand for better education, Sankar said that focus on education is quite high on the agenda of the government in tsunami rehabilitation. NGOs working in tsunami rehabilitation were also interested in education. The physical infrastructure of schools, toilets and laboratories has been constructed by NGOs directly. Many NGOs have partnered with local parent-teacher associations for taking in additional teachers. Sankar welcomed the observation raised on the need to consider and focus on the educational aspects when designing the relief and rehabilitation packages with the support of multilateral agencies.

S. V. Anil Das, the ADB representative, said that skill upgradation is an overarching component, which mainly takes into account alternative employment. Das said that there is a section of the community whose children are educated and are probably interested in developing other skills, who could be considered for training.

On rebuilding the fisheries sector, some participants felt that replacing lost assets could be taken up by NGOs and other donor agencies, while the multilateral agencies could better focus on integrated coastal zone management. This is particularly important because there are areas where the effect of the tsunami on nearby villages has been dramatically dissimilar. Rehabilitation of communities in such pockets might throw up more conflicts than solutions. Therefore an ICZM plan should be formulated that would look at the coast in a holistic manner.

Sankar pointed out that engineering solutions have not been totally shelved. In some areas like the low-lying, densely populated pockets of Kanyakumari district, the sea protection wall would be the only solution available due to non-availability of land for people to be relocated on the landward side. Construction of such structures would be undertaken only after they are backed by technical studies that confirm their worth as the only solution available.

Pointing out that it is easy to assess the overall needs of the community with respect to physical

infrastructure, Sankar added that care has to be taken to consult the communities on various issues like livelihoods and housing. The process is ongoing, and the communities' perceptions are given due importance and seriousness.

The ADB representative, Das, said that initially, during rapid assessment, involving the community in every aspect of planning was difficult and impractical. Both the assessment and the choosing of the community were at random. This resulted in the ADB and the World Bank allocating their budgets under broad heads, leaving the breakdown figures and programmes to be worked out after consultations with the community.

It was also pointed out that there several compulsions and great pressure to get things done quickly, unlike the other programmes funded by multilateral agencies, where much time is spent to understand and study the situation before coming up with a plan of work.

On the importance due to the traditional knowledge of fisher communities, it was said that one key principle that the World Bank should recognize is to build upon what already exists. The modern fisheries management techniques might not be acceptable to the community and, therefore, it would be worthwhile to document the traditional management systems and the traditional knowledge bases that exist in different communities in the Indian Ocean region, and then come up with viable fisheries management practices acceptable to the communities.

Milne added that the World Bank has projects and funds to support the supply of sea-safety equipment and communication networks. Most of the multilateral organizations like UNDP also have funds for setting up early warning systems.

On the question of sustaining fisheries, Derek Staples of FAO said that a study conducted in Thailand sought to determine what incentives are required to reduce trawler efforts. It was found that even with the fuel prices going up and thereby operational costs, the fishers would still not leave fishing because that is their way of life. This is not just a phenomenon of developing countries but can be seen in all the countries where there is fishing. When people are sentimentally attached to the profession, it is difficult to think of incentives to move them out of fishing, unless they are quite innovative.

H. Mohamad Kasim, Principal Scientist, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), India, said that in the face of biological and economical overfishing, there should be efforts to help fisher people earn better prices for their catch. Value addition is the area requiring major inputs and a great deal of handholding, he added.

C. M. Muralidharan of Action for Food Production (AFPRO), India pointed out that a fisherman gets into fishing at the age of around 13 and hence it is very difficult to alter his mindset. The youth have to be targeted for alternative livelihoods and a change of occupation. For this, they need education and skills development. Therefore, such initiatives should target not the existing skilled fishermen but the future generations and encourage them to come out of fishing.

Muralidharan added that many NGOs, supported by donor agencies, will set up processing plants, cold chains and fish-drying yards. But unless management systems are in place, these will prove unsustainable. A collaborative approach should be looked at where an institution like the ADB would provide infrastructure at the most appropriate place based on community opinion, and its management could be leased to private entrepreneurs and monitored by the people.

Anil Das said that the ADB is very cautious in dealing with infrastructure development. A proper implementation plan should be submitted along with the cost estimates for the infrastructure and also details on who will manage the structure and how it will be managed. Both the government and the ADB are very keen that the NGOs or the CBOs that are going to handhold them should plan, from the very first day, to hand over responsibility to the community.

The session wound up with general requests to the organizations present to have more and more consultations at the local level, particularly with communities. While the funding agencies and the government will co-ordinate these processes, the government would also like the people to understand what these schemes are about and what their implications are. Requests were made to the NGOs to come forward and suggest projects and studies that they would like to provide to the communities for restoring livelihoods, building back better systems, and so on.

DISCUSSION ON WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

(The recommendations, which are included after the India Special Study at the end of this document, are based on reports presented and discussed at country meetings and at the Chennai workshop, as well as the deliberations at the NGO meeting on 17 January 2006. They reflect the overarching concerns of the participants of the workshop.)

Presenter: **Annie George**, CEO, NGO Co-ordination and Resource Centre (NCRC), Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, India

Chairperson: **Muhammad Imran Amin**, Telapak, Indonesia

Some participants asked about the steps that ought to follow from the finalization of the recommendations, and how to ensure that they are well accepted and acted on. Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary, ICSF, described the evolution of the recommendations. She said that the process involved was elaborate, starting with the country studies that were discussed and critically reviewed at country-level meetings, and continuing at the NGO meeting on 17 January 2006 before culminating at the regional workshop in Chennai. The participatory process threw up issues of common concern to all the participating tsunami-affected countries as well as certain country-specific issues. The proceedings of the workshop would be widely distributed and publicized so that the recommendations reach governments, multilateral agencies, NGOs and all those engaged in post-tsunami rehabilitation of fishing communities. It is hoped that they will help influence the course of rehabilitation in ways that benefit small-scale fishing communities and improve their livelihoods in the long term, Chandrika Sharma added.

PANEL DISCUSSION

(The presentation of the recommendations was followed by a panel discussion on key issues that emerged from the workshop. The panelists were asked to identify the top priorities that ought to lead the post-tsunami rehabilitation efforts in each country. These priorities are listed below countrywise.)

Panelists:

1. **Waraporn Prompoj**, Chief, International Co-operation Group, Fisheries Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Fisheries, Thailand

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2. **Saut P. Hutagalung**, Director of Planning and International Co-operation Bureau, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia
3. **Ranepura Hewage Piyasena**, Additional Secretary (Development), Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Sri Lanka
4. **Amarjeet Banga**, Director (FE&Fy Co-ord), Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, India
5. **Harekrishna Debnath**, Chairperson, National Fishworkers' Forum, India
6. **Gunnar Album**, Independent Observer, Norway

Chairperson: Derek Staples, Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

INDONESIA

1. Improve co-ordination for better planning and management, and involve community-level organizations, NGOs, governments and the *panglima laot*.
2. Accelerate the pace of rehabilitation programmes to ensure timely and adequate support.
3. Shape policies and long-term measures only after consultations with various stakeholders.

SRI LANKA

1. Enhance co-ordination at the regional and district levels, which would help the government to provide assistance to the really needy.
2. Target the complete fishing unit while undertaking rehabilitation.
3. Aim to improve livelihoods in fishing communities.

THAILAND

1. Ensure better co-ordination between the government and NGOs, and among NGOs, for which a co-ordination unit would help.
2. Strive for sound resources as a basis for good fisheries. Improved resource management would require detailed stock assessments that

could lead to plans for fisheries restoration, co-management and coastal aquaculture, among other areas.

3. Establish simple early warning systems in fishing communities to cope with future disasters.

INDIA

1. Focus on a sustainable livelihoods programme.
2. Strengthen developmental schemes specifically meant for fisheries.

(Harekrishna Debnath, Chairperson, National Fishworkers' Forum, India, added the following priorities:)

3. Help coastal communities become resilient to future calamities through region-specific long-term plans.
4. Involve the people in consultations on planning relief and rehabilitation measures, assessment of resources and requirements, and planning for sustainable fisheries management and coastal zone management.
5. Recognize the role of women in fishing communities and put them at the centre of the decision-making stage.

(Gunnar Album, the Independent Observer from Norway, added the following priorities:)

1. Document thoroughly the experiences of NGOs and make them available to governments in donor countries in an accessible form.
2. Help fishing communities improve their ability to control inputs and outputs in their fisheries.

Discussion

It was pointed out that after the tsunami, fisheries have come into focus in many countries, and a great amount of aid is being put to “build back better”. Only through dialogue can there be a convergence of ideas and priorities. Otherwise contradictions will abound like the attempts to develop alternative sources of livelihoods even as there are calls to protect traditional livelihoods.

Summarizing the session, the Chairperson, Derek Staples of FAO, said the foremost priority was the issue of sustainable livelihood, for which it is necessary to have co-ordination of rehabilitation efforts among

the different stakeholders. Another priority is the need to understand the status of the resource base on which many livelihoods depend, for which participatory management, co-management and sustainable aquaculture are options worth exploring.

CONCLUDING SESSION

At the final session of the workshop, Sebastian Mathew, Programme Adviser, ICSF, and V. Vivekanandan, Chief Executive, SIFFS, provided some concluding comments. Mathew drew attention to the fact that relief and rehabilitation work in the post-tsunami period had led much greater — and perhaps unprecedented — interaction between fishing communities and governments of countries in the Indian Ocean region. There was thus a very real potential for a common framework to emanate from such an encounter. There was also considerable scope to draw from good legislation that exists in some countries in the region. The recommendations for longer-term rehabilitation, presented at this workshop, could also contribute to building an effective framework that brings together the regions and communities of south and southeast Asia.

Vivekanandan said that in the post-disaster situation, there was clearly a willingness to collaborate and co-ordinate, cutting across the usual boundaries between the private and public sectors, and governments and NGOs, as was evident during this workshop. The problems at the end of the first year after the tsunami, however, remain much the same as those that were highlighted in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, for example, in the NGO statement to the 26th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the FAO on 8 March 2005. While there is agreement on what needs to be done, the problem lies mainly in the realm of implementing and operationalizing policies and principles. Proposing the practical modalities of implementation is especially challenging in view of the diversity in the institutional and legal framework of the tsunami-affected countries. While there is enormous potential for sharing experiences on rehabilitation, for the sharing to become learning, we have to contextualize and abstract the experiences. Often, it has proved difficult to reach this level.

Vivekanandan added that there was a need for greater reflection on the meaning of community participation, and whether there should be an unquestioning acceptance of proposals put forth by the community. Equally, there is a need to question the policies of donors, who remain largely unaccountable to those on the ground, and who prioritize interventions based on their own perceptions.

On the issue of co-ordination, identified as a key priority by all the government representatives in the panel discussion, Vivekanandan pointed out that in the wake of the tsunami disaster, various models of co-ordination have evolved. In India itself there are three or four distinctly different models of co-ordination. The Thailand model, as exemplified by the Save Andaman Network, is also very interesting, and there are rich opportunities to learn from them.

On the issue of “building back better”, Vivekanandan said that he remained a sceptic. It appears better to do less than more, because often it is in the name of doing something better that bigger problems are created. It is not easy, for example, to address problems such as bad governance, social exclusion, and gender inequality as part of short-term interventions.

Finally, Vivekanandan flagged a few issues that emerged from the discussions during the workshop. Rehabilitation issues were more or less similar across countries, even in Thailand, a country regarded as economically better off. None of the countries had good baseline data about numbers of boats, fishermen, and so on. This appears to be a problem inherent to small-scale fisheries, due to its informal nature and the presence of, by and large, sociopolitically marginal communities. With State laws differing from community “laws”, issues of legal pluralism arise as well.

Another important issue was transborder fishing. The post-tsunami context offers an opportunity to look at this issue in greater depth. Fishermen caught as poachers are often on small boats. National boundaries, while important, cannot be allowed to ignore the lives and livelihoods of small-scale fishermen. This is an opportune time for India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Maldives to work out some

humane system to allow access to one another's waters, based on certain conditions, rather than treating fishing as a criminal activity, Vivekanandan added.

Several comments were subsequently received from the participants. There was a query on how donors could be made accountable, an issue that remains a challenge, it was pointed out. One participant responded that perhaps the best way to increase accountability was to produce our own knowledge, as that increases options and alternatives. At present, the production of knowledge is monopolized by those who can pay. It is important that mechanisms for articulating, documenting and disseminating peoples' knowledge be developed. Enough resources have been generated during the tsunami to enable the development of information centres on a regional basis.

The demand side of rehabilitation efforts was also discussed. Communities who were the recipients of aid were often not bothered about the quality of

aid. In the face of increasing demand and lack of quality control, donors had nobody to guide them. This is where fisher organizations like SIFFS can make qualitative differences.

It was pointed out that rehabilitation packages should strive for an average threshold of programmes that seek to improve the day-to-day lives of the affected, and should not be designed to cope only with unprecedented disasters.

In closing the workshop, Chandrika Sharma, thanked all participants for contributing meaningfully to the deliberations. The tsunami had brought together people from different parts of the world, creating an enabling environment for working together and understanding issues of common concern. It generated a greater space for governments, NGOs and fishworker organizations to gather and discuss issues. Only such participatory and collaborative efforts can continue to contribute to the larger betterment of humanity, in general, and fishing communities, in particular, Chandrika Sharma concluded.