

## Tsunami Five-Year Report Q&A

### **Q: How much money was allocated to Tsunami relief?**

A: In response, the international community provided assistance on an unprecedented scale, with in excess of USD 14 billion pledged for the relief and recovery of tsunami-affected countries - with over USD 5.5 billion of this coming from private sources, such as individuals and organisations.

UNICEF funds received for the Tsunami stand at USD 694.7 million, three quarters of which came from UNICEF's National Committees. Of that total, USD 672.2 million had been utilised by end October 2009. USD 608.4 million were spent between 2004 and 2008. The estimated expenditure from 1 January to 30 October 2009 is USD 63.9 million. USD 22.5 million remains unspent.

### **Q: How will the remaining USD 22.5 million be spent?**

A: Any remaining funds will be handed over to the Tsunami affected countries to carry on recovery work, either through government or UNICEF country office programming.

### **Q: Why did it take UNICEF five years to spend the millions donated?**

A: Rebuilding communities that were shattered to their core is not a patchwork task of months or even a year, but is rather a matter of steady commitment over many years. The Indian Ocean Tsunami was an unprecedented natural disaster that led to a massive outpouring of global support. In order to ensure long-term support to communities and governments in reconstruction and recovery stages, UNICEF accepted funding for projected expenditures over several years that would link emergency response to rehabilitation and development. Throughout this process, local communities were empowered to take part in recovery planning. The aim was not to find quick solutions that were not sustainable, but to "Build Back Better."

### **Q: What are some examples of building back better?**

A: UNICEF's focus throughout the recovery process was and continues to be on building back better. What do we mean by that? It means that inside the four new walls of a rebuilt health facility there are trained medical staff who have the drugs and equipment and knowledge they need to provide quality health care. It means not just rebuilding schools, but ensuring that the quality of education is better – that teachers and administrators are well trained and students may learn in a safe environment. Throughout the Tsunami affected areas, for example, UNICEF has been able to introduce Child Friendly School strategies where they were not previously employed. And there are numerous other examples of the kinds of opportunities available in post-tsunami recovery work:

Conflict resolution: In Indonesia, the unprecedented international response to the Tsunami created a unique opportunity to bolster the peace process between the government and the Free Aceh Movement, resulting in a peace agreement signed in August 2005. To consolidate the peace reached in the aftermath of the Tsunami, UNICEF's reconstruction efforts focused on both Tsunami- and conflict-affected areas.

- Education: Large funding in the wake of the Tsunami allowed previously dormant education policies in Indonesia to be reinvigorated, while also drawing attention to issues of quality. For example, free education was extended up to age 12, in line with national targets.
- Child Protection: Thailand's recovery efforts have been instrumental in building national systems to strengthen child protection. A model Child Protection Monitoring System (CPMS) was initially established in 2007 to identify and monitor the situation of children orphaned by the Tsunami, as well as other at-risk children. Information from the monitoring system is used by local administration officials to develop plans for child protection at the community level and to allocate budgets and services. The CPMS was expanded from 27 sub-districts in 2007 to 36 sub-districts in 2008, and is now being considered for national replication.

- And in India, the institutionalization of children's panchayats (village councils) – where children represent their peers and discuss issues like school dropouts, substance abuse and child labour – as part of the local administrative units in Kerala, was a major achievement.

**Q: What were the challenges of conducting recovery efforts simultaneously across the eight countries affected by the Tsunami?**

A: Each of the eight tsunami-affected countries that UNICEF works in poses unique challenges. Work in Sri Lanka and Somalia has in some cases been halted because of a surge in hostilities; construction in Indonesia has been hampered by new roads yet to be built and unresolved land titles; monitoring and evaluation in the Maldives is made more complicated by the dispersed geography.

Realizing that lasting recovery will take years, UNICEF has strived to meet its responsibility not only to move quickly, but also to be accountable and ensure our work has lasting impact. Building back better involves strategic planning and cooperation from other agencies, organizations and the survivors who must be a part of the process. UNICEF is also concerned about corruption or abuse of funds and requires strict controls on who receives funding and how the money is spent.

**Q: How has the conflict in Sri Lanka affected Tsunami reconstruction?**

A: Implementation of tsunami-related activities in Sri Lanka has been constrained by the deteriorating security situation in the north and north-eastern districts. Construction has met with significant delays and postponements from transportation of materials and hiring difficulties. The displacement resulting from the rise in hostilities is impacting children on multiple levels, denying them access to education, health services, worsening nutrition and aggravating human rights protection concerns.

**Q: In what ways has the Tsunami relief served as a catalyst to improve access to basic services for children and families?**

A: Take Somalia, for example. Prior to the Tsunami, there were only two Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centres in the tsunami-affected area, and one health post functioning with minimal expertise and drug supply. As part of the Tsunami response, over 68,900 people now have improved access to basic health services through the rehabilitation of 14 primary health care facilities, training of healthcare staff and provision of equipment, medicines and nutrition supplies. During 2009, in a new push to reduce under-five child mortality rates, the remaining Tsunami response funds were used to support a Child Health Day campaign, during which children benefited from immunisation, Vitamin A supplementation, nutritional assessments, de-worming, distribution of oral rehydration salts and water purification tablets.

Another example is in Indonesia, where fifteen per cent more people now have access to improved sanitation than before the Tsunami. Aceh has shifted from household to community-managed water and sanitation systems, which are assured for short- and medium-term sustainability.

**Q: Will relief work come to an end in all the affected countries?**

A: Recovery programmes ended in India in 2007, while programmes in Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar drew to a close in 2008, with continuing work handed over to national authorities or integrated into existing programmes. Reconstruction of health centres, schools and water and sanitation systems gathered pace in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives – in particular the sizeable construction of new schools in Aceh and Nias – while being supported by major capacity development initiatives. By end 2009, Somalia and Maldives will integrate any remaining Tsunami recovery into on-going programmes, while in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, UNICEF will continue to support reconstruction activities through to end 2010.

Each UNICEF country office has engaged with governments and partners to support national recovery plans in each country. This is the common and agreed approach of the UN system, which has committed itself to supporting and empowering governments in their lead role as architects and implementers of the long-term recovery.

**Q: How long will UNICEF remain involved in recovery efforts?**

A: While the majority of the Tsunami reconstruction goals have been fulfilled, UNICEF will remain involved in the recovery effort as long as the Tsunami's impact is felt in the region. Recovery for the Tsunami generation will go on for years. We have been in the region for 50 years, working on improving access to health care, sanitation, clean water, and other services that are so critical to the well being of children. When this historic and unprecedented disaster struck, UNICEF was already on the ground, and was delivering supplies and emergency relief within hours. Over time, our work in the Tsunami zone will gradually become integrated into UNICEF's ongoing country programmes, but it will continue indefinitely.

**Q: How has UNICEF responded to the specific needs of children orphaned by the Tsunami?**

A: Across the region, thousands of children lost parents in the Tsunami. In Sri Lanka alone, over 7,500 children have been registered to have lost at least one parent, creating a challenge for government and aid agencies to provide for these families. UNICEF has worked on several different levels to protect children who have lost one or both parents, including training thousands of adults to identify and treat children who have endured traumatic events, providing supplies to growing families, providing a learning environment and supplies for schools and working with local governments to develop foster care for those children who do not have families to care for them.

**Q: Did UNICEF raise more money than it needed for Tsunami relief?**

A: No. The Indian Ocean Tsunami was an unprecedented natural disaster that led to a massive outpouring of global support. In order to ensure long-term support to communities and governments in reconstruction and recovery stages, UNICEF accepted funding for projected expenditures over several years.

UNICEF stopped all new fundraising initiatives on January 26, 2005, when estimates of funding needs were met, withdrew its direct appeals and actively discouraged government donors from providing more funds than were requested. UNICEF informed key partners that pending fundraising initiatives would be directed towards longer term recovery and reconstruction when possible. While small donations continued unsolicited, UNICEF declined several large contributions from governments and other groups when efforts to redirect that funding to other crises in need were rejected by the donors.

**Q: How does UNICEF keep track of expenditures related to Tsunami recovery work?**

A: UNICEF has a financial management tracking system for the Tsunami that monitors all Tsunami funding and expenditures. UNICEF also conducts internal and external audits in each of the Tsunami affected countries. Reports on UNICEF's work in the affected regions are published on UNICEF's website, including funding figures.

**Q: Have there been cases of corruption or misuse of the donations?**

A: Corruption is a reality in every country, especially where large sums of money are being spent rapidly to rebuild whole regions. The enormous amount of money poured into recovery and reconstruction in the Tsunami region encouraged the unscrupulous to misuse funds, but UNICEF remained focused on preventing abuses with the funds it spent. While UNICEF internal financial procedure may seem sometimes cumbersome, such tight procedures help avoid the misuse of funds.

UNICEF's program process is the same everywhere. Priorities are agreed with governments, and specific accountabilities are carried out by both sides. UNICEF does not provide grants to governments, but does pay for specific commodities and services as part of a broad and agreed plan. For instance, UNICEF will enter into contracts on behalf of governments for the reconstruction of schools. UNICEF will manage the payment of these contracts. UNICEF will also spend funds to provide training for government workers. These expenditures are managed by UNICEF to satisfy specific objectives, and the disbursement of funds is managed by UNICEF and implementation of activities is monitored by UNICEF staff.

**Q: What concrete measures were put in place to avoid corruption (e.g. price agreements)?**

A: For the Tsunami relief effort, UNICEF allocated additional resources for oversight and audit for the Tsunami relief operation including:

- A comprehensive manual that explains UNICEF's financial rules and regulations is provided to partners.
- Before any cash disbursements are made, there is stringent examination of proposals and budgets by UNICEF at all levels. UNICEF requires all recipients to open an exclusive bank account for these funds, and the account must have two signatures. UNICEF finance staff then verifies that the accounts are not personal and the forms must be registered in UNICEF's finance department before any proposal for cash advances is considered.
- Programme/project staff make regular field visits to monitor projects and also examine the way the funds are being handled.
- When payments are made, funds are supplied for only 3 months at a time. Additional funds are granted only after strict assessment of how the initial money was spent.
- Advances are usually made in small amounts, ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, making it very difficult for corruption to take place on a significant scale.
- Higher amounts are usually for institutional or individual contracts that undergo a rigorous screening and selection process by a Contract Review Committee made up of UNICEF staff members with experience in judging the cost of the services rendered.

**Q: In what ways has the Tsunami altered the way UNICEF responds to emergencies?**

A: UNICEF has learned many valuable lessons from the Tsunami that can be implemented in future emergencies, from structural to operational improvements. For instance, a disaster on the massive scale of the Tsunami has taught UNICEF to **increase its roster for emergency deployment**. UNICEF has improved its human resource system, realizing the need for a larger and up-to-date roster of potential staff and strengthening the capacity of staff in country office emergency planning.

It has also **streamlined its financial systems** to be able to absorb and track huge contributions and expenditures, modified its global financial monitoring tools to improve tracking and reporting and increased its internal Emergency Programme Fund to ensure timely availability of funds.

To better base emergency response decisions on objective evidence, UNICEF has **strengthened information gathering** with new tools at the onset of an emergency while expanding evaluations during the implementation of emergency programmes.

Among key lessons learned from the Tsunami response was the importance of **strengthening emergency preparedness and response capacity**. A number of programme innovations were field tested and implemented, generating good practices to be used in other countries. For instance, in child protection, there was an emphasis on unaccompanied minors, an issuance of inter-agency guidelines and support for governments to prevent out-of-country adoption. School models and designs from Sri Lanka and Indonesia were used in other natural disasters.

The Tsunami stretched the capacity of aid organizations to deliver the most appropriate supplies where and when they were needed, and underscored the need to **improve emergency supply**. To that end, UNICEF reviewed its emergency supply to identify supply lists for common scenarios and delivery times for each type; determine the most efficient source of supply; and determine the best locations for stockpiling.

In Myanmar, for example, lessons learned from the Tsunami response have positively influenced the country's preparedness and response to other emergency situations, particularly in terms of medical supply preparedness and management. Following cyclone Mala and other emergencies in 2006, UNICEF was able to quickly mobilise and deliver emergency relief goods, including family kits, insecticide treated bednets, and essential drugs for local health centres, in the affected areas. Following cyclone Nargis in 2008, UNICEF distributed child survival kits to help treat up to 600,000 episodes of diarrhoea, 300,000 cases of pneumonia and 60,000 cases of post-partum

haemorrhage prevention, and in cyclone-hit township hospitals, 6,200 cases of neonatal sepsis and severe pneumonia. UNICEF also provided support for therapeutic feeding programmes to respond to identified pockets of severe acute malnutrition.

**Q: How has the Tsunami underscored the importance of partnerships in recovery and development work?**

A: Responding to such a large-scale disaster encompassing such a large geographic area with so many collaborators underscored the importance of partnerships to UNICEF's work, and the need to strengthen and expand both in the affected countries and globally. Partnerships have been expanded, particularly with other UN agencies and the private sector. Coordination with other humanitarian partners has been improved through the cluster approach, which assigns leadership and support roles to different agencies within an emergency. Globally, UNICEF is cluster lead for Water and Sanitation, Nutrition and Education (co-lead with Save the Children). Under the Protection Cluster, UNICEF is also lead agency for the Child Protection sub-cluster and the Gender-Based Violence sub-cluster (co-lead with UNFPA).

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