

Of the many countries affected by the tsunami of December 26 2004, our group has chosen Sri Lanka as the recipient of our fundraising. Many different agencies are working with the Republic of Sri Lanka to coordinate relief efforts and direct relief funds to the appropriate places. Out of the numerous groups who are currently working to rebuild Sri Lanka, we have chosen UNICEF to be the recipient of our fundraising. The UNICEF group is active in Sri Lanka and is also very reputable and well known throughout the international community. We believe that donating through UNICEF will allow for our fundraising money to be used to its fullest potential.

During the event itself we plan to provide all of the information detailed in this paper. Alongside this information we will be providing current information about the rebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka. We will also provide information about UNICEF to assure people that their contributions will be used wisely. Lastly we will provide a slideshow with images of the effect that the tsunami had on the Sri Lankan people and all other who were affected by the tsunami. This will allow people to see first hand, if they have not already, the destruction that the tsunami has caused. It will also put into perspective the scale of the rebuilding efforts and the seriousness of our cause.

The country of Sri Lanka is a republic and its government is a representative democracy. This is a democracy in which the people's elected deputies (representatives), not the people themselves, vote on legislation. The Head of State of the Republic of Sri Lanka is the President. The President is also the Head Executive, the Head of the Government, and the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The President is elected by the people and holds office for a period of six years. The President has the right to attend, address and send messages to Parliament at any time. The President is also

entitled to all the privileges, immunities and powers of a Member of Parliament other than the right to vote, and shall not be liable for any breach of the privileges of the Parliament or its members.

The total population of Sri Lanka is just over 19 million with a population density of 304 people per square mile. The country has a total land area of about 65,525 square miles. The tsunami Dec. 26th had a great impact on this population as about 31,000 lives were lost and 1.5 million people were displaced. Sri Lanka's largest industries are food processing, textiles and apparel, food and beverages, telecommunications, and insurance and banking. Main exports have shifted from plantation crops (93% in 1970, 15% in 2003) to textiles and garments (63% in 2003.) The GDP per capita is about US\$3,700 and ranks 143rd of 232 countries reported.¹

The people of Sri Lanka are made up of two primary ethnic and religious groups, the Sinhala-Buddhist majority and the Tamil-Hindu minority. The Buddhist religion makes up about 69% of the population, while the Hindu religion only makes up 15% and Christian and Muslim religions together make up the remaining 15% of the total population. The culture is changing in Sri Lanka, in the 1970's development was discouraged and isolation was advocated. Now, culture is seen as a goal and a framework. The people of Sri Lanka are now coming together after being torn apart as a result of the long lasting civil war.²

Sri Lanka has experienced a 19-year civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lanka Government. This conflict has resulted in the death of over 60,000 people, and several hundred thousand Tamil citizens have fled from their country. The Tamils were fighting to gain self-determination and also create an

independent homeland, while the Sri Lanka government was fighting to keep and uphold a unitary state. The fighting continued into the 1990's until the commencement of peace negotiations. Now the country is facing new opportunities and also new challenges on the humanitarian front. Access has increased to most areas of the country and over 183,000 displaced people have returned to their homes. As of 2003, 1,000 refugees have returned from India and another 5,000 are expected. The conflict is improving in Sri Lanka, but the destruction from the war has left the towns and villages without a basic infrastructure, shelter, or even education and health facilities.³

At least 1 million people were directly affected by the Tsunami December 26th. The infrastructure was partially or fully destroyed as far as two kilometers inland, across 13 districts along the northern, southern and eastern coastlines. Overall, despite extensive damage to the country, the situation has been improving significantly. An increasing number of displaced populations are returning to their homes (545,492 compared to more than 850,000 on 29 December).⁴

The tsunami struck a relatively thin but extremely long coastal area stretching over 1,000 kilometers, or two thirds of the country's coastline. About 100,000 houses were damaged; of which more than 75,000 were completely destroyed, as were 150,000 vehicles. Coastal infrastructure (roads, railway, power, telecommunication, water supply, fishing ports) was also significantly affected. Some estimates regarding the overall damage to Sri Lanka are US\$1 billion with a large percentage of the losses concentrated in housing, tourism, fisheries and transportation.⁵

In the long term, the devastating effects of the catastrophe could mean around 250,000 more people will be living in poverty. In addition, Sri Lanka's large budget

deficit will make it difficult to contribute funds to the disaster areas. It is expected that tourism revenues will decrease, deteriorating its current account deficit. Some sources have estimated an impact of up to 1% of the GDP, which could reduce growth in 2005 from the 6% projected by the Government to less than 5%. Inflationary pressures are also expected to increase.⁶

At a preliminary meeting it was agreed that for purposes of the needs of assessment, the ADB (a Sri Lankan transportation agency) would focus on the transport sector, the World Bank on education, health, and housing infrastructure, and JBIC (a Sri Lanka based energy company) on power and water supply. The United Nations system will help strengthen the link between ongoing emergency relief and long-term reconstruction. Reconstruction on the transport sector includes the following: repair or replace boats, engines and fishing gear to enable the fishers to resume fishing in the shortest time possible. Moreover, essential facilities for cold storage, ice producing facilities, fish receiving and marketing centers, harbors and anchorages are also needed immediately. Priorities on the health sector are as follows: implementation of disease prevention activities; provision of medical services, including supplies management and mobilization of additional medical professionals; strengthening of disease and water quality surveillance, as well as environmental hygiene promotion and the improvement of sanitation in displacement camps.⁷

The Sri Lankan government is implementing a number of policies to aid its people in Tsunami relief efforts. Sri Lankan military officers have been visiting shelters across the eastern part of the country and informing people that it is all right to go home and start rebuilding their lives. Monday the 21st of February, Sri Lankan school children

were back in class for the first time after the Tsunami. The Sri Lankan government has already taken the first steps to begin the reconstruction of the destroyed schools within the next month. The government has also aided in the donation of basic food, water and clothing all of which have been distributed to refugee centers from United Nations agencies, International charities and government warehouses. Authorities have said that aid has reached all but a very small number of citizens. The government is currently working to improve the conditions in overcrowded facilities, which can very quickly become unsanitary and potential breeding grounds for contagious diseases. Alongside all of the actual relief work, the government has set up several special donation bank accounts that are all available on the country's official website, <http://www.priu.gov.lk/>. These accounts allow expatriates to donate directly to the well.

Works Cited

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