



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION

Update – August 3, 2005

SRI LANKA

U.S. and Sri Lanka sign agreement for \$133 million in reconstruction projects

USAID signed an agreement with Sri Lanka's Ministry of Finance & Planning on July 25 that launch implementation of the US Government's post-tsunami reconstruction program. Mission Director Carol R. Becker assured the media at a press conference after the signing that the \$77 million in new projects for large and small infrastructure will be executed expeditiously, while maintaining U.S. standards of quality, transparency, and accountability. The large infrastructure package includes construction of 14 vocational schools, a bridge, and three fisheries. The contract for the work is expected to be awarded by the end of September.



*USAID Mission Director Carol R. Becker (left) signs the strategic agreement with the government of Sri Lanka represented by Ministry of Finance Secretary P.B. Jayasundera (second right) and Deputy Secretary S.B. Divaratne (right), witnessed by U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Jeffrey J. Lunstead (second left).
Photo: USAID/Zack Taylor*

The agreement also included continued funding for community focused micro-enterprise programs to help affected families get back on their feet, and provide counseling to help people who remain traumatized. Construction of 100 children's parks will have therapeutic value for the young, and assistance to builders will ensure access for the disabled in new construction. Dr. Becker noted that successful implementation of projects under the agreement will involve consultation and participation from a wide range of government officials, members of the affected communities, and the private sector, and expressed confidence the program will make a meaningful impact toward helping rebuild livelihoods and communities in damaged areas.

FAST FACTS: U.S. ASSISTANCE AS OF AUGUST 3, 2005

Total USG Humanitarian and Recovery Assistance Pledged 12/31/04:	\$350,000,000
Tsunami Recovery and Reconstruction Fund:	\$631,000,000*
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance Committed:	\$101,550,957
Total USAID Rehabilitation/Reconstruction Assistance Committed:	\$427,695,969
Other USG Humanitarian Assistance Provided:	\$237,900,000

*\$656 million was approved for the Tsunami Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, but \$25 million is committed to Avian Flu.

For more information on the tsunami and USAID's work, please see "Tsunami Relief" at www.usaid.gov.



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SRI LANKA

USAID cleans celebrated lagoon in Batticaloa

USAID has begun a project to clean up the Batticaloa lagoon, home to Sri Lanka’s famous “singing fish.” The project will help restore livelihoods of more than 3,500 local people by removing rubble and debris that impeded navigation of the lagoon. A \$71,000 USAID grant brings together multi-disciplinary teams of engineers and technicians, including divers from the Sri Lanka Navy. Other participants include local elected government officials and civil servants, police, fishing societies, the multi-ethnic National Youth Services Council, and a large contingent of volunteer youth. The cleanup is expected to be complete by the end of September.

Tourists come to Batticaloa to hear the sounds that emanate from the waters of the lagoon between April and September. According to local lore, the noises are akin to a string orchestra tuning up or a vibrating wine glass. Some say the sounds are made by top-sail catfish, while others attribute them to mollusks or water flowing through holes in rocks at the bottom of the lagoon.



Workers remove a felled tree from the lagoon at Batticaloa while executing the USAID project.
Photo: USAID



A traditional Sri Lankan dancer greets U.S. officials at the opening ceremony in July.
Photo: USAID

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives opens new office in Matara

USAID expanded the reach of its peace-building program with the opening of a new office in the southern town of Matara. The new office is the third in Sri Lanka for USAID, which also has offices in Ampara, and Trincomalee. The USAID presence in Matara helps assist communities to identify their unique needs and priorities since the tsunami in this politically volatile region. Through the new office, USAID can work with organizations who may be too small or lack the capacity to come in contact with international development organizations. Recent projects in the area include reconstruction of damaged schools, and reequipping schools that sustained damage and lost inventory while serving as temporary housing for people displaced by the tsunami.



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INDIA

CityLinks: Touching US and Indian cities

USAID is helping link tsunami affected cities of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam with coastal cities in Florida. City Managers and other urban professionals from Florida cities, which were recently affected by hurricanes, shared their experiences with their counterparts in Tamil Nadu. Urban professionals from the US and India will have exchange visits and share knowledge and experience with government officials, private industries and NGOs in mitigating potential future disasters and helping to build stronger cities. During the first visit from July 10–23, two teams from Florida met with their counterparts to identify priority issues and jointly prepare strategies for development. Potential program interventions include refurbishment of water and sanitation systems, improved construction techniques to mitigate damage from future floods and development of beachfront into manageable parklands with improvements.



Urban professionals from the U.S. and India exchange visits and share information.

Photo: International City/County Managers Association



THAILAND

Catering to basic needs

During the early community assessments and training sessions for the post-tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods project, participants needed access to prepared food while working in rural locations. Unfortunately, restaurants and catering services did not exist in these areas. In response to this dilemma, a group of women came forward with a request for initial funding to purchase pots, pans and utensils to start a catering service. After the development of a simple business plan, community revolving funds provided seed money to start the business. Only weeks after starting their business, the customer base has expanded beyond the initial village to include multi-donor work crews in a 20 mile radius, far surpassing their early expectations.

USAID provides entrepreneurs with community revolving loans to begin small businesses.

Photo: USAID/Suzanne Ross



*Bill Frej, Mission Director, USAID Jakarta, District Mayors in Aceh and Philip Schwehm, Chief of Party, LGSP during the signing ceremony.
Photo: USAID/Larry Meserve*

INDONESIA

USAID to strengthen recovery planning and build good governance in Aceh

USAID is quickly moving to restore governmental services in the province of Aceh and get citizens back to their homes. On July 22, USAID signed an agreement with the Districts of Aceh Barat, Aceh Jaya and Nagan Raya that will provide approximately US\$2.25 million in technical assistance to implement the Districts' action plans to rebuild their communities.

With limited infrastructure and significant loss of civil servants, USAID will build the technical skills of local government employees and council leaders to carry out the action plans, which will determine the location of houses, mosques, roads, schools, health centers markets and common areas.

USAID supports cash-for-work in Gurah

The villagers of Gurah continue their clean-up efforts under USAID's community-based recovery program. After successfully removing the debris from their rice fields, they now tackle the difficult job of clearing fallen trees from the irrigation canal. This task is essential prior to the rainy season in October. Mostly widowers now, these men earn \$3.50 per person per day under a cash-for-work initiative. They estimate that the canal will be cleared in 30 days with 40 people working as a team. Originally, Gurah had 600 inhabitants. After the tsunami, there are only 200. Despite their hardships, the community is united and looking toward the future.



Through a cash-for-work initiative, villagers work to remove fallen trees from the irrigation canal.

Photo: USAID/Roberta Cavitt