

AFTER THE TSUNAMI Rapid Environmental Assessment



United Nations Environment Programme

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Maruthamunai, Sri Lanka. Minhaz Haque, aged 15, stands in the rain near his destroyed house in Maruthamunai village, eastern Sri Lanka. He says there is nothing left, not even the foundation, as if the house was never there. © Shehzad Noorani/Still Pictures

**“...there is nothing left,
not even the foundation,
as if the house was never there...”**

FOREWORD

by Klaus Toepfer
Executive Director UNEP



Although several weeks have passed since the Asian tsunami devastated coastal communities in 12 countries around the Indian Ocean, we are still struggling to comprehend the magnitude of the human losses. The suffering and destruction that was left in the tsunami's wake have prompted an unprecedented global response. Determined and resilient local communities, with help from national and international organizations and governments, have mobilized relief and started recovery. Now, as attention turns to reconstruction, the focus has changed to look at the underlying issues and plan for sustainable re-development.

UNEP's mission in this context is clear: to provide and coordinate environmental expertise that can rapidly assess the extent of damage to ecosystems and environmental infrastructure; to identify, and bring to the international community's immediate attention, urgent environmental risks; and to ensure that the environment is fully integrated into the region's reconstruction and development agenda. In a part of the world where tourism, fisheries and agriculture form the economic base, the protection of ecosystems and the sound management of natural resources are crucial to the region's development. With care for the environment, reconstruction efforts can reduce future risks from natural disasters and provide lasting benefit to the people of the region.

To carry out this mission and to harness UNEP's technical resource base, UNEP created the Asian Tsunami Disaster Task Force, which began operations on 28 December 2004. The Task Force has particularly benefited from the support of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia Pacific. UNEP has fielded experts to Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Yemen and Seychelles to assess the tsunami's impact on the environment. We are also aware that India, Malaysia and Myanmar are conducting their own assessments, and we are grateful to the Government of India for already sharing their results with us.

This report is the product of close cooperation between UNEP and national environmental authorities and experts. It provides a preliminary ground-level look at the tsunami's impact on various sectors of the region's environment. It highlights problems in need of immediate attention, underscoring the strong link between environment and sustainable livelihood and the need for improved early warning and disaster preparedness systems.

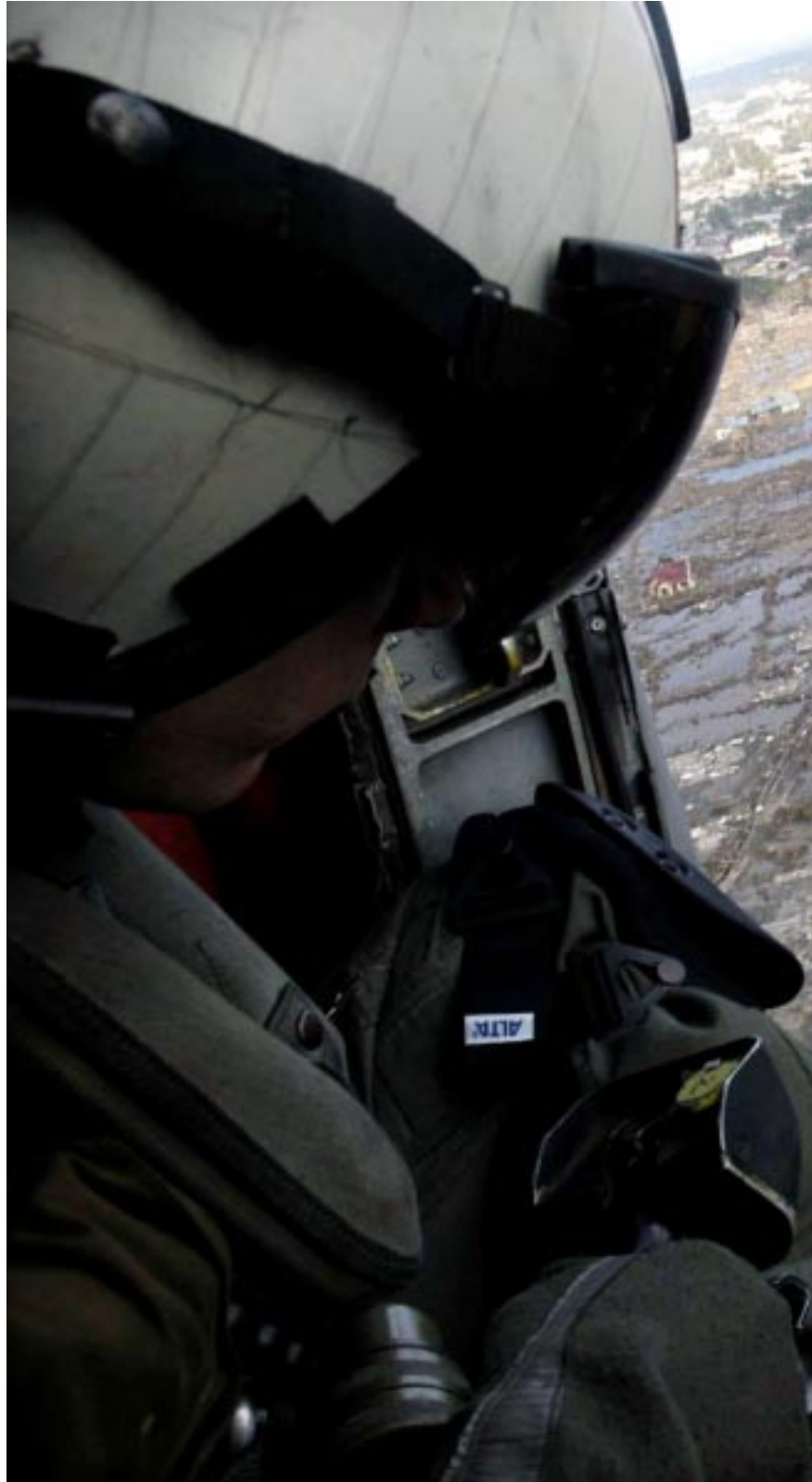
The report benefits from and complements the work and findings of numerous needs assessments and other assessments by individuals, international and national organizations and specialized institutions. IUCN and WWF have provided valuable support to the UNEP Task Force, and United Nations colleagues in the affected countries—including representatives of OCHA, UNDP, HABITAT, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, IMO, UNESCO and other agencies—have been supportive, sharing information and findings with UNEP. The support of the Governments of Finland and Norway has been indispensable to the ongoing assessment work.

The Task Force's work builds on UNEP's experience in rapid assessments and response. Working closely with UN colleagues, international organizations and counterpart national authorities, UNEP teams have been able to provide policy and technical advice to address pressing environmental needs—such as cleaning up waste to prevent further degradation of groundwater supplies—and have helped to guide the overall environmental recovery process.

UNEP's experience in the region to date has shown that the tsunami-affected countries are firmly committed to addressing the environmental challenges before them. I strongly believe that this terrible event has provided the countries and communities around the Indian Ocean with an opportunity to focus on the important role the environment plays in their development. I sincerely hope that the extraordinary expressions of support from the global community can be sustained and translated into action that will reduce risks and build a pathway to more a sustainable future for the region's people. For its part, UNEP will continue to respond to any requests from the affected countries for help in the challenging reconstruction process ahead.

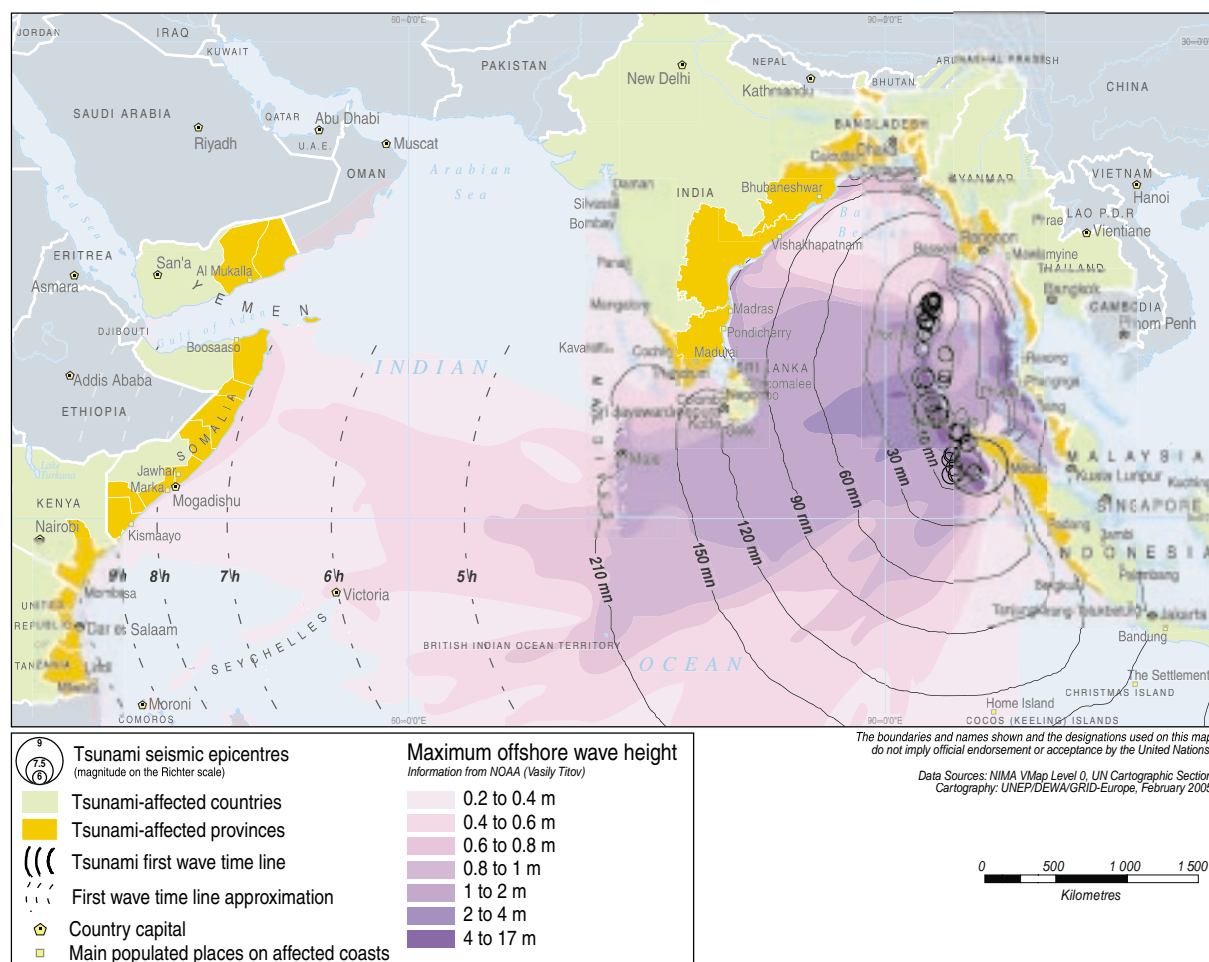
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia (1 January 2005). A US Navy helicopter flies over Banda Aceh after dropping aid supplies. The 26 December tsunami triggered an unprecedented wave of international support. UN member states and private donors had, by February 10, pledged \$4 billion in assistance.
© Patrick Bonafede/US Navy/Reuters





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

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