

PRESS INFORMATION

Jakarta Expert Meeting Identifies Measures to Prevent Corruption in Tsunami Assistance

JAKARTA, INDONESIA (8 April 2005) – An expert meeting on Corruption Prevention in Tsunami Relief concluded today with participants recommending a set of principles to prevent corruption in delivering relief and reconstruction assistance to tsunami afflicted areas.

The meeting, organized jointly by the Asian Development Bank, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific, and Transparency International, was hosted by the Government of Indonesia on 7 and 8 April in Jakarta.

Participants stressed that the meeting was only the start of a long-term process on fighting corruption and promoting transparency in disaster relief operations beyond the post-tsunami reconstruction efforts. They thus called upon the three organising institutions to initiate a policy on managing corruption in humanitarian relief that provide applicable solutions for use in disaster affected communities.

Addressing the responsibilities of each stakeholder group in curbing corruption in tsunami relief and reconstruction efforts, recommendations deriving from this meeting include:

- **All stakeholders** involved in the tsunami assistance must ensure transparency and accountability in their operations, in particular in the management of the financial flows. For this, up-to-date information must be actively made available to any interested party. Further, they should coordinate their respective operations and provide for independent oversight of project implementation.
- As the **affected people's** ownership of the relief and reconstruction process is essential, operations should build on their leadership, participation, and commitment to ensuring the best use of assistance. Relief operations must therefore contribute to the strengthening of local institutions, transfer of technical skills, and should promote policies aimed at preventing corruption.
- **Donors** should coordinate with governments and among themselves to avoid duplication of assistance schemes. They should also establish uniform procurement rules, maintain and publish clear books and records, and provide assurance of full internal and external controls. They must further make a careful assessment of the local conditions so that allocated resources match needs.
- **Governments** must involve affected people and civil society in decision making, ensure information dissemination, and provide easily accessible corruption reporting channels combined with effective mechanisms to encourage and protect whistle blowers.
- **Non-governmental organizations** play an important role in monitoring the relief and reconstruction process and in reporting any suspicion of corruption to authorities. They need to closely coordinate their activities with governments, donors and among themselves, while ensuring the maximum involvement of all groups of affected people in priority setting and decision making.

“Our collective success in responding to this disaster will be measured by how well the planned funds reach intended recipients, and how reasonable and transparent our approach is,” Jak Jabes, Director of ADB’s Governance and Regional Cooperation Division, told the meeting.

To achieve this, “the OECD and its member countries’ donor agencies are committed to combat corruption in tsunami relief and ensure that assistance to the affected population is delivered in a swift, transparent and fair manner,” said Patrick Moulette, Head of the OECD Anti-Corruption Division.

Participants agreed that transparent procurement and project implementation processes must be followed by all stakeholders and internal and external audit, evaluation and monitoring are essential.

Peter Rooke, Transparency International Regional Director for Asia Pacific, said that “it is important to ensure that chosen governance structures to manage relief and reconstruction efforts, including financial flows, give voice to the governments of affected countries, the affected communities, and ultimate beneficiaries, as well as to the donors whose resources are at stake.”



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Opened by the Indonesian Minister for Administrative Reform, HE Taufik Effendi, the meeting was attended by more than 60 senior representatives from governments, civil society, and the private sector from the six most affected countries – India, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand – and representatives from 16 key donors agencies and international organizations involved in tsunami reconstruction efforts.

ADB and OECD are working together in their ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific, the region's unique forum uniting Asian and Pacific countries in the fight against corruption. The meeting in Jakarta is their first joint initiative with Transparency International, a global non-governmental organisation with more than 90 national chapters dedicated to fighting corruption that has significantly contributed to increased awareness about corruption and transparency worldwide.

For more information, please contact:

ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific

Mr. Jak Jabes
Director, Governance and
Regional Cooperation Division
ADB
Phone: +63-2-6325749
Fax: +63-2-6362182
Email: jjabes@adb.org

Mr. Patrick Moulette
Head
Anti-Corruption Division
OECD
Phone: +33-1-45241810
Fax: +33-1-44306307
Email: patrick.moulette@oecd.org

Transparency International

Ms. Sarah Tyler
Press Officer
Transparency International
Phone: +49-30-3438 200
Fax: +49-30-3470 3912
Email: styler@transparency.org

