



யாழ். மாவட்ட  
அரசு சார்பற்ற நிறுவனங்களின் இணையம்  
COUNCIL OF NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS  
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## *Situation Report – March 2005*

### **1.0 GENERAL SITUATION**

The graduates recruited under the graduate appointment scheme with the understanding that after three months training they would be absorbed into the permanent cadre. Surprisingly they are expected to be trainees for nine months and absorption to the permanent cadre will be made on their performance in a test. The graduates recruited under this scheme are thoroughly disappointed.

“International Women’s Day” was observed in the District on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2005. To reflect the obstruction of the security personnel in regard to women’s free movement an effigy of a woman wrapped in barbed wire was taken in a procession to the Parameswara junction and burnt. A letter captioned “To Sri Lanka Army” was handed over to the officer in charge of the Nallur army camp.

It is reported that circulars and other letters sent to Divisional Secretaries offices are in Sinhala only and this action in addition to violation of Government’s much advertised policy of parity of status for both languages hinders smooth functioning of the offices concerned and actions taken in such circular letters invariably get delayed as the circular letters have to be translated by someone who knows Sinhala which is a hazardous process in this part. This amounts to humiliation.

Displaced fishermen of Valigamam coastal villages within the HSZ and currently living in the villages of Polikandi, Sakkotai and Supparamadam in Vadamarachchy North are to launch a protest campaign demanding they be allowed to resettle in villages from Valalai to Thondamanaru which border the HSZ.

Temporary shelters for the displaced located in the above villages have been washed away by tsunami and these fishermen have been displaced again.

According to the fisheries societies if the government fails to concede their request they would be forced to launch a vigorous agitation campaign.

A massive procession was staged on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2005 organised by the Confederation of Public Organisation, Jaffna District in support of the following matters and a memorandum to this effect was handed over to representative of the UNHCR, SLMM, ICRC and Government Agent Jaffna. The Government Agent’s copy was to be forwarded to Her Excellency the President.

1. Normalcy has not been restored in the Tamil areas even after the lapse of three years of signing the MoU.
2. Displaced people have not been settled in their places of origin.
3. ISGA to be afforded to the LTTE and resumption of peace talks.

4. A coordinating body to be formed with the LTTE to handle Tsunami rehabilitation.
5. Allow foreign delegations to visit North and East to see the Tsunami disaster without any embargo.
6. Cessation of killing LTTE political wing leaders in the East.
7. No discrimination in regard to the rehabilitation move whether it be South, North or East.

## 2.0 TSUNAMI

### 2.1 *Housing needs*

This is directly linked to availability of land which depends on the minimum coastal reservation of 100m or 200m. Number of houses affected due to the reservation restriction are given below.

<b>Reservation</b>	<b>Point Pedro division</b>	<b>Maruthankerni division</b>	<b>Total</b>
100m	2,933	927	3,860
100- 200m	1,654	1,847	3,501
	<u>4,587</u>	<u>2,774</u>	<u>7,361</u>
Fully Damaged Houses	- 3,708	- 51%	
Partially Damaged Houses	- 1,700	- 23%	
Not Damaged Houses	- <u>1,953</u>	- 26%	
	<u>7,361</u>		

In the Maruthankerni Division, land is available for relocation of families whose houses fall within 200m. In the Point Pedro Division land is available for about 400 houses only. Therefore land issue has to be solved for 4,100 houses. The people are also protesting against the relocation and had a hartal in Vadamaradchy on 21.03.2004

The Coastal Conservation Department is inactive in the district. They have to find a workable solution by organising a dialogue with the affected people.

In our opinion the coastal reservation can be reduced to about 25m in the reach Thondamanaru to Munai due to the presence of coral reefs and shallow sea i.e. Polk Strait sea. Furthermore our forefathers had constructed a coral bund inside the sea to protect the area from waves. The bunds had not been maintained due to the conflict and it is not existing anymore. The people were trying to reconstruct it with the assistance of some organisation but the security forces did not approve the reconstruction.

The Coastal Conservation Department with the assistance of marine engineers should investigate and frame proposals for immediate implementation in order to find a solution for the land problem.

People are expecting at least 500 sq. ft house which will cost around Rs.500,000.00

The plan, design, location and direction should be decided by the family after consulting relevant parties. This should not be considered merely as an engineering structure but should serve as a “HOME” for the whole family.

The main construction problem will be the skilled men and construction materials such as sand, metal etc. At present dune sand is very difficult to get and the cost is around Rs.3000.00 for 70 cu. ft (1 tractor load). In addition to these 7,300 houses, 14,000 houses under the World Bank Programme for the resettled families (conflict) have also to be constructed. Many public buildings, private houses are also under construction.

A material schedule and a labour schedule have to be prepared for the whole programme and necessary arrangements made for uninterrupted supply.

Training of masons and carpenters should be an essential component in the programme as there is acute shortage of skilled men.

## 2.2 *Education Needs*

Most of the agencies are focussing on hard infrastructure i.e. building schools and not paying due attention to quality of education.

From the children’s perspective the following need urgent attention

Non Attendance	}	- 10%
Irregular Attendance		
Slow learners		
(Low literacy and Numeracy)		- 25%
Orphans		- ?
Dropouts		- 20%
Child labour		- ?

## 2.3 *Health Needs*

The Point Pedro base hospital and V.V.T hospital could not cater for the patients on 26/12/2005 and most of the cases were referred to Jaffna Teaching Hospital. Toxsoide injection was not given for about a week to the injured as a result of entanglement with the barbed wire security fence along the sea beach. MOH division is very weak and the cadre has not been filled since 1990. Senior PHI is in charge of the activities. After the task force moved into the area, the situation was brought under control.

The entire cadre has to be filled immediately with competent medical persons and the hospital has to be well equipped to render the service expected of a base hospital according to Sri Lankan standards.

Furthermore, according to WHO standards, at least two MOH divisions are required for the Vadamarachchi area.

Nutritional aspect of the children under 5 years needs immediate attention as the dry rations issue in the area does not take this into account.

## **2.4 Needs of fisher folk / Others**

In the Tsunami affected villages of Point Pedro (17 Nos) only about 50% families are engaged in direct fishing activities. Main focus on fishermen and neglecting others in the village is creating a conflict among the affected population. Other livelihood activities have to be supported simultaneously.

Village level fisheries Co- operative Societies are the CBOs serving the fishermen. Since 1996, UNHCR, UNDP, CARE and NECORD have given financial support to these societies. Unfortunately they were project oriented and failed to facilitate an evolving process orientation. Strengths and weaknesses of these societies have been studied by one of our member organisations to introduce a functional and structural change in order to strengthen these societies.

Nearly 30% of the population can be classified as ultra poor or poorest of the poor. Almost all the rehabilitation programmes implemented in the district since 1996 have failed to improve the living conditions of these families. Most of the women headed families come under this category. Some local NGOs are implementing pilot projects to find out an appropriate methodology to address the needs of this category.

Private sector involved in the fisheries sector also needs some support in order to boost up fishing activities.

### **Fisheries Infrastructure**

Tsunami has damaged the entire infrastructure and filled up the channels, leading to sea through coral reefs. The following activities have to be attended to immediately.

- b. Cleaning of channels
- c. Reconstruction of the coral bunds
- d. Safe anchoring places for boats
- e. Lighthouses / Beacon lights

### **Environmental Protection / Coastal Protection**

- i. Coral reef bund in the sea (Northern sea)
- ii. Repair of retaining walls of Point Pedro - Ponnalai Road.
- iii. Tree planting wherever possible for the reach from Munai to Thondamanaru
- iv. An earthen bund cum road along the Eastern coast
- v. Tree planting along the Eastern coast in a belt

Unfortunately the two departments in charge of these activities are not pursuing the matter.

## **2.5 Water Needs**

Interface of the ground water lens has got disturbed due to Tsunami and most of the wells have turned saline. Drinking water is a problem to the coastal area. The two urban areas namely Point Pedro and Valvetithurai are facing lot of difficulties Water Board has submitted the proposals, formulated by Engineering science in 1984 for approval in order to solve the drinking water problem. Immediate approval and implementation is very necessary.

We understand that many water purifiers have been distributed in the South but not a single one to Jaffna District.

## 2.6 Sanitation Needs

The coastal areas are normally congested. Latrines and wells are located closely due to limited land space.

In order to reduce the cost of latrines, people are adopting a single pit model i.e. septic tank and soakage together. This has caused severe environmental issues. Therefore the single pit model has to be banned and separate septic tank - soakage pit model has to be promoted.

A sewerage system was designed by Engineering Science for V.V.T Urban Council in 1984. This has to be included in the reconstruction plan.

## 2.7 Temporary Shelters

The position in regard to construction of temporary shelters for the displaced people to move in is as follows according to Secretariat source.

<i>Name of Organisation</i>	<i>Point Pedro</i>		<i>Maruthankerny</i>	
	<i>Allocated</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Allocated</i>	<i>Completed</i>
HUDEC	508	241	155	110
Sewa Lanka Foundation	219	30	241	90
UNHCR	482	262		
White Pigeon	75	50		
Save the Children in Sri Lanka	125	50		
TRO			1100	475
CARE			120	120
World vision			120	60
ZOA			290	142
<b>Total</b>	<b>1409</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>997</b>

Statistical Data of the Tsunami affected persons in the Jaffna District.

Deaths	-	1,256
Injured	-	1,647
Estimated Missing	-	1,240

## 2.8 TRO

Relief items were given from TRO funds and donors contribution.

Constructing 512 kitchens in transit shelters at Point Pedro and Maruthankerny. 260 kitchens completed each costing Rs. 12,000.00.

The Council of NGOs Jaffna District sent a report on recovery of Tsunami catastrophe to Mr. Brain Smith of Asian Development Bank for incorporation in the final report.

### **3.0 EDUCATION**

The proposal to establish a private medical college in Colombo was vehemently protested by the Jaffna University students and on 2<sup>nd</sup> march, 2005 the students staged a protest campaign.

As a result of the suspension of the surgery classes for the final students of the Medical College for the last three months, the students boycotted the classes from 7<sup>th</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2005.

Required pass in A/L was considered sufficient for admission to Bharatha Natiam and Carnatic Music courses. But this year students got badly disappointed due to admission based on "Z" score.

The general standard of education has deteriorated in the District. Analysis of the situation in one of the five zones revealed the following facts.

Grade 1	-	2000 Students	
Grade 10	-	1600 Students – Dropouts	- 400
Success in O/L	-	640 i.e. 40%	
Qualified to study A/L	-	300	
Admission Gained	-	150	

### **4.0 HEALTH**

Shortage of Medical Officers is prevailing for fairly a long time and in time to come it will lead to a crisis according to the DPDHS Jaffna. To cater the needs of six lakhs population, the medical officers in other parts of the Country should come forward to serve in the Jaffna District to avoid a crisis. In the District barring the Jaffna Teaching Hospital where 100 medical officers have to serve only nine are serving. Out of nine, five are Sinhala doctors and others are on contract after retirement. Of the required 58 Registered Assistant Medical Practitioners, only 17 are in service. Besides 30 are employed on contract and as these officers cannot serve after completion of 65 years, the continuation of employment of these officers is a question mark and 10 – 15 hospitals may have to be closed.

Outside the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, 17 medical specialists should function whereas there are only 2 specialists that too on contract. Taking into consideration the urgent needs of the six lakhs people in this District, the DPDHS has made a public announcement that medical officers should volunteer to work in this District as a service for at least one or two years which will be considered to be a boon for the people.

### **5.0 AGRICULTURE**

Farmers had to abandon cultivation of subsidiary food crops in the fields after the maha paddy harvest due to scarcity of seeds and high cost in the private sector.

### **6.0 FISHERIES**

Sivaraj Pirabu aged 24 and Joseph Premathas aged 39 of Valvethithurai were arrested by Sri Lankan Navy on March 12<sup>th</sup> while fishing at KKS sea waters which is in the HSZ. They were handed over to the Point Pedro police and later released.

## **7.0 SECURITY CONCERN**

On 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 a grade seven girl of Vembadi Girls High School was knocked down by a speeding army vehicle and the girl succumbed to death. Hundreds of students and teachers of the college blocked the traffic in protest following the accident. A group of civilians who joined the students protest set fire to an Air Force vehicle. Security forces deployed hundreds of additional troops. Consequently students and civilians protested near the Jaffna University in the afternoon. Army tear gased and opened fire resulting in the death of one elderly man and another wounded.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 in Neervely an elderly lady was subject to sex assault. Protest from the civilians sparked and the situation was very tense. The police arrested the suspect.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 in the Chavakachchery town an army vehicle knocked down a civilian boy who was riding a motor bicycle and the boy sustained severe injuries and the motor bicycle badly damaged. People in protest blocked the road. Army retaliated, fired tear gas against the protesters and insisted the shops to be closed and no traffic whatsoever was allowed to pass through the town the day of the incident and the following day.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 an army soldiers entered a house near Kaligai junction in Karaveddy with ulterior motive. The Vadamarachchy Confederation of Public Organisations staged a big protest on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2005.

An army soldier of 522 Brigade (Chavakachchery) Mr. Krishantha Ranil aged 24 surrendered to LTTE political wing on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 due to torture by high ranking officials. He was handed over to ICRC and ICRC handed over him to Palaly Security Head Quarters.

## **8.0 TELECOMMUNICATION**

Applications submitted during the last three years for telephone connections have not been processed and connection given by the Telecommunication Unit, Jaffna. Hospitals, Government organisations, Non Government organisations and private organisations are helplessly awaiting for the connection. Telephone is an indispensable means of communication for speedy transaction of business especially in the current era when many other sophisticated system of communication is in force.

## **9.0 MINE ACTION**

On 12<sup>th</sup> march, 2005 a twelve year boy collected an unidentified object close to the fence of an army camp in Gurunargar and brought it to his home which is situated close to the camp. While handling this object, it exploded causing injuries to his right thumb.

On 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 in Urumpirai East a man while tilling his land that was not cultivated, hit a mine which exploded. The victim sustained injuries.

Mr. Elmo Anandarajah, officer in charge of the District Mine Action office, Jaffna made a recent statement that out of 70% of the mines laid in the North especially in Killinochchy and Elephant -Pass. 30% of demining has been done and the balance is in the process of demining by various teams involved in this project.

## **10.0 VISITS**

Representatives of the ADB (Jaffna District Implementation Assessment Team) headed by Mr. Joe William of the CIDA called at the Council office on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2005. They had discussion with the members of the Council. Tsunami damage and needs were stressed by the members in detail.

ICRC delegate Mr. J. Dickson visited the Council on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2005. He showed interest in knowing the present situation in the District vis – a - vis Tsunami as well.

A team from the National Peace Council comprising three members met the Council members on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2005 and had discussion in regard to having an exhibition of photographs taken by Mr. Wolter Keler, a German depicting the change of life of the people after the opening of A9 route.

Ms. Nilu Gunasekera of the Save the Children in Sri Lanka with Mr. Asok Kumar had a meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 with the member organisations in regard to Commonwealth Education Fund and the implementation in the Northern Province.

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Hony. Secretary