Tsunami response – One year on

The tsunami which struck north-western Sumatra on 26 December 2004 devastated many communities in neighbouring Asian countries, including Sri Lanka where the impact was substantial.

Over a year since humanitarian aid commenced and with the emergency relief phase now over, the Government of Sri Lanka has identified key challenges:

- Providing permanent shelter
- Ensuring livelihoods are revived
- Restoration of infrastructure
- Ensuring aid is accessible to those affected by the civil conflict

PIA’s response – Sri Lankan Tsunami Reconstruction Project

In partnership with the Institute of Town Planners in Sri Lanka (ITPSL) and AusAID, PIA will soon be implementing its Sri Lankan tsunami reconstruction project.

Since the last project update (December 2005), significant progress has been made.

In December 2005, PIA representatives visited Sri Lanka and attended a conference on disaster management and planning response coordinated by the ITPSL. This provided a forum for sharing experiences in disaster management, and discussion of ways to improve the effectiveness of disaster management and planning in Sri Lanka.

In Colombo PIA representatives met with planning agencies to review the scope of the PIA reconstruction project. It was agreed that to be most effective the project would focus on reconstruction in particular areas of need, including Trincomalle, Hambantota, Battacaloa and Mannar. A memorandum of understanding was also signed by the ITPSL and PIA, outlining the details relating to the coordination and implementation of project activities.

PIA has also appointed an in-country Project Manager. Hemantha Jayasundera is an experienced planner of many years and is currently Director (Project Management) with the Urban Development Authority in Sri Lanka, and has previously managed an Asian Development Bank Project.

The PIA Project Implementation Plan which will include activity and resource schedules for the proposed project is now in its final stages. PIA is expecting to have volunteers working in Sri Lanka toward the middle of 2006.