Tsunami Semi-annual Report
Maldives

Appeal No. 28/2004

This report covers the period of 1 November 2006 to 30 April 2007, but reports cumulative totals from December 2004 onwards.

In a world of global challenges, continued poverty, inequity, and increasing vulnerability to disasters and disease, the International Federation with its global network, works to accomplish its Global Agenda, partnering with local community and civil society to prevent and alleviate human suffering from disasters, diseases and public health emergencies.

In brief

Executive Summary
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ tsunami recovery effort in the Maldives is extensive, covering all main sectors of recovery programming and stretches to all of the 20 atolls. There has been significant progress made in all recovery programme areas, including encouraging achievements in housing and community infrastructure construction, as well as community-based work in disaster management and psychosocial support. In addition, as the Maldives is one of the few countries in the world, without a National Society, special attention is being given to the creation of the Maldives Red Crescent Society.

In order to ensure programme quality, the International Federation has set strategic cross-cutting priorities across the different programme sectors. These priorities are outlined in the Tsunami Regional Strategy and Operational Framework 2 as well as in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Maldives country strategy. Examples of these priorities include community consultation and participation as well as sustainability. In addition, equity issues are addressed in order to avoid community tensions created by unequal recovery assistance. This means taking into account the people who were not directly affected by the tsunami such as host communities.

A particular focus of the Red Cross Red Crescent has been on risk reduction - on enhancing the resilience of communities against future disasters. Different forms of risk reduction have been integrated into Red Cross Red Crescent programmes. In practice, this translates into more hazard resistant housing, water supply systems that provide safe drinking water during dry seasons, as well as raising awareness in community-based risk identification and health awareness.
The tsunami recovery operation has seen good progress made during the last six months, though there remains much to be done. The next six months will see two National Societies complete their programmes and close their delegations in the Maldives. During the same period, some new large-scale construction projects will get underway now that contracts have been signed or are close to being finalized with contractors. Longer-term, community-based capacity building projects in disaster management, first aid and health awareness will continue to build community resilience, which, in the future, are also likely to become core activities of the Maldives National Society.

To achieve the afore-mentioned, strong coordination and collaboration with the government, the communities and other partners remains an ongoing priority. Challenges such as aligning the timings of different parts of community construction or avoiding community tensions need to be worked through continuously in cooperation with and through the commitment of all parties.

**Click here for the Global Tsunami Semi-annual Report and collective Red Cross and Red Crescent financial report**  
**Click here for other Tsunami Semi-annual Reports by country**  
**Click here to go directly to the annexed full analysis of programmatic performance indicators**

**Operational Overview**

The impact of the tsunami disaster was enormous in the Maldives: over a third of the country’s population was affected as were the country’s two main sources of revenue, tourism and fishing. In all, the equivalent of almost two-thirds of its GDP was lost. However, financial figures for 2006 showed strong economic growth, with tourism rebounding almost to pre-tsunami levels, and GDP growth estimated at over 18 percent. The improvement of the government’s finances led to the approval of a budget by parliament that provides funding for a very wide range of infrastructure and development projects. However, some lenders have expressed concern that such a large increase in spending may also stretch the country’s ability to sustain sound fiscal policies.

Politically, there have been signs that the tensions between the government and the principal opposition party were beginning to thaw. Formal negotiations have been held, though these initial talks broke down after a few weeks. These ongoing difficulties are reflected in the slow progress being made in the revision of the constitution, an important precursor for moving the political reform agenda forward.

An outbreak of the chikungunya virus reached epidemic proportions across the country towards the end of 2006 up to the end of the rainy season in February 2007. This outbreak further emphasized the importance of providing control measures as well as raising awareness about dengue and chikungunya across the islands and in Male’.

Low-level tensions between different communities on some islands continue to pose challenges for Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes, particularly where internally displaced persons (IDP) are residing. These situations are actively monitored and necessary steps are being taken to reduce tensions where possible.

Red Cross Red Crescent partners have also finalized a Maldives volunteer policy that was approved by the Maldives government. This policy provides a framework for volunteering in the Maldives and a consistent Red Cross Red Crescent approach to volunteer recruitment and management.
Federation-wide achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmatic Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maldives total population</td>
<td>298,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall estimated number of persons reached by International Federation and partners</td>
<td>219,400¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of persons with access to an improved water source</td>
<td>90,100²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of persons with access to improved waste management facilities or improved latrines (built to SPHERE standards)</td>
<td>96,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hospitals and clinics completed</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of hospitals and clinics to be provided</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of shelters completed</td>
<td>1084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of shelters to be provided</strong></td>
<td>1084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of houses occupied</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of houses completed</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of houses under construction</td>
<td>809</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of houses planned</td>
<td>368</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of houses to be provided</strong></td>
<td>1485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons certified or skilled in community based first aid (including psychosocial support)</td>
<td>588</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of households that have received livelihood support grants</td>
<td>568</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of projects with a sustainability plan or documented exit strategy</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated percentage of projects with one or more forms of local participation</td>
<td>98%, except one programme 15 %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figures represent progress achieved up to 30 April 2007

The Red Cross and Red Crescent relief and recovery programming in the Maldives has reached over two thirds of the country’s population. This high coverage is largely due to programmes such as the Australian and Canadian Red Cross’ waste management programme, the Federation Secretariat supported rainwater harvesting programme and the American Red Cross psychosocial support programme. These interventions provide sustainable solutions for waste management, increased storage capacity of safe drinking water and psychosocial first aid for close to 100,000 people on over 70 islands across the country.

Communities that were hardest hit by the tsunami are also receiving more targeted support that aims to address their broad needs through integrated housing, community infrastructure, water and sanitation, livelihoods and disaster management programmes. The French Red Cross’ work in Laamu Gan, British Red Cross programmes

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¹ This figure includes the beneficiaries of a measles vaccination campaign where the American Red Cross, its Measles Initiative partners (United Nations Foundation, UNICEF, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization) and the Government of the Maldives vaccinated more than 80 percent of the targeted population, which consisted of males between ages 6 and 25, and females aged 6 to 35 (encompassing women of child bearing age). This is the first time in the country’s history a mass vaccination programme of this nature was conducted.

² This figure is reduced from the last reporting period. This new figure better reflects the installation rate of rain water harvesting tanks (approximately 80 percent) whereas the previously reported figure reflected the number of tanks distributed.
in Vilufushi and the Federation Secretariat’s safer island project in Dhuvaafaru are good examples of this holistic approach.

Despite some challenges, the general programme progress is encouraging. In housing construction, an additional 128 houses have been completed in the last six months, bringing the total to over 300 completed houses. It is also important to note that the occupancy rate of the completed houses is over 85 percent, with beneficiaries waiting to move into the unoccupied houses. This occupancy rate indicates that the houses have been well received by the communities.

The German Red Cross has so far built 24 hospitals and clinics. Most of these facilities are already operational and efforts to ensure their long-term use and maintenance are being coordinated with the ministry of health. In general, the nearing completion of programmes further emphasizes the need to have agreed exit or sustainability plans.

Health and Care

The International Federation’s health and care work in the Maldives is focused on five key areas: improving access to safe water and sanitation; better waste management; rehabilitation of health facilities; providing psychosocial support, and; raising awareness of health risks. These areas reflect the particular vulnerabilities of the country, such as limited water resources and the fragile ecosystem.

A Federation Secretariat rainwater-harvesting project has distributed rainwater-harvesting kits to 79 islands in 18 atolls, targeting over 100,000 people. By April 2007, the project’s minimum target installation rate of 80 percent had been reached on the majority of islands. A community mobilization workshop has been carried out on one island where there was a particularly low installation rate. A rainwater collection information leaflet has also been developed to communicate key messages on the importance of rainwater harvesting, safe water collection and safe water storage. The information leaflet will be distributed widely throughout the Maldives in the near future.

The dry season from February to April was an important test of the supplementary water supply systems. Many islands experienced critical water shortages during this period and seven of the ten completed water supply systems provided safe drinking water for communities. These water desalination systems are designed to ensure access to safe water during dry periods or whenever normal access to rainwater is disrupted (e.g. during floods or droughts). Selected community members have been trained to operate the system on islands with completed installations and four selected islands have been involved in water management training. Both training programmes have been designed to address the concerns of system sustainability and community ownership. The programme will be completed within the next six months when then five remaining systems built, with follow up work related to training and programme evaluations continuing through September 2007.

Community sewer systems are in various stages of planning or implementation on nine islands in the Maldives. A joint American Red Cross and Federation Secretariat programme is currently ongoing on three islands and the Secretariat is close to completing another sewer system on its own. The British Red Cross is in the process of finalizing design details of one community sewer system and the American Red Cross is in the planning process for an additional three community sewer systems. This move is consistent with the overall objectives of improved community sanitation, preservation of water resources and prevention of groundwater pollution. Sustainability and effective community management remain the focus for all programmes.
In the aftermath of the tsunami, the Australian and Canadian Red Cross Societies identified cleaning-up the devastated islands and improving waste management facilities and practices as key priorities. The programme is addressing the inadequate waste management which has previously involved waste being dumped on the beach or thrown to the sea. In April 2007, the construction and cleanup phase of the programme was completed with 77 communities cleaned-up, over 36,000 metric tonnes of tsunami debris removed, and 79 waste management centres built. In addition, thousands of community members have been trained in waste management. As the programme reaches its completion, the focus is on providing a comprehensive handover to the government and the communities to ensure that the results seen are sustainable.

The German Red Cross is also about to complete its work to rebuild and rehabilitate damaged health facilities. Twenty-four clinics and hospitals have been completed and equipped, with only two remaining to be done. These rehabilitated facilities will significantly improve people’s access to health services.

One less visible but equally important aspect of the International Federation’s health and care work in the Maldives is the American Red Cross’ psychosocial support programme. The programme is now operating in 71 communities and 114 schools across its seven target atolls. To date, the programme has trained 128 government ministry personnel and volunteers to provide psychological assistance in times of large or small disasters. Project staff and trained volunteers have facilitated 215 community activities designed to bring communities together to address their current needs and meet future challenges. In addition, school activities have been conducted with the support of trained teachers to provide students with a safe and positive learning environment.

**Shelter and Construction**

The Red Cross and Red Crescent is the largest international agency in the Maldives in terms of providing permanent housing to tsunami survivors, with commitments to build 1,485 houses for over 7,000 people.

In the last six months, 128 houses have been finished, bringing the total number of completed houses to 308. All these houses meet or exceed local hazard resistance standards. Many houses sit raised above ground level, have seismic resistant structures and ceiling storages to keep items dry and safe in times of flooding. The Red Cross Red Crescent continues to monitor the houses even after they have been finished and handed-over to ensure that any defects are addressed and fixed. Surveys have also been carried out to gauge opinions about the new homes.

Of the remaining 1177 houses, close to 70 percent are currently under construction.

The work on some islands goes well beyond simply providing housing. On Laamu Gan, Thaa Vilufushi and Raa Dhuvaafaru the French Red Cross, British Red Cross and Federation Secretariat are developing a wide range of community infrastructure (schools, hospitals, community centres, sewage systems and electricity supply) to sit alongside the new houses. This holistic approach requires extensive communication with future inhabitants. To improve community involvement and participation, Red Cross Red Crescent is organizing site visits and focus group discussions for the communities as well as updating information on bulletin boards, broadcasting an interactive radio show and operating telephone hotlines for people to call and raise questions or voice concerns.

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**Seeing It for Themselves**

“*The sun was then unrelentingly hot as we all walked for an hour around the construction site, starting with foundations and moving onto pillars, frames, walls, paint and finally an almost finished house complete with tiled floors, finished bathrooms and painted walls both inside and out.* […]

*Nothing prepared me for people’s reactions as they entered one of the finished houses. People who had clearly been sceptical as they walked around the site now became overwhelmed by what they saw. Women grabbed, punched my arms (a very Maldivian thing to do) and almost everyone gave the international ‘thumbs up’ signal for good.*

*The word ‘baraabaru’ meaning ‘really good’ in Dhivehi was repeated over and over again and an old man grabbed me in a huge handshake, overwhelmed by what he was seeing, saying shukuriya (thank you) and baraabaru over and over again.*

*International Federation recovery coordinator’s report from a beneficiary site visit to Dhuvaafaru Island*
The Canadian Red Cross is focusing on the reconstruction and repair of community buildings, such as preschool, community centres and island offices as well as rehabilitation of sports fields. The projects – 14 of which are completed with a further 79 underway – will benefit communities across almost 50 islands.

Strong **partnerships and close coordination** with the government and other actors involved in the recovery process are essential to the success of all large-scale reconstruction projects. Coordination can be a challenge at times, particularly when relevant capacity is not available and the timings of the different parts of construction need to be aligned. The Maldives’ peculiar geography – its over 1000 islands spread across 800 kilometres of ocean – is another constant challenge. Most materials need to be imported and transported by boat for several hundreds kilometres.

**Livelihoods**

The tsunami severely disrupted the livelihoods of many people across the Maldives. In response, British Red Cross has disbursed nearly 197,000 Swiss francs (USD 160,000) worth of livelihood grants to over 560 households, allowing people to invest in and support their own recovery. Grants to groups as well as to individuals have facilitated larger scale income-generating activities such as fish processing.

The programme has not just focussed on grants, but has also placed a strong emphasis on providing training and technical support to build capacity. This in turn will strengthen livelihoods and increase resilience.

French Red Cross has identified 120 households in Laamu Gan to receive assets in order to improve livelihoods. The programme targets the whole community and community members will help to identify the most vulnerable requiring livelihoods assistance. This approach is designed to reduce any tensions between the host community and the newly settled community.

**Disaster Management**

This low-lying island nation is especially vulnerable to natural hazards such as storms, sea surges, flooding and drought. The International Federation is working with the government and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a national disaster management framework and is also providing disaster management training for government officials. This work is essential for creating a policy environment for countrywide disaster management and for ensuring a coordinated approach between different partners.

In addition, first aid standards and training material specific to the Maldives context have been developed in partnership with the faculty of health sciences and ministry of education, and approved by the department of public health. Over 20 people have been trained as first aid trainer of trainers (TOT), who can then train community and school members in first aid. The new trainers have already organized their first training session testing the newly approved first aid standards for 35 participants.

Community-based disaster management is an important component of all International Federation disaster management programmes. Community-based **identification of risks** has been facilitated through the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) process. This process has resulted in an integrated multi-sector community-based disaster management programme (CBDM), which targets island communities and schools.
Local Disaster Management – Bringing about Positive Change

Mariyam Khaleel, from Maabaidhoo is married with four children. She is the locally-selected focal point for disaster management and works closely with the BRCS staff. “I enjoy volunteering; I have always been a person who wants to help the community and work to improve things, so it was natural for me to take on this role.” Mariyam set about forming a task force. She explained, “at first people were reluctant to come forward but I explained the advantages of volunteerism and made them understand how much we can achieve ourselves to improve islanders lives. Ten people came forward, seven women and three men – most of them recent school leavers”. Mariyam is confident that the task force will be able to contribute to important national events such as World Health Day, as well as promoting public health messages on the island to reduce risks.

Mariyam attended a week-long trainer-of-trainer’s course organized by the International Federation in Male’ on chikungunya and dengue fever that started on 18 February. “It was very interesting, I learned how to work with the community and encourage them to take positive action. I also learned about the symptoms and dangers of these diseases – it was particularly interesting to see the health centre data that showed the patterns and trends”.

On 3 March there was an island clean up day that she helped organize, distributing leaflets door to door on dengue and chikungunya. There was a high turnout as the island office, the health centre, the school, guides and the scouts all attended. “It was a very good day’s work, I was very proud. It is very satisfying to work for the community to bring about positive change”.

The CBDM approach proposes, for the first time in the Maldives, solutions such as creating awareness on dengue fever and chikungunya risks with a community approach. Consequently, training and awareness materials have been produced. In total, 23 master trainers at national level as well as over 70 atoll community volunteers and schoolteachers have been trained as trainer of trainers.

In the first month of activity, 80 percent of the schools and 50 percent of the communities have finalized their dengue and chikungunya control and prevention plans. Fifty parents and 250 students have participated in the awareness sessions. In addition, island disaster management committees are being established to help prepare for and respond to disasters.

As a part of the disaster management programme, the International Federation took on the financing the construction materials of all the temporary shelters needed for families who were displaced by the tsunami. Altogether 1,084 shelters have been built to standards that exceed the SPHERE guidelines. The Red Cross Red Crescent also distributed non-food items such as mattresses and gas stoves, while the government continues to provide support in terms of food and facilities to the displaced. As increasing numbers of people are moving from temporary shelters to their permanent houses, future management of the shelters is under consideration.

National Society Development and Humanitarian Values

When the tsunami hit the Maldives in December 2004, the Red Cross Red Crescent was relatively unknown in the country. The Maldives is one of the few countries in the world without a Red Cross Red Crescent National Society. The tsunami disaster, however, prompted the process of creating a Maldives Red Crescent Society.

Since the beginning of the process, information dissemination meetings – attended by nearly 5,000 people – have been held across the country. Voluntary-based working groups have been organized to develop statutes, to determine the focus of future programming and to promote the process across the atolls. Most of the representatives for the general assembly have already been selected and the elections for Male’ Atoll’s general assembly representatives are planned for August 2007.

At times, the process of creating a National Society has been criticized for being too slow. In response to these criticisms and to improve the quality of the formation process, a new 20-member working group and sub-groups with specific tasks have been created. Thanks to the committed work of one of the sub-groups, statutes for the future National Society have been revised and are pending final approval. These positive signs of progress are bringing the process closer to the formal creation of the Maldives Red Crescent.
In addition to creating the National Society, general information dissemination on the Red Cross Red Crescent has been integrated into different programme designs. Even in technical workshops, such as training for rainwater harvesting tank installation, time is spent discussing humanitarian values and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The monthly Red Cross Red Crescent radio programme has proved effective in reaching people across the Maldives. The interactive nature of the programme, which allows listeners to call in, has provided an opportunity to have questions answered and clarify misconceptions that might have arisen across many communities. Monthly and quarterly newsletters produced by French Red Cross and British Red Cross are also a valuable way of disseminating information, particularly to those displaced by the tsunami.

World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May 2007 will provide another platform for promoting humanitarian values and disseminating information about the Red Cross Red Crescent.

Following last year’s successful celebration, plans for this year include activities such as first aid demonstrations, clean-up campaigns, tree planting and a Red Cross Red Crescent exhibition in Male’ as well as on several other islands.

Working as a Movement

Some weeks after the tsunami, the government of the Maldives drew up a National Recovery and Reconstruction Plan. International Federation partners – the Federation Secretariat and six National Societies – have coordinated their programmes in line with this plan. Direct partnerships with the government have been built, with the Red Cross Red Crescent providing quarterly updates on progress and implementation challenges.

Joint operational and policy decisions facilitate coherent programming and equity. This is reflected in the development of common Red Cross Red Crescent beneficiary selection criteria for housing in the Maldives. The criteria has been used by all Red Cross Red Crescent partners involved in housing construction, making beneficiary selection consistent across different housing projects and locations. In addition, the Red Cross Red Crescent has approved a joint volunteer policy, which clarifies different aspects of volunteer work. Since different National Societies are working with community volunteers on several islands, it is integral to ensure a common approach and practice.

Efficient coordination takes place with UN and other international agencies as well as with some local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In disaster management, common approaches are being developed with UNDP, while the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is the International Federation’s main partner in distributing rainwater harvesting tanks. Although most local NGOs have limited programming capacity, partnerships such as the French Red Cross livelihoods assistance project have been enhanced through collaboration with local NGOs and community-based organizations such as Care Society, Maldives Island Development Association (MIDA) and Mathimaradhoo Youth Association (MJZ). Such partnerships, apart from their specific objectives such as community integration and livelihoods, ultimately strengthen the capacity of Maldivian civil society.

3 These are the American Red Cross, Australian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, French Red Cross and German Red Cross.
Looking Forward

The coming six months will be marked by the completion of the tsunami recovery programmes of two National Societies, the German and Australian Red Cross. The Australian and Canadian Red Cross are set to hand over their waste management programme to communities and the government, though follow-up support will be provided over the next 12 months. The health facilities built by the German Red Cross are almost all operational and handed over.

Whilst these endeavours are coming to an end, other large scale construction projects will soon be getting under way after long tendering and contracting processes. Examples include the French Red Cross community construction in Laamu Gan, the Federation Secretariat’s construction of community facilities and sewage system in Dhuvafaru and a British Red Cross housing project on Vilufushi. In the coming months, people will be able to move to their newly built houses on Kudahuvadhoo, Laamu Maabaidhoo and Laamu Ishdhoo-Kalaidhoo, as well as enjoy refurbished community facilities and sports fields on several islands.

The next reporting period will be crucial for the formation of the Maldives Red Crescent Society. The elections for Male’ Atoll representatives for the general assembly are scheduled to take place in August and the revised statutes are being translated for final approval. Simultaneously, local capacity building needs to continue in the areas of disaster management, safe water management and first aid.

On 8 May the Maldives people will come together for the second time to celebrate World Red Cross and Red Crescent day, under this year’s theme of “Together for Humanity”.

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