



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)**

**HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SRI LANKA  
Situation Report  
Reporting Period: 18 – 22 March 2005**

**Situation**

Erskine Bowles, the UN Deputy Special Envoy for Tsunami Reconstruction, visited Sri Lanka from 21 to 22 March, on behalf of former President Bill Clinton, the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Reconstruction. During his stay in Colombo, Mr. Bowles held meetings with a number of government officials including the Commissioner-General of Essential Services and head of The Task Force for Relief (TAFOR), Tilak Ranaviraja; the Senior Advisor to the President and head of the Taskforce for the Rebuilding of the Nation (TAFREN) Mano Tittawela, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Wiswa Warnapala, and Secretary of Foreign Affairs, H. M. G. S. Palihakkara. He also held meeting with the UN Country Team, civil society and the diplomatic and donor community and an informal discussion with a group of ten Sri Lankan journalists. Receptions were also held in his honor by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator Miguel Bermeo and by the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Jeffrey Lunstead.

During his visit to the country, Mr. Bowles also made a brief OCHA-organized visit to Galle District to see first-hand tsunami relief and recovery efforts. While there he went to several sites in Hikkaduwa, one of the largest and most devastated divisions in Galle. In Peraliya, he visited a medical clinic staffed by Peraliya Volunteers, as well as temporary and transitional shelter and damaged homes in the process of being rehabilitated. In Seenigama, he was shown the upgrading and improvement of tent shelters by the Consortium of Italian NGOs. He also met with local UN agency representatives and NGOs, including UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNV, OCHA, The Salvation Army, Sewa Lank, Danish People's Aid, and Project Galle 2005, and with members of the community. He also met in with the Government Agent (GA) for Galle District, Gunasena Hewavitharana

The United States Embassy has issued a travel warning to its citizens in Sri Lanka “to act with caution when traveling or working in the Eastern region of the country because of on-going violence, including politically motivated assassinations in that area.”

**Overview of activities**

The government's Transitional Accommodation Project (TAP) in cooperation with UNHCR and other agencies announced 18 March, that 10,000 transitional housing units are expected to be completed soon in ten affected districts. The Taskforce for Relief (TAFOR) is the implementing government agency for these projects on the district level. Four thousand transitional housing units have already been completed according to UNHCR. Another 20,000 transitional housing units are slated for completion in coming months.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNCHR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are the two main lead agencies assisting TAFOR in coordinating with state agencies and NGOs identified as agencies who will fund the TAP programmes in the districts.

The Sri Lanka Red cross has pledged to construct 15 000 houses in tsunami ravaged areas. The programme will also include the rehabilitation of 32 government hospitals affected by the tsunami.

The Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) is now producing and posting on its website district level meeting schedules and contact lists for Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Jaffna and Ampara in an effort to increase information sharing and communication flow. HIC is also in the process of collecting district level data for its "who does what where" database which is called (W3). HIC is currently collaborating with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) to standardize the "who does what where" data already collected by each organization and then produce a comprehensive W3 database for the relief and recovery community.