

Tsunami: Rebuilding Efforts Underway

Washington, DC, January 18, 2005—Even as relief efforts continue, the World Bank, the United Nations and other international organizations have begun the work necessary to rebuild the regions devastated by the Dec 26 tsunami.

Following a visit to the disaster-affected areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, three of the twelve countries in Asia and Africa, World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn emphasized that it is insufficient to replicate the pre-existing slums.

“Reconstruction efforts will aim to help each country rebuild lives for their people that offer greater hope and opportunity than they faced before the disaster,” he says.

While it may take another two-to-three months before detailed damage assessments can be completed, an initial evaluation that is due within the next two weeks will provide an early road map for donors.

In contrast, the comprehensive damage assessment will set out long-term priorities and will guide how each dollar of aid is used to the greatest benefit of the survivors. Ultimately, the Bank expects to provide more than \$1 billion.

Any reconstruction efforts, according to the Bank president, must take into account the culture and special needs of each community. For example, balancing the need to reduce the vulnerability of fishing communities with their tradition of living close to their boats, which are their livelihoods.

This balance, he says, should be determined by those in the communities.

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