Tsunami media clips No. 9: 15-17 January 2005

Note: This is a daily summary of media reports concerning damage to aquaculture, aquatic livelihoods of coastal communities and related issues, gathered for the purpose of preparing a regional assessment to aid medium- to long-term rehabilitation of affected areas. It is not intended as a comprehensive summary of media reports, nor is it a summary of general damage. The content does not necessarily reflect the views of the NACA organization.

Thailand

Hatchery losses may hurt entire shrimp sector
Twenty days after the tsunami disaster, Chokchai Sermsirimanont has returned to survey the damage to his shrimp hatchery operation in Takua Pa district. The manager of AA Ocean Farm said the tsunami killed seven of his workers, destroyed 300 of his cement hatchery ponds and washed away equipment and shrimp. Total property damage was around 20 million baht, not including the lost profit potential of his 3,000 breeding stock, which could have produced some 50-60 million larvae a month. His operation is just one of some 1,300 hatchery farms along the Andaman coast. Some 60-70% of all shrimp farms in six provinces suffered damage in the Dec 26 tsunami.

Source: Bangkok Post 15/01/2005

Govt pledges 60 million baht to help tsunami-hit small businesses
The Thai government said Wednesday that it was speeding up a compensation program for around 2,400 small business owners whose livelihoods have been affected by last month's devastating Indian Ocean tsunami. Officials said at least 60 million baht would be spent on the scheme. The department would allocate 48 million baht to local administrations in affected provinces, which would pass on compensation of 20,000 baht to each tsunami-hit business owner. Twelve million baht would be kept in reserve to meet other possible claims from the small business sector. "We want these people to be able to get up and run their businesses as quickly as possible. In the longer term, different agencies will provide access to other forms of direct help, such as loans and credit," he said.

Source: Financial Times Information, January 13, 2005

Thai shrimp farmers appeal for soft loans to help post-tsunami revival
Thai shrimp farmers have appealed for immediate government financial aid to help the industry, a key export earner, recover from the devastating impact of last month’s tsunami.

Source: MCOT.org; 17 January 2005
http://etna.mcot.net/query.php?nid=34749
Indonesia

For now, Indonesian fishermen don't have the sea as an option officials must move quickly to revive industry, advocates say

Fishermen and their families were hit particularly hard by the tsunami, not only because they live near the coast, but also because the blow to their livelihood may be the most enduring. The disaster killed more than 115,000 people in Indonesia. The government said 14,000 fishermen were among the dead, but some analysts estimate the actual figure is larger. Here in the hardest-hit province of Aceh, a $422 million industry was decimated in a matter of minutes, as the powerful walls of water flattened fishing villages, fish markets and wharves, and smashed wooden boats into bits of flotsam.


Malaysia

Fish auctions failing to click

Poor demand for fish in Kedah has forced many local fishermen to auction off their catches over the past week. The fishing community's problems are further compounded by the reluctance of many wholesalers from other States to increase orders. Checks showed the prices of many prized fish, including siakap and ikan bawal have been slashed by more than 80 per cent. The fish is auctioned off at as low as RM7 per kilogramme.

Source: New Straits Times; January 17, 2005

Malaysia govt to buy unsold fish amid post-tsunami scare

The Malaysian government is to buy unsold fish to help tsunami-hit fishermen whose incomes have been severely affected by the disaster, media reports said. This is an interim measure until the situation improves,' Deputy Agriculture Minister Shariff Omar was quoted as saying.

Source: Yahoo! Finance UK; January 16

India

Fisher-communities critique relief

Twenty four fishermen associations met in Chennai on 16 January to critique the ongoing tsunami relief operations in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. The meeting, convened under the banner of Fisher Movements Coordination of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry (FMCTNP), urged the Central and State Governments to spell out rehabilitation policy. The meeting also pointed out that this unprecedented calamity should be converted into an opportunity to bring far-reaching changes to the lives of fisher-communities.

Source: tsunami2004-india.org; 2005/1/17
**Control room opened**

SIFFS has opened a Fishing Craft & Gear control room in Kanyakumari district to collate requests for repair of craft and gear. A Fishing Craft and Gear Control Room has been opened at Nagercoil (Kanyakumari district) on 12 January 2005. The telephone number of the control room is: 04652-570682.

*Source: tsunami2004-india.org; 2005/1/12 8:51:55*

**U.N. agency says tsunami devastated Indian Ocean fisheries**

The Food and Agriculture Organization said the damage to fisheries from the Dec. 26 tsunami is worse than originally expected, with fishing families deprived of their former incomes as well as alternative jobs in local industries such as tourism. The Rome-based agency is looking at ways to assist the fishers and restart the fishing industry in the region, though Tietze said it was still seeking funds for the aid projects. The FAO has sent experts to Sri Lanka to advise the government on rehabilitation projects, while it plans support measures in other affected countries including Indonesia, Thailand, the Maldives, Somalia and the Seychelles. Tietze said fishermen in the region had only begun to repair their boats in the last few days, their first step toward recovering their former jobs before seeking to replace lost fishing gear. He said that in Sri Lanka and parts of Thailand even those fishermen who had not lost their equipment and had been able to go back to work had problems selling their catch because of fears that the fish would have fed on dead bodies. In Sri Lanka - where more than 7,500 fishers were killed by the tsunami and a further 5,600 are missing - over 5,000 fishing families have been displaced and 80 percent of fishing boats destroyed, the agency said in a statement. Ten of Sri Lanka's 12 main fishing harbors were devastated by the tidal waves. In Indonesia the tsunami killed two-thirds of the fishers in Banda Aceh, the agency reported, while in the surrounding area of northern Sumatra about 1,000 fish cage farms were destroyed. In the province of Nanggro Aceh Darussalam, where 42,000 fishing families live, 70 percent of the fishing fleet has been destroyed, the agency said in a statement. Ten of Sri Lanka's 12 main fishing harbors were devastated by the tidal waves. In Indonesia the tsunami killed two-thirds of the fishers in Banda Aceh, the agency reported, while in the surrounding area of northern Sumatra about 1,000 fish cage farms were destroyed. In the province of Nanggro Aceh Darussalam, where 42,000 fishing families live, 70 percent of the fishing fleet has been destroyed, the agency said in a statement. Ten of Sri Lanka's 12 main fishing harbors were devastated by the tidal waves. In Indonesia the tsunami killed two-thirds of the fishers in Banda Aceh, the agency reported, while in the surrounding area of northern Sumatra about 1,000 fish cage farms were destroyed. In the province of Nanggro Aceh Darussalam, where 42,000 fishing families live, 70 percent of the fishing fleet has been destroyed, the agency said. In Thailand, the tsunami has caused an estimated US$49.6 million ([euro]37.5 million) of damage to marine fisheries and fishing cages, while fishing villages lost about 4,500 boats and seafood supplies in some areas have dropped by 90 percent. Along the coast of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, 300,000 fishers have lost their jobs and 2,000 boats were destroyed. The agency said that according to local industry estimates, seafood exports from India could decline by around 30 percent following the tsunami.

*Source: Associated Press, January 13, 2005 Thursday*

**Fishermen at sea with other work, women key to livelihood**

Homeless fishermen are like fish out of water when it comes to taking up alternative jobs, leaving women to tread unexplored territory of cooperative and hold the key to livelihood revival. NGOs as well as government have realised that efforts at providing alternative employment for fishermen have not met with the desired success. "We had launched food-for-work programmes for the fishermen here, which include construction of temporary shelters and removal of debris in exchange for food. But to our surprise, only a very few came forward, either due to their aversion or incompetence for any work other than their traditional occupation fishing," Tamil Nadu Rural Development Secretary Santha Seela
Nayar told PTI. However, as the men wait for compensation or replacement of their damaged boats and fishing nets so that they can return to the sea, administration plans to launch employment programmes for women in the area, modelled on the success stories of self-help groups and co-operatives like Amul in other states. Many NGOs have, however, come up with innovative ideas aimed at providing employment for women in the affected areas. They feel that with proper advertising and marketing strategies, women in Nagapattinam can make a mark in the co-operative domain.

Source: The Press Trust of India, January 13, 2005 Thursday

Post-tsunami they dread the sea

The fishermen, who were the most vocal against the government restrictions on habitations within 500 metres of the sea shore, are now the most willing to shift their homes as far away from the sea as possible. In the havoc wreaked by the December 26 tidal waves in the 30 coastal villages and fishing hamlets here, the worst-affected were the fishing and non-fishing community living dangerously close to the sea. The Pondicherry (federally governed territory on the eastern coast of India) government, that has been pressing for stricter Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ) now says that almost overnight people from the coastal villages have agreed to shift their habitation to a kilometre away from the CRZ. The town planning includes a first barrier of mangroves within 200 metre of the shore. No individual will be allowed to construct living quarters in this zone. "In the next stage we have planned some concrete coastal barriers like that in the northern part of Pondicherry. "The land has been identified and the estimate is being drawn for the dwelling. Initially we had planned to construct one single stretch of 4000 houses along the 20 kilometre of coastline and establish the villagers there", Joint Director Planning and Research dept R Mogane said. "Now not one single fisherman is willing to live so dangerously close to the sea. We have seen cyclones and tides before and upon warning we never took out boats to sea. But we were totally unprepared this time".

Source: The Press Trust of India, January 13, 2005 Thursday

Regional

Elimination of fish diet in tsunami-hit areas could affect health’

The United Nations food agency has warned the people in the tsunami-hit areas that elimination of fish from their diet could hurt nutrition and said there was no evidence of seafood-borne illnesses increasing in the affected region. Eliminating fish from the diet could have adverse nutritional impacts, with possible health consequences -- especially for weakened tsunami survivors recovering from injuries, the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation said in a statement yesterday. It said there was no evidence, epidemiological or of any other nature, that fish and seafood-borne illnesses have increased in Asian countries hit by the tsunami. The agency, however, said that one emerging concern was that damaged wastewater and sanitation systems might leak into fishing grounds or aquaculture ponds, leading to viral, bacterial and parasitic intestinal infections.

Source: India Express; 16/01/2005 11:53:14
Coral reefs should recovery quickly from tsunami
Geographer Jennifer Rahn, a Baylor University assistant professor whose principle research focus is coral reefs, says the Dec. 26 tsunami in the Indian Ocean did not cause as much damage to the coral reefs as watchers initially feared. She said the reefs could take a couple of decades to recover, or they could bounce back in as quickly as one or two years. “There are lots of coral reefs in the Indian Ocean, and they have adapted to pounding by hurricanes.” Rahn said the latest reports indicate the destruction to the reefs is less than anticipated, though in some places the reefs may range from five to 50 percent damaged, depending on the location. “Most of the damage consists of reefs covered with debris— refrigerators, doors and other garbage that has to be removed. Up to 100 scuba diving volunteers a day are out cleaning off the coral,” she said.

Source: Baylor University; 15/01/2005

Environmentalists worry about tsunami debris in remote Indian islands
But last month's tsunami wrecked those beautiful coasts, smashing jetties and boats and turning thousands of homes and buildings into heaps of rubble. As the clean-up begins, a question is emerging: What to do with all the debris? Environmental activists are worried that government agencies and private contractors will simply dump it all into the sea - long a common method of trash disposal here.

Source: The Star Online; January 17, 2005

Tsunami could throw two million into poverty
Nearly two million people could fall into poverty as a result of the tsunami that killed more than 160,000 people around the Indian Ocean, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said yesterday. While the overall effect on most economies would be minimal, and in some cases even beneficial, the Manila-based institution said its initial study had showed the weakest in society would bear the economic brunt of the disaster.

http://www.gulf-news.com/Articles/WorldNF.asp?ArticleID=147706

Indian Ocean Fishing Industry `Devastated' by Tsunami, UN Says
The tsunami disaster in southern Asia and eastern Africa `"devastated" the fishing industry in the region, destroying docks, boats and ice plants, the United Nations said. In Sri Lanka, more than 13,000 fishermen are counted as dead or missing.

Source: Bloomberg.com; January 13, 2005

Poorest In S. Asia Face New Hardship; Maldives, Sri Lanka Worst Off, Study Says
An estimated 2 million people in Asia are at risk of sinking deeper into poverty as a result of the Dec. 26 tsunami and its aftermath, with the harshest long-term economic damage expected in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, according to a study by the Philippines-based Asian Development Bank. The study released Wednesday by the bank -- a multilateral
lender whose largest shareholders are the United States and Japan -- found that as many as 1 million Indonesians, 435,000 Indians and 250,000 Sri Lankans are in danger of falling further into poverty. Particularly hard hit will be the fishermen and farmers whose boats and equipment washed away with the violent waves. Estimates in Sri Lanka, which was already facing a large budget deficit, indicate the tsunami tore up railways and roads and destroyed 100,000 homes and 150,000 vehicles -- although the key port of Colombo sustained only light damage. "Now they have little financial leeway to cope with this disaster," Ifzal Ali, the bank's chief economist, said in a telephone interview. Still, the region hit by the tsunami -- which had been experiencing some of Asia's fastest economic growth -- appears resilient enough to absorb much of the broader financial impact, particularly given the outpouring of international aid, the study concludes. Losses should be markedly less than those suffered in the region during 2003 following the outbreak of SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, the study says. Although the loss of life and property damage were worst in Indonesia, the report indicates that the nation should be able to cope with the economic fallout. The Indian economy is also expected to suffer a minimal amount. Though the port city of Madras was hit, its industrial and port infrastructure has not been affected. Bangladesh, Malaysia and Burma are also expected to suffer minimally. "In Indonesia and India, the risk is not to the national economies but rather to the individuals who lost their livelihoods and now need grants and loans to buy new boats and equipment," Ali said. "They will need assistance, or else there is a major risk they could find themselves slipping further into misery."

Source: The Washington Post, January 13, 2005 Thursday

UN funding to save mangroves

GEORGE TOWN, Thurs. - A United Nations-linked initiative to fund projects on the sustainable use of mangroves in Malaysia may be the answer to save such areas. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) is calling on local non-governmental and community-based bodies to submit project proposals which focus on the conservation of mangroves. Launched in 1992, SGP supports activities of non-governmental and community-based organisations in developing countries towards climate change abatement, conservation of biodiversity and protection of international waters. Other projects include reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants and prevention of land degradation while generating sustainable livelihoods. Funded by the GEF as a corporate programme, SGP is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and United Nations Environment Programme. "The projects are to support local in-shore fishing communities while promoting the conservation and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystem in Penang island and Sungai Acheh in Seberang Prai, and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use around Kuala Muda in Kedah."

Details of funding assistance from GEF/SGP for mangrove conservation projects in Malaysia can be obtained by emailing: martin.abraham@undp.org

Source: New Straits Times Press (Malaysia), January 14, 2005, Friday
Fight natural disasters with nature

Poorly executed redevelopment will make coastal and island communities just as vulnerable to future natural disasters as they were to the tsunami. Nearly 40 island nations - attending a UN conference in Mauritius this week on the vulnerability of small island states to natural disasters and climate change - are expected to endorse this call. Coral reefs are the equivalent of natural breakwaters, providing a physical barrier that reaches the sea surface, causing waves to break offshore so that they dissipate most of their destructive energy before reaching land. WWF estimates that coral reefs provide US$ 9 billion annually in economic benefits associated with coastal protection. The reefs are also important breeding grounds for fish. Mangrove forests, too, act as natural shock absorbers. They provide nutrients and spawning grounds for a variety of fish and shellfish. They are also a source of timber, charcoal and medicine to local communities. When managed properly, they can support livelihoods, as well as provide coastal protection, the UN Environment Programme said. Sri Lanka's government has indicated that it intends to make sure communities and tourist resorts in the tsunami-affected areas are relocated a safe distance from the sea. Australia has offered help in both areas. But these are just small initial steps in what conservation groups and the UN Environment Programme say should be a full-scale "green" reconstruction programme.

Michael Richardson is a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

Source: South China Morning Post Ltd., January 14, 2005

Tsunami-affected countries face severe local food security problems;
Estimated 2 million people in need of food aid; Overall food availability in region adequate

Local communities severely hit by the tsunami disaster will face severe food security problems in the short and long term because parents and relatives have been lost, livelihood assets have been destroyed, and sources of income no longer exist, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said today. Harvest prospects have deteriorated in agricultural areas worst hit by the tsunami and heavy rains. It is estimated that 2 million people in 12 different countries in the disaster region are in need of food assistance, the FAO said. However, in spite of local losses, overall food availability in the region affected should be adequate to cover food needs. The 2005 main season paddy and maize crops, to be harvested from March on, were already on the ground when the tsunami struck Sumatra. The island is the second in Indonesia in terms of rice production. In Sri Lanka, the hardest-hit eastern and southern coastal districts are among the largest paddy growing areas. Planting of the 2005 main paddy season, accounting for some 60 per cent of the total rice production, had just been completed when the tsunami arrived. In the Southern region, including the affected provinces, harvesting of the 2004 main season paddy crop was underway when the tsunami hit coastal areas. In India, some 90 per cent of the country's annual paddy crop is grown from May to November. The tsunami did not affect the overall 2005 production prospects. Rice surplus is expected to be sufficient to cover the food aid needs in the country's worst-affected areas. Further information on M2 PressWIRE can be obtained at http://www.presswire.net on the world wide web. Inquiries to info@m2.com).

Fisheries 'devastated' by tsunami

Fisheries in many countries affected by last month's Asian tsunami have been devastated, according to a United Nations assessment. It says some countries have lost about three-quarters of their fishing boats. In many affected countries fishing is a major source of food for local people and an important export commodity. "The situation is extremely serious," said Jeremy Turner, chief of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Fishery Technology Service. "In Sri Lanka, our reports suggest to us that something like 80% of fishing vessels have been either lost or damaged, and similar levels of destruction have taken place in northwestern Indonesia, that's northern Sumatra," he said. Of Sri Lanka's 12 major fishing ports, 10 have been seriously affected, with damage to facilities such as cold stores and slipways. Figures from other countries are less comprehensive, but surveys suggest that Thailand has lost more than 4,000 boats. It is thought that Somalia has lost more than 2,000, and the Maldives is without about a third of its fleet. In some regions fish supplies in markets have dropped by 90%, the FAO has reported.

Source: BBC, 13 January, 2005
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4172561.stm

International

Relief aid abounds, but not a consensus on its use; expert warns of doing more harm than good

Billions of U.S. dollars are being allocated by governments and international organizations to countries affected by last month's tsunami. In an interview with ZENIT, Riccardo Cascioli says that the challenge now is to identify the best way to use the funds. Cascioli is the director of the Italian-based European Center of Studies on Environment, Population and Development, and an expert on Asian issues.

Source: ZENIT.org; 2005-01-16

Hawaii shrimp exports escape tsunami's wrath

Hawaii shrimp farms exporting brood stock into Asia say business for the most part remains unaffected by last month's cataclysmic tsunami that severely damaged the region's shrimp-farming industry.

Source: Pacific Business News, January 14, 2005

Market fish fit for consumption

There is no quality deterioration of fish available in the market, the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University has said. In a press release here, he said extensive tests conducted by the university did not exhibit any adverse symptoms. It was the onerous responsibility of the university to allay the unfounded fears in the minds of the general public," Dr. Balaraman said. Salinity in seawater was a positive deterrent" to the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms.

Source: Financial Times Information, January 13, 2005
World Bank President urges tsunami reconstruction be driven by the affected communities

World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn said Wednesday that reconstruction in the tsunami-hit countries of Asia and Africa must be driven by the local communities affected by the disaster, adding that the process of rebuilding should be transparent and ensure accountability for the funds. As an immediate response to requests for assistance, the World Bank has announced it will provide $300 million in initial financial support to Indonesia, $100 million to Sri Lanka, and $12 million to the Maldives. Mr. Wolfensohn reiterated Wednesday that the Bank could provide more than $1.0 billion, and perhaps as much as $1.5 billion, for longer-term reconstruction efforts in the affected countries. However, the World Bank President stressed that it is critical to conduct comprehensive damage assessments to guide the reconstruction effort, and that each dollar of aid is used to the greatest benefit of the survivors. The World Bank President said the reconstruction effort 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 said, should be determined by those in the communities. In addition to ensuring community involvement, Wolfensohn said the international community and each government in the tsunami-effected countries will discuss ways to ensure the funds raised for reconstruction can be easily distinguished from other development finance and tracked from donor to community, with progress tracked on the Internet.

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Source: M2 Communications Ltd, January 13, 2005