



PRESS RELEASE

1024 Wisconsin Avenue N.W., Suite 401 Washington D.C. 20007
Tel. (202) 944-3600 Fax. (202) 944-3611 <http://www.thaiembdc.org> E-mail: thai.wsn@thaiembdc.org

POST-TSUNAMI DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND

Schools for Orphans under the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation

1. In the aftermath of the 26 December tsunami disaster, His Majesty the King instructed the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation to provide food and medical supplies to areas affected by the tsunami. It has also provided support to hundreds of children who have been orphaned by the tragedy. The Rajaprajanugroh will build 4 schools in Phang-nga, Phuket, Krabi and Ranong provinces to accommodate the orphans. Each school will be provided with modern facilities including:

CAI library (Computer Assisted Instruction) which will be equipped with computers, CD Rom, Multimedia, DVD, videos, books, encyclopedia and other reference materials.

An ICT war room which is in fact a multipurpose conference room which can be used as a meeting room for briefings, study visits or exhibitions. It should also serve as venue for local teleconference or videoconference with other countries.

The Distance Learning Foundation (DLF), under His Majesty the King's patronage, can broadcast the international videoconference or teleconference via satellite to the whole kingdom and neighboring countries, namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and China (Yunnan). Related information on Distance Learning Foundation and E-Learning can be found at <http://www.dlf.ac.th>.

2. On behalf of the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, Dr. Chalintorn Burian, the Center's program representative in Thailand, presented a check in the amount of US\$10,000 to the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation on 17 February 2005. This money will be used to help victims of the 26 December 2004 tsunami in southern Thailand. The money is part of a fundraising campaign undertaken by the East-West Center and made possible through the generosity of the people of Honolulu. Administrators of the East-West Center Tsunami Relief Fund designated

that the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation would be among a select group of relief organizations in the region to receive support.

3. The Ministry of Public Health is confident that the government will be able to control possible epidemics in the tsunami-hit region. Since the tsunamis struck the six provinces on the 26 December 2004, public health officials have been constantly monitoring the situation around the coastal areas, especially around the worst hit area in Takaupa district of Phang Nga. As the donated water is starting to run out, the Public Health Ministry is planning to set up clean water distribution centres in 6 areas in Phang Nga province, 3 of which have already been installed. In addition, the people are being instructed to eat cooked meals, and to avoid consuming unhygienic food.

4. The Society for the Disabled of Phuket has represented the Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific Region (DPIAP) in donating an initial 20 wheel chairs in the tsunami affected area. The 20 wheel chairs were donated on 23 February 2005, with an additional 150 expected to be delivered early next month, as the number of disabled has increased significantly in the 6 tsunami affected provinces along the Andaman Coast. However, the exact number of the increase in the disabled cannot be determined yet, as information from the government sector is still forthcoming. The initial donation will be given to the pre-tsunami disabled people, and while, information is currently being gathered to assess the post-tsunami situation.

5. To celebrate HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's 50th birthday this year, the Medical Services Department's Sirindhorn Disability Rehabilitation Centre is racing ahead with a 3.3-million-baht project to help those left handicapped by the tsunami. Mobile medical teams will provide treatment and distribute artificial limbs and equipment. Dr Chatri Banchuen, Director-General of the Medical Services Department, said the centre would send mobile medical units to Wachira Phuket Hospital, Phangnga and Satun on 7-11 March 2005 to fit the disabled with durable artificial limbs and special equipment and teach the handicapped how to take good care of themselves. Each limb would be made of resin and polypropylene, with the cost ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 baht, and take up to two days to build. They would be made from five-million-baht worth of material donations from Germany and should last 10 years.

POST-TSUNAMI DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

On 24 February 2005, Ambassador Kasit Piromya called on Governor Jeb Bush at the Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida. They discussed the Governor's trip to Southeast Asia after being hit by the Tsunamis. Ambassador Kasit and the Governor discussed technical cooperation and the possible dispatch of an expert team from Florida to train the Thais to deal with natural disaster prevention and relief. Prior to the call, Ambassador Kasit had a meeting on comprehensive management and planning in the recovery phase with the high ranking officials including:

1. Dr. Pamela Dana, Director
Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development
2. Secretary John Agwunobi, Florida Department of Health
3. Secretary Thaddeus Cohen, Florida Department of Community Affairs
4. Secretary Colleen M. Castille

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
5. Director Craig Fugate, Florida Division of Emergency Management
 6. Director Susan Pareigis, Agency for Workforce Innovation
 7. Bud Nocera, President/CEO, Visit Florida, Inc.
 8. Mary Helen Blakeslee
Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Ambassador Kasit also visited and observed the Emergency Operations Center under the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Department of Community Affairs.

THE FORUM ON "THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARDS ASIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA"

On 25 February 2005, Ambassador Kasit Piromya chaired the 1st Luncheon Forum at the Embassy. Topic of discussion was "The New U.S. Administration's Policy Towards Asia and Southeast Asia." Dr. Catharin E. Dalpino, Adjunct Professor, Asian Studies Program, Georgetown University, was the lead speaker, raising regional and international issues concerning the role of the United States in East and Southeast Asia. Other participants included Prof. David Steinberg of Georgetown University, Mr. James Lister of the Korea Economic Institute, Mr. Ed. Gresser of the Progressive Policy Institute, Mr. James Gagnon of the State Department and Ms. Cynthia Bunton of the International Republican Institute. The discussion ranged from political, economic to security issues, such as the role of China, South Korea and North Korea in light of Pyongyang's nuclear announcement and withdrawal from the 5 party talks, to regional cooperation within ASEAN, East Asia Community, and APEC.
