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Seminar, 31 May 2005
Faashana Maalam, Dharubaaruge, Male', Maldives

FINAL REPORT
by
Ms Deborrah Lührman

PRESENTATION
by
Moderators of
4 Workshops,
MoT, MTPB, NDMC
and
Concluding Remarks
by
MATI

POST TSUNAMI REVIEW

WORKSHOP AND SEMINAR

Ministry of Tourism

In association with
Maldives Association of Tourism Industry and Maldives Tourism promotion Board



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Introduction

A Post Tsunami Review was conducted from 24-31 May by the Maldives Ministry of Tourism, in cooperation with the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), the private sector Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), and the World Tourism Organization (WTO). A series of four workshops for resort operators, tour operators, aviation companies and travel agencies culminated in a final seminar that was attended by some 150 representatives of the tourism sector, as well as the Ministers of Finance, Planning and National Development, Education and Tourism.

The purpose of the meetings was to raise awareness about the need for a Disaster Management plan for the tourism sector and to solicit information that will form the basis of the plan. The aim of the workshops was described as follows:

- To examine the reaction and challenges faced when the tsunami hit the country on 26th December, 2004
- Review what has been done since then
- Examine the future challenges
- Foster cooperation between all stakeholders in the exchange of information, experiences and best practices in disaster management.

The Ministry of Tourism is to be commended for conducting the meetings in an extremely professional and participative manner. A preliminary report on the results of each of the four workshops is attached, including the tsunami experiences of each of the sub-sectors of the tourism industry.

The Maldives tourism industry

Tourism forms the backbone of the Maldivian economy—accounting for 32% of GDP, 70% of foreign exchange earnings and 30% of government revenues. One out of every five jobs in the Maldives is directly linked to tourism at island resorts, tour companies, restaurants and transport companies. In addition, the industry indirectly provides income for thousands of other inhabitants. International tourist arrivals were estimated at 616,000 in 2004.

The tsunami flooded the low-lying Maldives, but hit with less force than in places closer to the epicenter of the Sumatra earthquake and because of protection afforded by its coral reefs. Eighty-two people were killed, 26 more are missing and presumed drowned, and 100,000 were left homeless. Two British tourists were killed. Out of 87 resorts in the islands, 24 were damaged by the tsunami, the rest were undamaged. There are currently 71 resorts open and fully operational, ten resorts are still closed for repairs and expected to reopen before the high season begins in October, while six resorts were severely damaged and need to be rebuilt.

Occupancy rates at the open resorts climbed steadily for the first three months of the year, approaching normal levels by the end of March. Then the second earthquakes off the coast of Sumatra occurred. Even though there was no second tsunami, arrivals dropped off again. Although May is the low monsoon season, occupancy rates were significantly lower than the same period last year, averaging between 30-50%. The estimated cost of rebuilding is US\$100 million and it is estimated that revenue loss from the closures and lack of visitors will be at least US\$200 million, increasing if the downturn in arrivals continues.

Results of the Post Tsunami Review

Participants in each session of the Post Tsunami Review coincided in the need for a Disaster Management Plan that covers all types of natural and man-made crises, everything from another tsunami to fires, air crashes, epidemics, civil unrest and terrorism. Concerns for actions that improve tourism safety and crisis response focused on nine broad areas, their specific suggestions are listed below:

Male International Airport

As the only international airport in the islands, safeguarding the physical integrity of the airport and ensuring its efficient operation in a disaster was the foremost concern of the tourism sector, which called for:

- a) Additional protection for the runway
- b) Additional protection for navigational equipment
- c) Back up communications systems with resort islands, tour operators, travel agency offices and with domestic airports
- d) A clear chain of command and a disaster plan to organize airport staff in case of an emergency
- e) Emergency supplies of first aid, food, water and blankets
- f) Memoranda of understanding signed in advance with suppliers of equipment needed to clean up the airport in a disaster
- g) A new policy on airport departures, so the terminal is not flooded with passengers trying to get a seat in case of another massive emergency
- h) Disaster training and practice drills for airport staff both in daytime and at night
- i) Increased frequency of transfers from Male to the airport in a crisis

Telecommunications

A breakdown in the national telecommunications system during the tsunami caused the most problems for the tourism sector, blocking communication between national disaster authorities such as the NSS/Coast Guard and the resorts. It also prevented tour operators and travel agencies from contacting resorts for accurate information on the condition of their clients, causing alarm by their friends and relatives and in the international media. The lack of information coming out of the resorts exacerbated the crisis, leading to speculation that the situation was much worse than it actually was. In addition, the system collapsed for a second time during the tsunami alert on 28th March.

- a) Additional protection for the national telecommunications system
- b) Additional hardware capacity to handle more simultaneous calls
- c) Back up communications systems and increased capacity to handle calls at strategic disaster management points such as the airport, coast guard and national meteorological office
- d) Clarification and simplification of the legality of the use of satellite telephones

Early Warning Alerts

The tourism sector needs speedier alerts that reach each resort directly from the government, without relying on them to be constantly monitoring national television or radio. They also require more detailed instructions of what to do in a disaster, because they are legally liable for complying with government warnings and instructions.

- a) A system that “pushes” alerts out to each tourism business
- b) Quicker advice on impending storms, high tides and tsunamis
- c) More detailed information on what to do during each alert
- d) Increased capacity to handle simultaneous calls at the national meteorological office and national disaster management centre

Resort safety

As many resorts are located on outlying islands far away from emergency facilities, there is a need to upgrade and standardize safety regulations. Island resorts currently have varying degrees of preparedness. New construction codes are needed for new building. Although all the islands have low elevation, it was concluded that in most disasters it would be better for guests to remain in a shelter on high ground, perhaps on the upper floor up a two-story building, at the resort island instead of descending *en mass* at the airport.

- a) Satellite telephones and other back up communications systems
- b) Protection for electrical generators
- c) Disaster shelters on high ground
- d) Emergency supplies of food and water
- e) Evacuation plans
- f) Emergency information for guests in various languages
- g) Staff training and drills in using communications equipment, first aid and evacuation

Marine safety

Ship-to-ship two-way radios proved indispensable during the collapse of the telecommunications system in the tsunami and worked well. However, the tourism industry needs to make sure that transfers between islands and excursion boats are as safe as possible. There is currently confusion about where safari boats are allowed to anchor.

- a) Satellite telephones on tourism boats
- b) Improved safety regulations and enforcement for ferry boats
- c) Clarification of anchoring rules for safari boats
- d) Publication of maritime regulations in English

Insurance

There is confusion in the sector about insurance requirements, especially on small business owners such as travel agencies and safari boat operators. How much coverage is really needed? What type of coverage is necessary? What the insurance companies are required to pay out? How the industry works in the tourism source markets, especially in light of the European Union directive that makes tour operators liable for mishaps.

- a) Information on insurance for the tourism industry should be compiled and disseminated to travel agencies.

Crisis communications

Quick, honest and transparent information is the key to responding successfully and overcoming any kind of a crisis in the tourism sector. Detailed and plentiful information puts the crisis into context, allaying the fears of loved ones and putting a halt on speculation in the media.

- a) The government adopt a policy of full disclosure in a crisis
- b) A special disaster website with detailed maps be developed
- c) Information flow from the tourism ministry be increased
- d) A media centre be set up in a large scale crisis
- e) Priority be given to inter-governmental communication to prevent travel advisories or get them lifted the moment the danger subsides

Tourism recovery

Recovery of the tourism sector following a crisis calls for extraordinary efforts to regain the confidence of visitors in the main tourist source markets. It also requires extra human and financial resources to undertake a vigorous promotional campaign.

- a) Boost communications on safety improvements
- b) Launch an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign in major generating markets
- c) Increase the number of familiarization trips for journalists
- d) Solicit assistance from airlines to bring in tour operators and travel agents
- e) Television coverage and advertising to counteract the images of the disaster
- f) Seek out new source markets for tourists

Fiscal measures

There is a need to protect tourism jobs and small businesses during the crisis recovery period. Additionally, there is a need to provide economic incentives to larger businesses and airlines so that they can adopt measures to attract tourists back to the Maldives and speed up the recovery, thus lessening loss of government revenues, protecting the destination's reputation and reassuring new investors. Participants felt that a sector that contributes so much to national development is entitled to financial support from the government in times of crisis. Types of fiscal incentives discussed include:

- a) Lower landing fees at the airport
- b) Lower per-bed lease fees
- c) Extension of leases
- d) Tax incentives
- e) Waiver of import duties

Developing the Disaster Management Plan for tourism

In accordance with the procedures outlined the World Tourism Organization publications *Crisis Guidelines for the Tourism Sector* and *Risk Management for the Asia-Pacific Region*, the WTO consultant recommends adopting the international definition of a tourism crisis:

“Any unexpected event that affects traveller confidence in a destination and interferes with the ability to continue operating normally.”

It is further recommended that the Disaster Management Plan for tourism include the three key phases of a tourism crisis and the following elements:

Readiness

- a) Safety regulations for resorts and transport operators, including creation of a disaster shelter on high ground, back-up communications equipment and evacuation plans
- b) Safety regulations for the international and domestic airports
- c) Enforcement mechanisms
- d) A model evacuation manual for resorts
- e) Disaster training drills for resorts and transport operators
- f) Upgraded communications equipment and training for tourism authorities

Response

- a) Formation of a crisis unit in the tourism ministry
- b) Participation in a crisis management seminar by several tourism officials
- c) A crisis communications policy of full disclosure
- d) Training in crisis communications
- e) First aid training for resorts and transport operators
- f) A policy for dealing with travel advisories

Recovery

- g) An emergency crisis recovery fund
- h) Formation of a recovery partnership between the public and private sectors

- i) Research on travellers' perceptions in generating markets
- j) Communications activities in generating markets
- k) Fiscal relief measures for the tourism industry
- l) Familiarization trips for travel agents and media
- m) Promotional activities in generating markets
- n) Organization of special events

Conclusion

A good understanding of the importance of tourism to national recovery and development was demonstrated in all branches of government that participated in the workshops and seminar. An unprecedented level of participation and cooperation was demonstrated by leaders of the private sector. In addition, a great deal of momentum was created by this process, which needs to be harnessed and carried forward to create a safer and even brighter future for Maldives tourism.

Annex 1

Resort Operators Workshop

(Tuesday, May 24, 2005)

Programme

08:30-9:00	Participant Registration
09:00-9:15	Welcome Remarks by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr. Mohamed Saeed
09:15-11:00	Discussions
11:00	Tea Break
11:20	Presentation by WTO
11:30	Questions & Answers
11:45	Conclusion
12:30	Press Conference

This was the first in a series of four workshops with the different stakeholders in the tourism industry. It focused on the experiences and recommendations of **resort owners**. The workshop was opened by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr. Mohamed Saeed and moderated by Mr. Bandhu Ibrahim Saleem, Managing Director of Island Aviation Services. Panelists included:

- **Mr. Armando Kraenzlin** - General Manager, Four Seasons Resort and Spa at Kudahura
- **Ms. Fathimath Rizma Waleed** - Senior Marketing Executive, AAA Company Pvt. Ltd.
- **Mr. Mohamed Shareef** - Director, Maldives Airports Company, Ltd.
- **Capt. Ibrahim Afsal** - Coast Guard, Ministry of Defense and National Security Service

The workshop began with brief statements from the panelists, followed by a general discussion that involved about 20 additional representatives of resorts, as well as the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Mustafa Lutfi; the director of the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) Dr. Abdulla Mausoom; the Chairman of the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) Mr. M.U. Maniku; and a consultant in crisis management from the World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO), Ms. Deborrah Lührman.

Participants

	Name	Resort/Company/Office
1	Ali Mohamed	Olhuvveli Beach Resort and Spa Resort / Suntravel
2	Shirhan Mahir	Universal Resorts
3	Ibrahim Zuhair	Angaga Island Resort
4	Christopher Alan Santual	White Sands Resort and Spa
5	Mr.Mohamed Athif	Bandos Island Resort
6	John Neutze	Hilton Maldives Resort & Spa
7	Ahmed Nazeer	Kihaadhuffaru
8	Hussain Luthfy	Hermosa LTD INC / Madoogali Resort
9	Rajeev Chatterjee	Sonevafushi Resort & Spa / Sonevagili Resort & Spa
10	Ibrahim Shakir	Baros Maldives/ Universal Enterprises Pvt Ltd
11	Muruthala Musthafa	Vaadoo Island Resort
12	Ali Moosa	Lily Beach Resort
13	Kusal Lankeshwara Malwatte	John Keells Maldivian Resorts (Pvt) Ltd
14	Marco Groten	Sonevagili Resort & Six Senses Spa
15	Hussain Shahid	Sonevagili Resort / Promus Pte Ltd
16	Abdul Latheef	Bolifushi Island Resort
17	Ibrahim Naseer	Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd, Athuruga
18	Areef Ahmed	Crown & Champa Resorts, Meeru
19	Abdul Azeez Moosa	Asdhu Sun Island
20	Ibrahim Shihab	Magic Kingdom Resorts (Reethi Beach Resort)
21	Aishath Nezleen	Halaveli Holiday Village
22	Salvatore Puma	Moofushi Island Resort
23	Utkarsh Faujdar	Hulhule Island Hotel
24	Shamoon Mohamed	Leisure Maldives
25	Naheez Ahmed Saeed	Moving International (Pvt) Ltd
26	Andrew Wong	Singapore Airlines
27	Ibrahim Shujau	Singapore Airlines
28	Ali Firaq	Intourist Maldives
29	Mohamed Aslam	Ministry of Environment & Construction
30	Ibrahim Shafeeg Ahmed	Ministry of Atolls Development
31	Mohamed Zubair	Ministry of Atolls Development
32	Abdul Majeed Hassan	Dept of Inland Revenue / Min. Finance & Treasury
33	Ahmed Saeed	Haveeru Daily

The Tsunami Experience

The December 26th tsunami affected each resort differently. Some suffered extensive damage while others were relatively unscathed. Due to the low-lying geography of the islands, relatively high construction standards and the low-density of man-made structures at resorts, in most cases the high tsunami waters simply swept over the islands and back out to sea.

While individual experiences varied widely, none of the resorts received a warning that the tsunami was approaching and none of the resorts were prepared for this kind of a natural disaster. Guests panicked and almost all of them returned home, even at resorts that continued to operate normally. In some cases this was because of travel advisories issued by their governments, that instructed them to leave the country and left tour operators without insurance coverage.

The tsunami flooded electrical power generating houses in many resorts, leaving them without power and unable to access guest lists and other information stored on computers. Lack of electricity meant desalinization plants were unable to operate, but resorts had enough food and water supplies to last one or two days.

But communications was the biggest nightmare. The nation's mobile phone system collapsed and even resorts equipped with satellite telephones could not communicate with anyone in authority. Two-way radios on the resort ships were used to communicate among resorts but were unable to reach anyone at the National Security Service/Coast Guard or the airport. International resorts that had overseas offices and satellite phones were able to successfully coordinate information and evacuation through those offices.

The evacuation of guests was eventually accomplished using the resorts' own vessels, the coast guard and even the assistance of a Pakistani naval ship, but due to lack of communication with the airport it was difficult at the beginning to book aircraft seats for the departing passengers. One resort chartered its own plane and transported all guests to Singapore.

Most resorts were unable to communicate with their tour operators, the families of guests who were worried about their loved ones or with the media. The absence of reliable information led people abroad to speculate the disaster was worse than it was.

Improvements since the Tsunami

Initial post-tsunami actions have focused on repair and reconstruction. Less attention has been paid to developing emergency response plans, although many resorts have equipped themselves with satellite phone systems. Others have purchased life jackets.

A tsunami early warning system has been created linking the National Meteorological Office with the US Geological Service and activating alerts on national radio and television.

The earthquakes on March 28 off the coast of Sumatra provided a test for the new alert system, but there were complaints that it was still too slow and that the information provided about what to do was not clear. Again the nation's mobile phone system collapsed. Fortunately, there was no second tsunami.

A Disaster Preparedness Plan was created for the airport in February and implementation of some mitigation measures is underway. But some of the measures are very costly, such as moving the communications tower to higher ground and building a higher seawall. The Maldives Airports Company Ltd. will provide a copy of their Disaster Preparedness Plan to the Ministry of Tourism.

The NSS/Coast Guard has initiated disaster training programmes that they are offering to resorts free-of-charge. Given the impossibility of coming to the immediate assistance of each resort in the case of a nationwide emergency, training of resort staff is seen as the most useful preparedness measure than can be taken by the NSS/Coast Guard.

Remaining Challenges

1. Telecommunications — Communications hardware with several layers of backup systems needs to be installed on each resort island and at their offices in Male. In addition to mobile phones, satellite phones, radio systems with a dedicated disaster frequency and CB radios were discussed. There is confusion about the legality of using some of these systems. Communications equipment needs to be stored on high ground with spare batteries and staff needs to be trained how to use it.

2. Centralized information point — The government needs to establish a clear chain of command and communicate who has overall responsibility in a crisis situation. A centralized disaster hotline with information available in English needs to be set up for use by the resorts. Detailed disaster information also needs to be posted quickly on a website for communicating with the rest of the world.

3. Alert systems — Weather warnings need to be speeded up and more detailed. National television should be more involved in transmitting warnings.

4. Island safety — Priority must be given to saving the lives of guests and staff in an emergency. Each resort needs to have an assembly point on high ground, such as a two-story building, along with posted instructions on how to get there in case of a tsunami, flood or storm. This assembly point should be equipped with a communications system, a sanitation system, emergency medical supplies, food and water. Resorts should have life jackets available. A guest list should be maintained on paper or off-site. Smaller resorts need assistance in formulating a crisis manual.

5. Electricity and water — Electrical power supplies need to be protected from flooding by positioning generators on high ground.

6. Communications with the rest of the world — a high-priority needs to be placed on communication with tour operators and the media during a crisis, so that they have a true picture of what is going on in the Maldives and so that the crisis is not escalated due to speculation.

The Way Forward

Participants in the Resort Owners Workshop made the following recommendations:

- a) Resorts should strengthen their current communications systems.
- b) Coast Guard and Male International Airport should establish regular pre-set and agreed frequencies with the Coast Guard, the airport and the National Disaster Management Centre.
- c) Weather related alerts should be distributed more quickly and more widely.
- d) The Ministry of Tourism should coordinate with other government ministries in setting up a centralized disaster information command that takes the needs of resorts and tourists into consideration.
- e) The Ministry of Tourism should coordinate with other government ministries in drafting a Crisis Management Framework for the Tourism Sector, covering all types of natural and man-made emergencies.
- f) New regulations and safety standards for resorts should be developed that provide for a safe assembly point on each island, equipped with emergency supplies and a protected electrical generator. Audits of compliance should be conducted.
- g) A plain-language, model disaster manual for resorts should be drafted for adaptation by individual resorts. It should be written in Dhivehi and in English.
- h) Staff training in disaster management and disaster drills should be conducted.
- i) Regulations regarding the use of satellite phones need to be clarified and resorts be authorized by the Telecommunication Authority to use them for emergencies, without further delay.
- j) Resort and tourism ministry websites need to be updated quickly and frequently with detailed information during a disaster.
- k) Safety and security information for tourists should be made available on websites and at the resorts.

Annex 2

Tour Operators Workshop

(Wednesday, May 25, 2005)

Programme

08:30-9:00	Participant Registration
09:00-9:15	Welcome Remarks by Abdulla Mausoom, Director - MTPB
09:15-11:00	Discussions
11:00	Tea Break
11:20	Presentation by WTO
11:30	Questions & Answers
11:45	Conclusion
12:30	Press Conference

This was the second in a series of four workshops with the different stakeholders in the tourism industry. It focused on the experiences and recommendations of tour operators. The workshop was moderated by Mr. Mahmood Raze, Director General, Department of Civil Aviation.

Panelists included:

- Ms. Michelle Flake, Destination Manager, Kuoni Travels
- Mr. Shoumo Mukherji, Universal Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.
- Ms. Tracy Hall, Resident Manager, My Travel Pvt. Ltd.
- Mr. Ibrahim Hareef, Director, Maldives Airports Company Ltd.

The workshop began with brief statements from the panelists, followed by a general discussion that involved about 30 additional representatives of tour operating companies, as well as the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Mustafa Lutfi; the Director of the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), Dr. Abdulla Mausoom; the Chairman of the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) Mr. M.U. Maniku. It also included a representative of the national meteorological office, Mr. Abdul Muhsin Ramiz; a representative of the national telephone company Dhiraagu, Mr. Mohamed Abdul Gadir; and a consultant in crisis management from the World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO) Ms. Deborah Lührman.

Participants

	Name	Resort/Company/Office
1	Abdul Wadhood	Antrac Maldives Pvt.Ltd
2	Ahmed Abdullah	Seal Super Yachta Asia(Maldives) Pvt. Ltd.
3	Donna Winnard	First Choice And Hayes and jarus
4	Felicity Magro	Cosmos Holidays Operator
5	Ibrahim Nizam	The Grand Holidays Pvt Ltd
6	Kelly Frost	Kuoni Travel Ltd
7	Naheez Ahmed Saeed	Moving International
8	Naotoshi Yamada	Japan HIS Tours pte ltd
9	Nasko Tedfarov	Fourth Tour Est
10	Nathalic Guerini	TUI France/ Nouvelles Frontieres
11	Nathalie Berardi	Jet Tours
12	Paul Whittlesey	Tui UK
13	Regina Fernando	Rewe Touristik Destination Services
14	Qasim	Villa
15	Mohamed Umar Manik	Universal Enterprises Pvt Ltd
16	Fiyaz	Universal Enterprises Pvt Ltd
17	Mohamed Athif	Bandos Island Resort
18	Sim Ibrahim Mohamed	MATI
19	Ali Manik	MATI
20	Philip Gast	Manta Reisen
21	Ahmed Shareef	Worldlink Travels
22	Fathmath Saleem	Dhirham Travels
23	Nilanka Jayatilleke	Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd, Athuruga
24	Shamoon Mohamed	Leisure Maldives
25	Ali Firaq	Intourist Maldives
26	Mohamed Aflah	Skytours
27	Mujthaba	FRAM Agency
28	Abdul Muhsin Ramiz	Ministry of Environment & Construction
29	Ali Zuhair	Ministry of Defence and National Security
30	Mohamed Aslam	Ministry of Environment & Construction
31	Mohamed Zubair	Ministry of Atolls Development
32	Mariyam Ibrahim Manik	Ministry of Finance & Treasury
33	Mohamed Abdul Gadir	Dhiraagu
34	Andrew Wong	Singapore Airlines
35	Ahmed Zuhair	Island Aviation
36	Bandhu Saleem	Island Aviation
37	Pierpaolo Ceciliam	University of Perugia
38	Ahmed Muhsin	Aafathis
39	Ahmed Saeed	Haveeru Daily
40	Hamdhoon Rashad	TVM
41	Midhath Adam	Miadhu
42	Mohamed Jameel	Adu

43	Ali Zadhi	Majeedhiyya School
44	Aminath Nadha	Aminiya Schools
45	Anisa Saud	Mauhad Dhiraasiyaathul Islamiyaa
46	Haishiya Najeeb	English Preparatory School
47	Imran Jaufar	English Preparatory School
48	Ismail Siman	Dharumavantha School
49	Mohamed Aman Adam	Majeedhiyya School
50	Mohamed Shaneez Abdu Latheef	Dharumavantha School
51	Sama Ahmed Najeeb	Aminiya Schools
52	Shazra Saeed	Mauhad Dhiraasiyaathul Islamiyaa

The Tsunami Experience

A breakdown of the national telecommunications system was the biggest problem for tour operators during the tsunami. They could not contact resorts to find out the condition of their clients. Relatives of the guests and staff wanted to know about the safety of their loved ones and tour operators had no information.

In addition, they had to deal with the media frenzy in key generating markets. They could not issue reassuring messages because they lacked information themselves and the phone system was completely blocked. For the first two days, no real information was available, either locally or internationally. In some cases it took as long as four days to restore telephone service.

Tour operators worked cooperatively and tried their best to help. Guests and staff were upset and distressed. Nearby resorts managed to transfer their guests to Male International Airport, but unfortunately the airport was not equipped to handle such a major disaster. There were no supplies, such as blankets, to handle traumatized guests and many slept on the bare floor.

Lack of transport was big problem for resorts in remote areas. The only form of transport available for evacuation was a few *dhonis* normally used for excursions—though not enough to handle such a crisis. Most of the launches and seaplanes were damaged by the waves and could not be used.

The Department of Meteorology received a first warning that a tsunami might affect areas near the epicenter of the earthquake and felt the Maldives was too far away to experience serious problems. Due to the failure of the communication system, they did not receive a second warning that was issued, and consequently failed to issue a tsunami alert. Weather reports and warnings of bad weather, both in Dhivehi and English, are usually made available at telephone number 317171.

Improvements since the tsunami

The national telecommunications company, Dhiraagu, is installing a satellite telephone communication system at key points throughout the country — at Haa Alifu, Baa, Laamu, and Gaafu Dhaalu Atolls.

The National Security Service has set up a disaster plan and is trained to react immediately.

In order to help restore visitor confidence, fam trips for travel agents have been organized by Kuoni, First Choice and Singapore Airlines. The Maldives Tourism Promotion Board has organized fam trips for journalists. In addition, they organized a two-week promotion at a railway station in Japan. Advertising on television has been resumed. Road shows in major generating markets are being planned.

The government has exempted reconstruction materials from import duties and extended the payment of island leasing fees for the first three months of 2005 until the end of the year.

Remaining challenges

1. Restoring visitor confidence — Promotion and marketing needs to be stepped up to restore the confidence of travelers. People in the main generating markets need to be made aware that the Maldives is a safe place to visit, but the fundamental question of where to go in case of a repeat tsunami remains difficult to answer. The geographical location and formation of the islands give them some protection. Scientific evidence could be used to argue that the Maldives is relatively safe from tsunamis. It is equally important to monitor the health of the coral reefs and mangroves and protect them, as they give protection to the islands. But the most reassuring message would be to communicate new safety measures. Media campaigns can be more cost-effective and more credible than advertising.

2. Fiscal relief measures — Additional fiscal incentives, such as lower taxes, were requested to allow resort owners to lower prices during the recovery period and attract more visitors.

3. Telecommunications — A fail-safe communications system needs to be put into place with an additional frequency to be reserved for emergencies.

4. Centralized information point — Participates called for a central command centre for communication where gathering and dissemination of proper and correct information is carried out. A central disaster website could also provide information for people on the islands, as well as in the outside world.

5. Alert systems — Establishment of an early warning system for the country remains a high priority. A liaison officer or safety and security focal point needs to be appointed on each resort. People need to be made aware of existing information sources, such as dialing 317171 for weather information and warnings of bad weather, both in Dhivehi and English. Reports of weather conditions need to be made more widely available on a daily basis in newspapers and on radio, television and internet.

6. Airport facilities — The airport should be better equipped to handle disasters, with emergency supplies including blankets and hot drinks for trauma victims. There was also a suggestion to build a second runway at the airport that can be used during an emergency.

7. Evacuation plans — Allocate a safe area in each resort on high ground or in a two-story building to be used for evacuation with emergency supplies and skilled and trained manpower for caring people in a disaster.

The way forward

Participants in the Tour Operators workshop, together with the moderator and panel members, made the following recommendations:

- a) The government should invest in the tourism industry and increase advertising and promotional activities, especially fam trips.
- b) Back up communications systems should be created for passing information from reliable sources or focal points at each resort.
- c) Resorts should establish fully-equipped safe zones on each island and develop evacuation plans.
- d) Safety and evacuation information should be posted in resorts.
- e) Resort and airport staff should be trained for handling emergencies and caring for trauma victims.
- f) Airport facilities should be upgraded to better handle disasters.
- g) Alternative means of transport should to be identified to evacuate outlying islands.
- h) Maritime regulations should be made available in English.
- i) A Crisis Management Plan for the tourism sector should be developed to cover all types of natural and man-made disasters.

Annex 3

Airline Operators Workshop

(Thursday, May 26, 2005)

Programme

08:30-9:00	Participant Registration
09:00-9:15	Welcome Remarks by Mr. Moosa Zameer Hassan, Assistant Director - MoT
09:15-11:00	Discussions
11:00	Tea Break
11:20	Presentation by WTO
11:30	Questions & Answers
11:45	Conclusion
12:30	Press Conference

This was the third in a series of four workshops with the different stakeholders in the tourism industry. It focused on the experiences and recommendations of **airline operators**. The workshop began at the same hour the tsunami hit Maldives exactly five months earlier. It was opened by the director of the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, and moderated by Mr. Ali Hussain Didi, Director General of Male Municipality. Panelists included:

- **Mr. Andrew Wong** – Singapore Airlines
- **Mr. Hussain Jaleel** – Department of Civil Aviation
- **Mr. Ibrahim Hareef** – Maldives Airports Company, Ltd.
- **Mr. Ahmed Latheef** – Marketing Manager, Trans Maldivian Airways
- **Mr. Ibrahim Nordeen** – Board Member, Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI)

The workshop began with brief statements from the panelists, followed by a general discussion that involved the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Mustafa Lutfi; the Chairman of the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) Mr. M.U. Maniku; and a consultant in crisis management from the World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO), Ms. Deborah Lührman.

Participants

	Name	Resort/Company/Office
1	Ahmed Nazim	Maldivian Air Taxi
2	Ahmed Zuhair	Island Aviation Services Ltd
3	Capt. Mohamed Ameen	Island Aviation Services Ltd
4	Ibrahim Shujau	Singapore Airlines
5	Ignaz Mansoor	Voyages Maldives pvt ltd
6	Ali Firaq	Intourist Maldives
7	Giorgia Marazzi	Palm Beach
8	Pierpaolo Ceciliam	University of Perugas
9	Ali Manik	MATI
10	Mohamed Abdul Gadir	Dhiraagu
11	Mohamed Aslam	Ministry of Environment & Construction
12	Abdul Muhsin Ramiz	Ministry of Environment & Construction
13	Ibrahim Shafeeg Ahmed	Ministry of Atolls Development
14	Mohamed Zubair	Ministry of Atolls Development
15	Ahmed Saeed	Haveeru Daily
16	Mohamed Jameel	Adu
17	Midhath Adam	Miadhu
18	Ahmed Muhsin	Aafathis
19	Hamdhoon Rashad	TVM
20	Mohamed Aman Adam	Majeedhiyya School
21	Ali Zadhi	Majeedhiyya School

The Tsunami Experience

The tsunami threw Male's International Airport into chaos. Without warning, waves rushed up over the runway and entered the main terminal, peaking at heights up to ten feet in some places. The terminal was full of passengers and there were several large commercial aircraft on the tarmac. At least one small plane was in the air trying to land and three seaplanes actually taxied into the oncoming water, suffering extensive damage. Navigational equipment and back up navigational equipment were also damaged. An air taxi operator described the scene as a nightmare.

When the tide receded, crews went to work clearing debris from the runway and managed to reopen the airport after 10 hours. At the same time, a new flood began—of tourists who had been evacuated from resorts. Since the nation's telecommunications system had also collapsed, communication between the airport, the resorts and the tour operators was impossible. The airport was ill equipped to handle the hundreds of traumatized tourists.

Initially, there was chaos and lack of coordination in getting seats allocated to waiting passengers. Some tourists spent the night sleeping on the floor of the airport. Others were accommodated in guest houses in

Male, where there were some reports of price gouging. It was a disaster beyond the imagination of airport officials.

Four key disaster response mechanisms were lacking on that day: command, control, communication and coordination.

Following the tsunami, airlines cancelled charter flights and reduced frequencies of regularly scheduled flights due to the lack of visitors. The impossibility of communicating with the outside world immediately following the tsunami resulted in rumours and speculation that did further damage to the tourism image of the Maldives and has suppressed demand.

Improvements since the tsunami

A number of steps have been taken by the aviation industry to prepare for any future disasters and to speed up recovery from the current crisis.

Mali International Airport created a new Emergency Plan in January that includes measures to make the airport less vulnerable, such as moving the electrical power generator to safer ground. Other mitigation measures, for example building a higher seawall, would be more costly and are still under consideration. The Airport Emergency Plan will be sent to the Ministry of Tourism.

Maldivian Air Taxi has decided to put its sea planes into the water rather than keep them on the tarmac in case of a tsunami alert, so they can be used to evacuate people from remote islands.

Singapore Airways has adopted a three-point plan to help regain visitor confidence in the Maldives. Step one was to bring in the media from Asian source markets—Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan—so journalists could “see for themselves” the real situation. Step two was to bring in travel agents on fam trips and step three was to work with the agents to develop new packages for the Maldives.

Remaining challenges

1. Airport facilities – Chief among the concerns of airline operators was keeping the airport functioning safely in a crisis. The runway needs to be protected. Navigational equipment and electrical supply needs to be protected on high ground. Communications back up systems need to be in place. A clear chain of command for dealing with any type of emergency needs to be established. The airport must also be equipped with emergency supplies of first aid, water, food and blankets for stranded passengers. Attention also needs to be paid to improving facilities at domestic airports and increasing boat transfers to and from Male in an emergency.

2. Disaster Management Plans – The airport Emergency plan needs to be practiced to make sure it works. It should be circulated to interested parties that use the airport and coordinated both with the National Disaster Plan, as well as the Crisis Management Plan for tourism.

3. Telecommunications – Back up communications systems with several layers of redundancy are needed in case some of the systems fail in a disaster. This hardware is needed at Male International Airport, at domestic airports and at resorts. Staff needs to be trained in how to use the equipment and spare batteries should be kept on hand.

4. Resort safety plans – Island resorts need to establish a safe place on high ground for their guests to remain in an emergency instead of sending everyone to the airport at the same time and exacerbating the disaster. Guests should be moved to the airport only when it is open and there is a plane ready to evacuate them.

5. Recovery of tourism – The tourism industry has yet to recover from the shock of the tsunami. Although good progress was made in the recovery during the first three months of 2005, visitor arrivals fell significantly again following the second earthquakes off the coast of Sumatra on March 28th. Potential tourists and the travel trade in key generating markets need to be reassured that new safety measures are in place. They also need to be made aware that Maldives is located quite far from the earthquake activity zone and that its natural geography offers some protection from a severe tsunami. The best way to accomplish this is to bring in journalists who can communicate to their readers and audiences in a credible way in their own language.

The way forward

Participants in the Airline Operators workshop made the following recommendations:

- a) The government should work to improve the early warning alert system.
- b) Communications equipment at Male International Airport should be upgraded with a back up system and satellite telephones should be installed at all domestic airports.
- c) The airport Emergency Plan should be practiced with drills in daytime and at night, then adapted to make sure it works.
- d) Airport staff should be trained in emergency response.
- e) The airport should be equipped with emergency medical supplies, food, water and blankets.
- f) The airport Emergency Plan should be distributed to all airlines.

- g) The airport Emergency Plan should be coordinated with the Crisis Management Plan for the tourism sector.
- h) Memoranda of Understanding should be signed in advance to secure necessary equipment needed for the airport in case of a disaster.
- i) Airlines should be requested to help bring in more fam trips.
- j) Resorts should establish a safe place on high ground, where guests can remain until it is the right time for them to come to the airport.

Annex 4

Travel Agents Workshop

(Sunday, May 29, 2005)

Programme

08:30-9:00	Participant Registration
09:00-9:15	Welcome Remarks by Sim Ibrahim Mohamed, Secretary General, MATI
09:15-11:00	Discussions
11:00	Tea Break
11:20	Presentation by WTO
11:30	Questions & Answers
11:45	Conclusion
12:30	Press Conference

This was the first in a series of four workshops with the different stakeholders in the tourism industry. It focused on the experiences and recommendations of **travel agents**, who act as incoming tour operators, local representatives of foreign operators and safari boat operators. The workshop was opened by the Secretary General of The Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), Mr. Sim Ibrahim Mohamed, and moderated by Mr. Salah Shihab, Managing Director of Voyages Maldives. Panelists included:

- **Mr. Ahmed Shareef** – Managing Director, World Link
- **Mr. Mohamed Firag** – Managing Director, Inner Maldives Pvt. Ltd
- **Mr. Ali Firag** – Managing Director, In-tourist Maldives Pvt. Ltd.
- **Mr. Yoosuf Riffath** – Managing Director, Capital Travels & Tours Pvt. Ltd.

The workshop began with brief statements from the panelists, followed by a general discussion that involved about 15 additional local travel agencies, as well as the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Mustafa Lutfi; the director of the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) Dr. Abdulla Mausoom; the Chairman of the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) Mr. M.U. Maniku; and a consultant in crisis management from the World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO), Ms. Deborah Lührman.

Participants

	Name	Resort/Company/Office
1	Ahmed Marzooq	Sunny Maldives Pvt Ltd
2	Fezlyn Saleem	Sultans of The Seas Pvt Ltd
3	Shamoon Mohamed	Leisure Maldives
4	Ali Ahmed	Vista Company & Travel Services Pvt Ltd
5	Susan Shaheer	Voyages Maldives
6	Ibrahim Hussain Manik	Sea N See
7	Zainab Blass	Zala & Zainab
8	Mariyam Leena	Izano Maldives
9	Hassan Majdhy	AAA Travel & Tours
10	Hiroko Nurasato	IAS / Japan Representative
11	Zeena Zahid	MATI
12	Ali Manik	MATI
13	Abdul Muhsin Ramiz	Ministry of Environment & Construction
14	Ibrahim Shafeeg Ahmed	Ministry of Atolls Development
15	Mohamed Zubair	Ministry of Atolls Development
16	Ibrahim Nazim	Dept of Inland Revenue
17	Bandhu Saleem	Island Aviation Services Ltd
18	Ahmed Saeed	Haveeru Daily
19	Mohamed Jameel	Adu

The Tsunami Experience

Local travel agents were caught in the middle between foreign tour operators and the resorts, suffering greatly from the collapse of the national telecommunications system in the tsunami. They were responsible for thousands of clients on resort islands but had no way to communicate with those islands to get information on the condition of their guests. When resorts began evacuating guests to the airport or other islands, things became worse because the travel agents lost track of their clients and did not know where they had been sent.

Even after communication was restored, the situation continued to be difficult as not enough seats on departing flights were available to repatriate everyone. There were several reports of price gouging at emergency accommodations used to house tourists who were not able to depart immediately.

The Department of Immigration and Emigration was commended for their cooperation in swiftly expediting the departure of tourists who had lost their passports in the tsunami. They were also commending for good cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism in quickly providing photocopies of passports and the location of visitors.

The Ministry of Tourism was also congratulated for its quick action. As soon as communication links were restored with the outside world, the ministry began offering free email service and contacting the families

of tourists with as much information as possible on their condition. They also began posting accurate information about tsunami damage on their website. But by that time it was too late to prevent foreign governments from issuing a blanket travel advisory on the entire country.

Ministry officials also had to attend to representatives from the embassies of key tourism source markets, who began arriving the day after the tsunami with long lists of citizens believed to be on holiday in the vicinity.

Agents operating safari boats fared better and most passengers did not even notice the tsunami swells. Although they too were forced to leave the country, some against their will, due to the travel advisories.

Improvements Since The Tsunami

Following the tsunami the Ministry of Tourism worked with foreign governments to get out accurate and factual information about the true extent of the damage and get travel advisories lifted.

Many of the travel agents have purchased back-up satellite phone equipment, but there was confusion about the legality of such systems.

A 24 hour a day ferry service between Male and the airport has been started, making it easier to for the travel agencies to staff their airport offices around the clock and be in place in the event of any future emergencies.

Remaining challenges

1. Safeguarding the airport – The Male International Airport would become the centre of activity in any crisis, so it needs to be absolutely failsafe. The fact the runway survived the tsunami was a key factor in successful repatriation efforts. The runway needs to be better protected, as do communications and navigation equipment. The airport needs to be better prepared to handle emergencies with supplies of first aid, food, water, blankets, as well as more body bags and cold storage facilities. Lighting is required at the jetty.

2. Telecommunications – The nation's three telecommunications companies should get together to ensure continued service in a crisis. Back up communications hardware need to be installed and the current uncertainty over the legality of satellite phones needs to be addressed.

3. Early warning system – Warnings of approaching storms and high tides need to be disseminated more quickly to resorts and travel agencies. They should include more detailed information of exactly what to

do. Government instructions are especially important for travel agencies, which can be sued by their clients or the companies they represent if they do not follow official instructions.

4. Crisis Management Plan – A Crisis Management Plan for the tourism industry needs to be drafted for use in all types of disasters. It should focus on communication and include a clear chain of command with instructions on obtaining and issuing information. The lack of information in a crisis worsens the situation, leading the media and others to believe things are worse than they are and resulting in unnecessary travel advisories. The crisis plan should also include training and practice.

5. Resort safety – Resorts need to create a safe assembly area with communications equipment and each should have an evacuation plan. Loudspeakers should be installed to alert staff and guests in various languages. Staff should be trained to handle emergencies. Construction standards should require new buildings to withstand a tsunami.

6. Safe harbours – Safari boat operators requested clarification of where they are allowed to anchor, not only during an emergency but at other times as well. They rely on the goodwill of resorts to anchor in lagoons that are shared by hotels and inhabited islands, but sometimes they are chased off. The only safe harbours are on Male and there were complaints that the T-jetty there is expensive and overcrowded.

7. Insurance – Insurance is a relatively new industry in the Maldives and there is a lack of understanding about how it works. How much coverage is really needed? What type of coverage is necessary? What the insurance companies are required to pay out? And how the industry works in the tourism source markets. Especially in light of the European Union directive that makes tour operators liable, more information on insurance is needed locally.

8. Recovery measures – As the entire national economy is based on tourism, travel agents expected more government support in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster. Fiscal measures, such as lower landing fees at the airport or tax relief for resorts, were discussed as a way to speed up the recovery of tourist flows. In addition, a vigorous and aggressive marketing and promotion campaign is needed to assure tourists that the Maldives is a safe holiday destination. Tourists need to be getting information on new safety measures. Promotions should be designed to counteract television images of devastation with images of beautiful beaches, islands and welcoming local people. The quality of television advertising should be upgraded and its frequency increased. The opening of new source markets needs to be considered.

The way forward

Participants in the Travel Agents Workshop made the following recommendations:

- a) Government assistance for the nation's number one industry is badly needed, as tourism is the only economic alternative for the Maldives.

- b) Male International Airport should be safeguarded at all costs.
- c) Improvements should be made to the disaster alert system that include exactly what to do in case of an approaching storm or a tsunami.
- d) The national communications system should be made failproof.
- e) A Crisis Management Plan for the tourism sector should be created for use in any kind of emergency.
- f) Regulations regarding the mooring of safari boats should be clarified, making it easier to operate this type of tourism enterprise.
- g) Fiscal incentives should be offered to businesses in the tourism sector.
- h) An aggressive marketing and promotion campaign should be launched.
- i) Information on insurance for the tourism industry should be compiled and disseminated to travel agencies.

Annex 5

Post-tsunami Review Seminar

(Tuesday, May 31, 2005)

Programme

08:30-08:45	Recitation of Holly Quran
08:45-09:00	Participant Registration
09:00-09:30	Welcome Remarks by Dr. Mustafa Lutfi, Minister of Tourism
09:30-10:00	Presentation by Mr. Bandhu Ibrahim Saleem - Moderator, Resort Operators Workshop
10:00-10:30	Discussion
10:30-10:45	Presentation by Mr. Mahmood Razee - Moderator, Tour Operators Workshop
10:45-11:00	Presentation by Mr. Ali Hussain Didi - Moderator, Airline Operators Workshop
11:00-11:15	Presentation by Mr. Salah Shihab - Moderator, Travel Agents Workshop
11:15-11:30	Presentation by Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Director, MTPB
11:30-11:45	Presentation by Mr. Asim Ahmed, Director Strategic Planning, Ministry of Planning & National Development
11:45-12:00	Presentation by Mr. Mohamed Waheed Deen, Board Member, MATI
12:00-12:20	Tea Break
12:20-12:40	Remarks by Ms. Deborah Lührman, WTO Consultant
12:40-13:00	Concluding Remarks by Mr. Mohamed Umar Manik, Chairman, MATI
13:00	Press Conference

Participants

	Name	Resort/Company/Office
1	Hon. Ilyas Ibrahim	Minister of Transport & Civil Aviation
2	Hon. Hamdhoon Hameed	Minister of Planning & National Development
3	Hon. Mohamed Jameel	Minister of Finance & Treasury
4	Hon. Aneesa Ahmed	Minister of Health
5	Ali Mohamed	Olhuvveli Beach Resort and Spa Resort
6	Abdul Latheef	Bolifushi Island Resort
7	Ahmed Nazeer	Kihaadhuffaru Gasfinolhu
8	Aishath Nezeleen	Halaveli Holiday Village
9	Ali Yoosuf	Vilureef Beach and Spa Resort
10	Armando Kraenzlin	Four Seasons Resort Maldives
11	Areef Ahmed	Velavaru / Vakarafalhi / Meeru
12	Channa Jayasundara	Hakuraa Club / Velidhu John Keels Maldivian Resort
13	Dominik Rohl	Mirihi / Helengeli
14	Fezlyn Saleem	Reethi Rah, Sultans of The Seas Pvt Ltd
15	Aishath Shihab	Sultans of the Seas Pvt Ltd

16	Hassan Majdy	Vilamendhu / AAA Resorts
17	Ibrahim Naseer	Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd, Athuruga
18	Mannella Schwingshackl	Baros / Full Moon Maldives
19	Ibrahim Shakir	Baros Maldives/ Universal Enterprises Pvt Ltd
20	Ibrahim Zuhair	Angaga Island Resort
21	Iqnaz Mansoor	Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd, Athuruga
22	Jameel Usman	Champa Resorts
23	Ahmed Naem	Raveli Village
24	Kusal Malwath	Velidhoo, Hakuraa, John Keells Maldivian Resorts
25	Ibrahim Zuhair	Thulhagiri Island Resort
26	Mr. Francois Huet	Banyan Tree Maldives
27	Mr.Mohamed Athif	Bandos Island Resort
28	Mr.Shahul Hameed	Angsana Maldives Ihuru
29	Ms.Kerstin Poetzsch	One and Only Kanuhuraa
30	Ms.Ruchie Shaema	One and Only Kanuhuraa
31	Muruthala Musthafa	Vaadoo Island Resort
32	Nilanka Jayatilleke	Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd, Athuruga
33	Shoumo Mukherjee	Universal Resorts
34	Susan Shaheer	Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd, Athuruga
35	Tom Blachere	Rihiveli Beach Resort
36	M. W. Deen	MATI
37	Ibrahim Noordeen	MATI
38	SIM Ibrahim Mohamed	MATI
39	Zeena Zahid	MATI
40	Ahmed Abdullah	Seal Super Yachta Asia(Maldives) Pvt. Ltd.
41	Ahmed Rasheed	Capital Travels and Tours pvt ltd
42	Amna Musthafa	Capital Travels and Tours pvt ltd
43	Aminath Yumna	Capital Travels and Tours pvt ltd
44	Yousuf Rifath	Capital Travels and Tours pvt ltd
45	Aminath Shifaza	Sina Travel and Tours
46	Donna Winnard	First Choice And Hayes and jarus
47	Felicity Magro	Cosmos Holidays Operator
48	Ibrahim Nizam	The Grand Holidays Pvt Ltd
49	Michelle Flake	Kuoni Travel Ltd
50	Mohamed Aflah	Skytours Maldives pvt ltd
51	Naheez Ahmed Saeed	Moving International
52	Naotoshi Yamada	Japan HIS Tours pte ltd
53	Nasko Tedfarov	Fourth Tour Est
54	Nathalie Berardi	Jet Tours
55	Paul Whittlesey	Tui UK
56	Regina Fernanado	Rewe Touristik Destination Services
57	Ahmed Moosa	Tropical Excursions
58	Ahmed Fiyaz	Universal Enterprises Pvt Ltd
59	Tomoko Nakano	Wako International
60	Tracy Hall	MUTravels (Air Tours)

61	Tracy Hall	MyTravel
62	Yasuyo Toyama	ST World
63	Ahmed Nazim	Maldivian Air Taxi
64	Ahmed Zuhair	Island Aviation Services Ltd
65	Andrew Wong	Singapore Airlines
66	Capt. Mohamed Ameen	Island Aviation Services Ltd
67	Inthikab Ahmed	Island Aviation Services Ltd
68	Thagiyya Moosa	Island Aviation Services Ltd
69	Abdul Haris	Island Aviation Services Ltd
70	Ali Nasif	Island Aviation Services Ltd
71	Abdul Hameed Abdul Gafoor	Malaysia Airlines
72	Milinda Balasuriya	Srilankan Airlines
73	Shin Thomas	Qatar Airways
74	Santhosh Kumar	Qatar Airways
75	Darrel Soertsz	Emirates
76	Ahmed Adil	Maldives Connection Pvt Ltd
77	Ahmed Marzooq	Sunny Maldives Pvt Ltd
78	Ali Ahmed	Vista Company and Travel Services Pvt Ltd
79	Ali Mohamed	Sun Travels and Tours Pvt Ltd
80	Ibrahim Nizam	The Grand Holidays Pvt Ltd
81	Karu	Inpac Japan Cc Ltd
82	Shamoon Mohamed	Leisure Maldives
83	Giorgia Marazzi	Sun Sporting Holiday / Italian Hon. Consul
84	Gordon Rosa	Thomas Cook
85	Ryosuka Yakuwa	Cox & Kings
86	Mariyam Leena	Iziano Maldives
87	Zaufaran Nazeer	Dive Explorer Pvt Ltd
88	Zainab Blass	Dive Explorer Pvt Ltd
89	Denny Hamilton	UNDP
90	Hudha Ahmed	UNDP
91	Rita Missal	UNDP
92	Pierpaolo Ceciliam	University of Perugia
93	Ahmed Jameel	Ministry of Environment & Construction
94	Abdul Muhsin Ramiz	Ministry of Environment & Construction
95	Ali Shareef	Ministry of Environment & Construction
96	Arshad Jameel	Ministry of Finance & Treasury
97	Fathimath Ali	Ministry of Finance & Treasury
98	Ali Zuhair	Ministry of Defence and National Security
99	Hussain Jaleel	Dept of Civil Aviation
100	Ibrahim Hareef	Maldives Airports Company
101	Ibrahim Ismail	Min of Education
102	Ibrahim Naseer	Dept. of Immigration and Emmigration
103	Ibrahim Shafeeg Ahmed	Ministry of Atolls Development
104	Mohamed Naajih	Dept. of Immigration and Emmigration
105	Maizan Ahmed Manik	Dhivehi Raajeyge Adu

106	Mohamed Shareef	Maldives Airports Company
107	Mohamed Sodig	Maldives Police Service
108	Mohamed Zubair	Ministry of Atolls Development
109	Mohamed Ibrahim	MTCC
110	Mohamed Nazim	MTCC
111	Mariyam Nooredeen	Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies
112	Zakiya Moosa	Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies
113	Mohamed Saud	Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies
114	Ibrahim Saeed	Dhiraagu
115	Aishath Nazira	Male' English School
116	Aminath Naseer	Male' English School
117	Aminath Nadha	Aminiya Schools
118	Anisa Saud	Mauhad Dhiraasiyaathul Islamiyaa
119	Sama Ahmed Najeeb	Aminiya Schools
120	Shazra Saeed	Mauhad Dhiraasiyaathul Islamiyaa
121	Umar Ahmed Hussain	Male' English School
122	Ahmed Saeed	Haveeru Daily
123	Ahmed Muhsin	Aafathis Daily
124	Hamdhon Rashad	TV Maldives
125	Midhath Adam	Miadhu Daily

Annex 6

Presentation on Post-tsunami Activities

(Ministry of Tourism & Maldives Tourism Promotion Board)

Introduction

This is a summary paper on the main activities of Ministry of Tourism (MOT) and the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) during and the aftermath of the tsunami of 24th December 2004.

There are two sections in this paper. First section highlights the activities during the crisis phase, and the second section highlights the activities of the recovery phase.

SECTION ONE: The Crisis Phase

Following the tsunami, the staff of Ministry of Tourism and MTPB first of all gathered to MOT. In the light of the ensuing communication breakdown, initially there was a lot of confusion. However, within about one hour an organized initiation to address the crisis started to shape up. As such a task force was formulated within the MOT and MTPB staff.

Information gathering and dissemination

- ⇒ Gathering and dissemination of information was thought of as the most important task. Hence, information on the status of tourists, employees, and structural damages to the resorts were gathered/disseminated.
- ⇒ Information was gathered/disseminated through internet, TV, radio, telephone, fax, e-mail and other unconventional means such as through communication mechanisms of vessels and some inhabited islands.
- ⇒ It took about 18 hours for the Ministry to have the preliminary assessment.
- ⇒ This delay may mostly be attributed to the communication breakdown, particularly that of the mobile phone network.

Providing assistance in evacuations

- ⇒ The MOT/MTPB Task force played a key role in assisting in the facilitation of evacuations, search and rescue in association with the National Disaster Management Centre.
- ⇒ The team was also active in providing customer services to the tourists particularly at the Malé International Airport, and also was involved in other aspects such as body repatriations.

SECTION TWO: The Recovery Phase

Once the crisis phase was somewhat stabilized, and the tourists and the staff were accounted for the focus of the activities was placed on recovery.

Addressing the travel bans.

The most concerning issue with regard to the recovery, particularly in terms of tourist arrivals, was the issuing of travel bans or restrictive travel advisories by most of the main source markets to the Maldives. Hence special attention was given to measures to ease the adverse travel advisories. However, in the light of the way the region was covered in the media, coupled with the ‘devastated Maldives’ message coming out from some official sources, MOT was faced with an uphill task.

Nonetheless following the ‘government to government’ phone calls and the visit of representatives from various governments to the Maldives; their observation of the ‘system’ that was in place at the MOT to manage the tsunami-disaster; their observation of the national infrastructure and the tourism industry facilities and services that are intact; and the fact that they could locate most of their fellow country men/women and ascertain their safety, eventually lead them to convince their respective foreign offices to ease the travel bans.

Industry Assessment

Teams from MOT visited the damaged islands to have a more detailed, but by no means a full assessment, and estimated the cost of reconstruction to be at least US\$ 100 million; and the business loss was estimated to be at least US\$ 250 million. It was found that 30% of the resorts’ bed capacity was out of operation, and would remain so for quite some time.

Marketing Campaign

A number of meetings were held between the various stakeholders of the industry, and a team of volunteers were assigned the task of compiling a post-tsunami marketing campaign. Given below are the key point of the marketing campaign that was proposed, and then later approved by the Tourism Promotion Advisory Council, (TPAC) with some minor alterations.

- ⇒ Official letter on ‘status’ of the industry to all concerned
- ⇒ Familiarization tours for media to cover ‘status’ of the industry
- ⇒ Updates to be uploaded on to MTPB website
- ⇒ Monitor media and respond appropriately
- ⇒ Make a documentary on ‘post-tsunami’ tourism industry
- ⇒ Familiarization tours for travel trade
- ⇒ Advertising on international television and other platforms
- ⇒ ‘Welcome’ feeling to be created at the airport
- ⇒ Road shows at major markets
- ⇒ Visit of high-level delegation to major markets: meet operators & governments.
- ⇒ E-Newsletters to be distributed
- ⇒ Affiliate ‘destination promotion’ with major operators and airlines
- ⇒ Suppliers to provide ‘value-added’ dimensions to their product

Most of these activities are now being carried out. Many of the activities are being carried out with the support/contribution from the industry stakeholders; particularly from MATI, scheduled and charter airlines, tour operators, sea-plane operators, and hoteliers or resort owners.

Challenges

Global competition: Even though the Maldives has unique aspects to its product, more and more destinations are gearing themselves to 'lure' the tourists by what ever means.

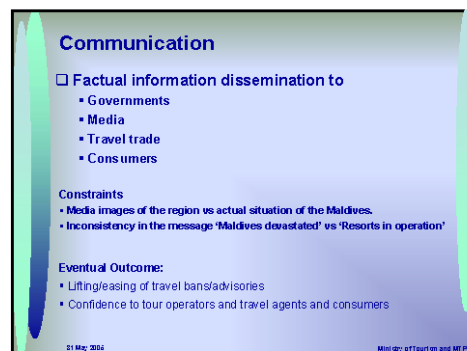
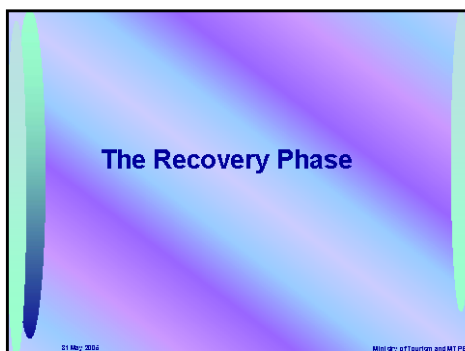
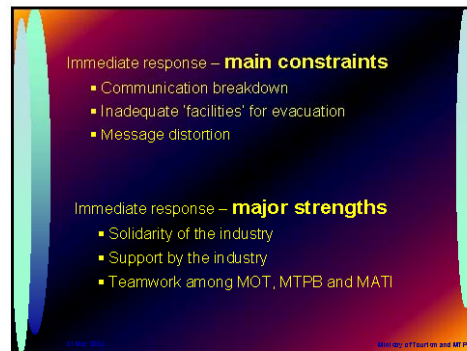
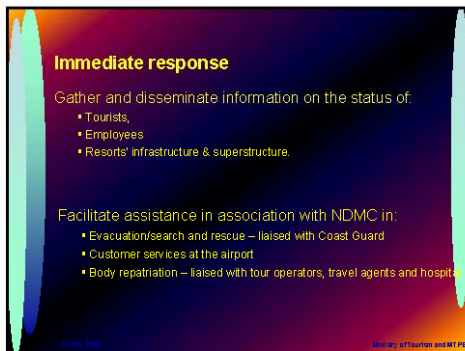
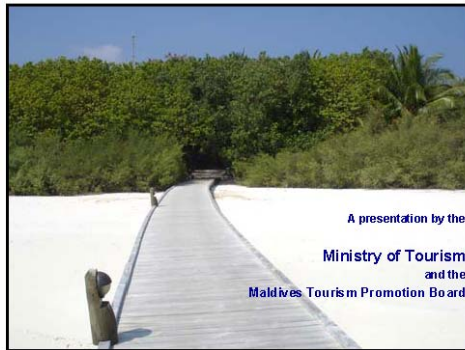
Addressing consumer 'expectations': Today's' consumers are becoming ever complex and more conscious of the products available in the market. Hence understanding their perceptions and expectations; and taking necessary actions to meet such expectations would be vital to lure them to the Maldives.

Creating a 'safe Maldives' image: Based on probable dangers/uncertainties to the Maldives, it is extremely important that the Maldives establish a 'Tourism Industry Disaster Management System' in order to give the confidence to both tourism industry suppliers as well as the tourists.

Maintaining tour operators/airlines loyalty: Considering the cooperate objective of 'making maximum profit' of many of the businesses it is unlikely that the airlines/tour operators would not give preference to a particular destination if they could see a better commercial aspect with a better profit margin.

Acknowledgements:

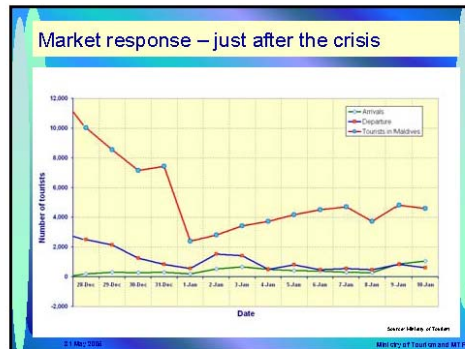
The MOT and MTPB wishes to acknowledge and thank for the support and contribution by MATI, tour operators, airline operators, resorts and hoteliers, travel agents, Department of Immigration and Emigration, and other government and non-governmental organizations to the recovery work of the tourism industry of the Maldives. Also a special thank to the Marketing Sub Committee that volunteered to undertake the task of compiling the post-tsunami marketing campaign and the members of the TPAC for their guidance.



Industry assessment

- ❑ Reinstating cost estimated at over US\$ 100 million
- ❑ Business loss estimated over US\$ 250 million
- ❑ 30% of the resorts' bed capacity were out of operation
- ❑ No significant impact on underwater beauty

21 May 2005 Ministry of Tourism and MTPB



Road to recovery: marketing

With input from tourism industry stakeholders the **Post-tsunami marketing plan** was compiled during the second week of January.

Objective: Reduce cancellations and encourage new bookings

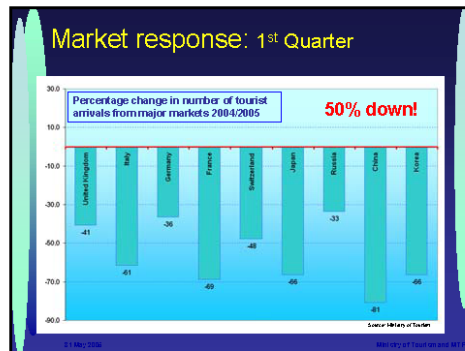
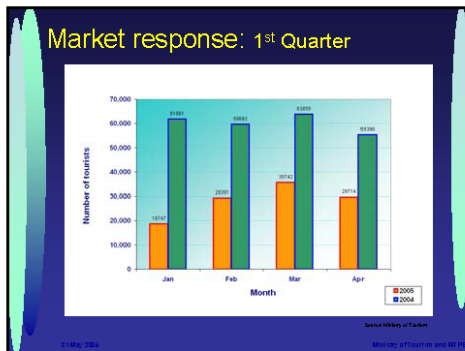
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Post-tsunami marketing campaign

Key Points

- Official letter on 'status' of the industry to all concerned
- Familiarization tours for media to cover 'status' of the industry
- Updates to be uploaded on to MTPB website
- Monitor media and respond appropriately
- Make a documentary on 'post-tsunami' tourism industry
- Familiarization tours for travel trade
- Advertising on international television and other platforms
- 'Welcome' feeling to be created at the airport
- Road shows at major markets
- Visit of high-level delegation to major markets: meet operators & govts.
- E-Newsletters to be distributed
- Affiliate 'destination promotion' with major operators and airlines
- Suppliers to provide 'value-added' dimensions to their product

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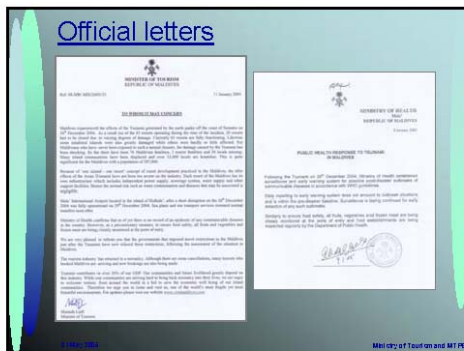




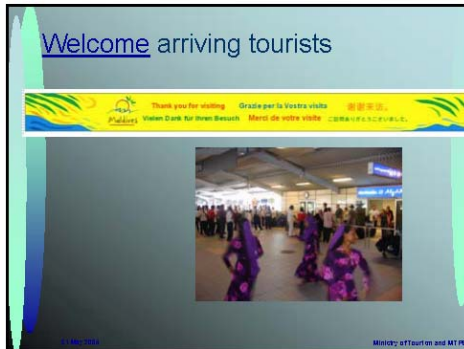
- ### Some of the planned/upcoming activities
- O'Neill Deep Blue surfing competition
 - Maldives exhibition at Japan's Tokyo station
 - European road shows
 - Kuoni travel agent familiarization trip
 - Milan tram advertising
 - More media familiarization tours
 - Display campaign in Germany with Thomas Cook
 - National TV adverts at some markets
 - Research on tourist perception

- ### Challenges
- Global competition
 - Addressing consumer 'expectations'
 - Creating a 'safe Maldives' image.
 - Maintaining tour operators/airlines loyalty

Thank you

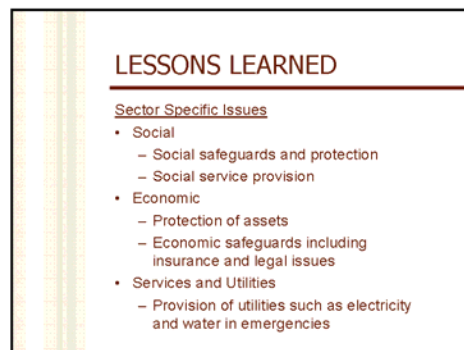
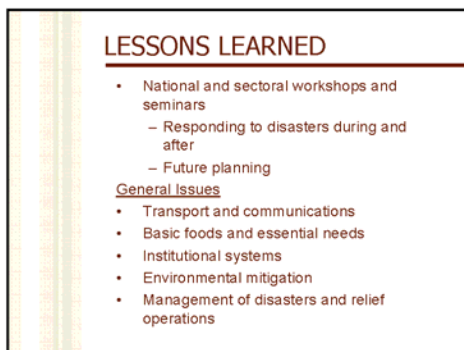
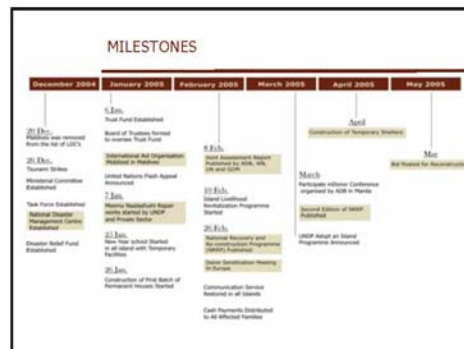
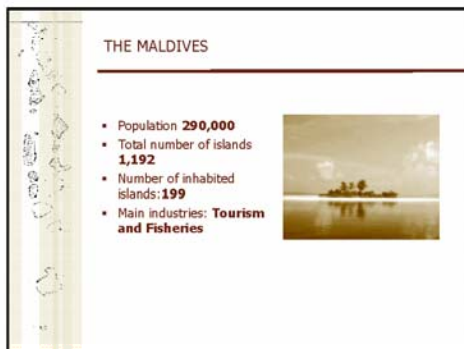
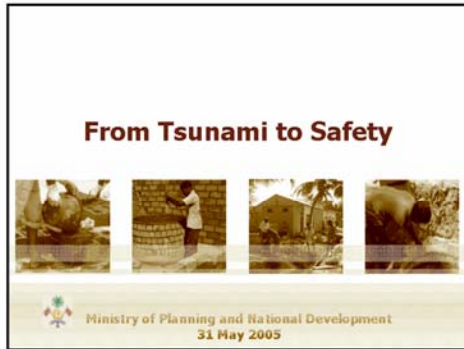


- ### Road shows / Product workshops
- | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Japan: | Tokyo
Osaka |
| China: | Beijing
Shanghai
Guangdong |
| Korea: | Seoul
Busan |



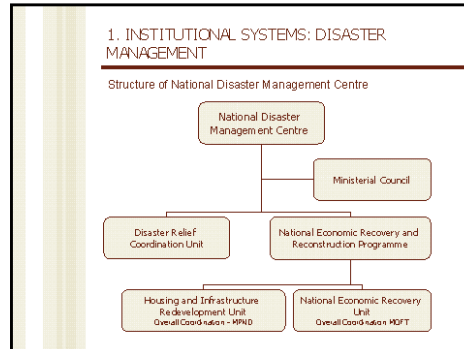
Annex 7

Presentation on “From Tsunami to Safety” (Ministry of Planning & National Development)



FUTURE PREPAREDNESS

1. Strengthening institutional and legal systems
2. Multi-hazard disaster preparedness planning and mitigation
3. Training and capacity building



INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

- NDMC
 - Coordinate all disaster and relief activities
 - Ensure transparency and accountability
 - Develop guiding principles for key sectors like housing and infrastructure development
- Develop a national policy for disaster management
 - Provide legal instruments for enforcing land use planning, building codes and regulations and investment in mitigation measures

DISASTER MANAGEMENT – NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Stages of Various Levels of Emergency
- Stage 1 – Lookout (White)
 - Occurrence of an earthquake in the Indian Ocean, including South East Asia and the Carlsberg Ridge, no immediate threat or consequence of the occurrence to Maldives
- Stage 2 – Alert and Warning (Yellow)
 - an imminent natural disaster threat, a direct or indirect disaster will be felt in Maldives
 - An alert warning on any type of natural disaster
- Stage 3 – Action (Red)
 - When NDMC confirms that the threat of a disaster is definite, and NDMC authorizes a Red Alert or when a disaster strikes any part of the country
- Stage 4 – Step Down (Green)
 - When the threat of the disaster ceases and rehabilitation work commences
 - (Detailed actions at national, regional, atoll and island level for all stages will be specified)

SECOND EARTHQUAKE – 28 MARCH 2005

- Earthquake of magnitude 8.7 in Northern Sumatra region occurs at 9:09pm local time
- Japan Meteorological Agency and United States Geological Survey advise Maldives of possible tsunami.

SECOND EARTHQUAKE – 28 MARCH 2005

- Steps taken at National level:
 - Tsunami Warning announced through the Government administrative network and television and radio.
- Steps taken at island level:
 - Population gathered together in structures that withstood earlier tsunami such as schools and Government administrative buildings.
 - Residents near the beach front were evacuated
 - Measures were taken to protect:
 - electricity generating stations
 - communications equipment
 - homes
 - fishing boats
 - food supplies



Annex 8

Presentation by WTO Consultant

(Ms. Deborah Luhrman – Crisis Management Expert)


The Way Forward
an international perspective

Deborah Luhrman
World Tourism Organization
Crisis Management Expert




What is a crisis ● ● ● ●

“Any unexpected event that affects traveller confidence in a destination and interferes with the ability to continue operating normally.”



What is crisis management ● ● ● ●

“The process of planning and managing the public response to a crisis in order to retain the confidence of the travel industry and minimize impact on the destination.”



Crisis Management ● ● ● ●

- readiness
 - regulations, enforcement, equipment
- response
 - care for victims, communications
- recovery
 - marketing, fiscal measures, partnerships



Maldives crisis plan ● ● ● ●

- tourism is resilient
 - jobs and small businesses
 - revenues
 - reputation and image



How to recover ● ● ● ●

- fix problems
- communicate those solutions
- take fiscal measures
- redouble marketing and promotion
- form public-private partnerships



Thailand

- Thailand Tourism Authority information hotline
- Video showing "tourism as usual"
- Congress granted emergency funding of US\$ 70 mil
- Waived entrance fees to marine park
- Collaboration with Thai Airways and Visa Intl.
- Promotion of domestic tourism
- Mega fam trip of 850 journalists and travel agents



Sri Lanka

- 24 hour call centre at SLTB
- Dedicated website www.contactsrilanka.org
- Duty waivers for hotel and travel industry
- Bounce back Sri Lanka campaign
- 200 fam trips for travel agents in February
- 150 journalist fam trips
- US\$ 4 mil integrated media ad campaign



Immediate actions to take readiness ● ● ●

- form inter-ministerial crisis coordinating unit for tourism
- Improve safety at resorts
- Improve safety at airport



Immediate actions to take response ● ● ●

- redouble communication
- Expand data base of media and tour operators
- Train staff in crisis communication



Immediate actions to take recovery ● ● ●

- Offer fiscal relief measures to tourism businesses
- Redouble promotion and marketing
- Turn the crisis into an opportunity



Annex 9

Closing Remarks by Mr. M.U Maniku *(Chairman, Maldives Association of Tourism Industry)*

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

A recent publication by the Pacific Asia Travel Association, PATA, is of the view that despite the December tsunami, associated nervousness and a short-term dampening effect, the entire region is recovering strongly and dramatically. PATA predicts overall growth of international visitor arrivals of 10.6 per cent per year to 2007 across the 40 countries in the region. Every destination in the Asia Pacific region is forecast to show positive annual growth to 2007. Some factors influencing the forecasts are the recovery following the tsunami, the emergence of low-cost airlines, the rapidly rising middle-classes across Asia, and significant advances in avionics, leading to new generation aircraft that will change how we move around the world meanwhile, the global average growth is forecast at 4 to 5 percent.

For this growth to be realised and sustained it is vital that we build customer and investor confidence. A Disaster Management Plan and a Business Recovery Plan for the Maldives are essential tools that will drive such confidence. The four workshops we held recently provided a framework for key issues to be addressed immediately.

Our recent discussions have made it clear that the main challenge we faced during the tsunami was the breakdown in communications. A secondary communication system is needed that would ensure communication linkages between the resorts, local airports and the Coast Guard during any emergency. The need to improve the communication network is a vital issue.

We have said that focal agencies need to be developed to act in a crisis situation and supporting agencies need to be established. Recovery and reconstruction processes have to be worked forward and policy issues need to be resolved. Moreover, a holistic approach is needed for the recover of losses in a crisis. We spoke of the need for command control, communication and co ordination.

Other key issues for the Disaster Management Plan to be addressed are:

- ⇒ Communication — importance of backup systems, additional frequency for emergencies, passing on accurate information from reliable sources, focal points for information on what is happening and what has to be done
- ⇒ Evacuation — safe locations at the zones, skilled and trained people for caring people in trauma, emergency supplies
- ⇒ Transport — a second runway at Male' International Airport for emergencies and different modes of transport.

- ⇒ Safe area on the resorts, safe islands, safe harbours and airports.
- ⇒ Crisis marketing for the tourism industry.

We recognised the increasingly important role of insurance.

There is also the very real need for business recovery.

The PATA Annual Conference in Macau this year produces some key pointers for government and public sector cooperation business recovery, mainly that of public and private sector cooperation in raising finance for tourism development and recovery.

I would like to share with you some of these ideas.

- ⇒ Investors in tourism projects are more likely to be supportive if governments supply assurances along with infrastructure.
- ⇒ Financiers not only analyse the economical viability of tourism business plan, but also political stability, the economic growth rate, the enforcement of contracts and the protection of property rights.
- ⇒ A lack of project financing for entrepreneurs has become a serious bottle-neck in the development of travel and tourism industry in Asia Pacific.
- ⇒ “The key component to financing tourism projects is the public-private partnership. Although tourism is largely a private-sector driven business, the government’s role is indispensable. It is crucial to create a favourable environment to attract private investment in tourism.
- ⇒ “It is imperative for the government to give incentives and high recognition to the investment as part of a strong policy commitment to tourism development.
- ⇒ Financiers also realise the importance of sound environmental practice.

We look forward to a closer partnership with the government and all stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Thank you