

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE
SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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INFORMATION NOTE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

Tsunami Disaster.

The Tsunami disaster has caused destruction of almost mythical proportions and continues to present an awesome challenge to relief efforts from all over the world.

The Sovereign Order of Malta / ECOM (Emergency Corps of the Order of Malta) launched its response to the disaster in the immediate aftermath of the event on December 26. ECOM assessed the priority needs and has been focusing on relief operations in India and Thailand. These are countries in which the Order of Malta has local partners, permanent local staff, and a history of well-established aid projects. Teams have been providing medical aid in the Marthandam region of India. In Thailand an ECOM team was transferred from the refugee camps in northwest Thailand to the Phuket area. They have gone to the severely neglected towns of Ban Muang and Ban Nam Kem and provided food and non-food supplies to the people of the totally destroyed village of Ban Muang. Drugs and bandages have been distributed and all relief items were purchased in the local market.

There has been an assessment made of the needs and possible aid missions by ECOM with partners in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. A team will cooperate with Caritas International in the coastal areas in southern Sri Lanka to identify the most urgent needs. An Emergency Health Team, which can treat 10,000 people for three months, will be assigned to this area.

The Order of Malta and the aid groups of Caritas and the German Technical Relief Organization have agreed to collaborate and focus on the restoration of water supplies and water-related issues as part of their work for the long-term rehabilitation of the areas.

New York, January 10, 2005