dignity would be to help provide some form of employment to those affected as soon as possible so that they can become independent again.

Considering the above, the Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists in conjunction with the center for National Operations is coordinating efforts to provide psychological and psychical help and has assigned a team of consultant Psychiatrists who will be responsible for relief measures in the affected areas. Those affected and those conducting relief work are advised to contact their local hospitals for further assistance.

Special arrangements have been made at psychiatric units of the following hospitals for this purpose; National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Colombo (Tel 2691111), Colombo South Teaching Hospital, Kalubowila (Tel. 2763261), Colombo North Teaching Hospital,

Ragama (Tel 2959261), Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Ragama (Tel 2959261-3), General Hospital Nagoda, Kalutara (Tel 034 2222261-2), Teaching Hospital Karapitiya, Galle (Tel 091 2232250-1), General Hospital, Matara (Tel 041 2222261, 047 2222016), General Hospital Batticaloa (Tel 065 2222261, 065 2224461), Teaching Hospital, Jaffna (Tel 021 2222261).

Specialized services are also available at Base Hospital's Ampara (Tel 063 2222262, 0632224725) and Trincomalee (Tel 026 2222262).

Other organizations both local and international wishing to provide psychological and psychiatric assistance are kindly requested to contact the College at slcpsych@yahoo.com to enable the co-ordinate related relief efforts and also prevent the inappropriate use of the resources. ■

GUIDELINES ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN POST-DISASTER SITUATIONS

Batticaloa NGO Consortium

O ver the past two decades, it has been encouraging to witness an international consensus emerge with regards approaches for "sustainable development". It has been felt that sustainable development requires that development interventions are participatory, consultative and be sensitive to the diverse political, social and economic contexts within which people live. This recognition and movement towards sustainability was also incorporated into development interventions of international organisations working in Sri Lanka, such as the German Development Cooperation (GTZ) bilateral agency or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). At a global level, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has identified human rights, democratic values, gender equality and peaceful conflict management as central to their operational principles (Mayer et al, 2003), and the UNHCR has long asserted that relief activities be, idevelopment oriented from the outset, and thereby enable beneficiaries to move quickly towards self-sufficiency (Crisp, 2001). These priorities have manifest in Sri Lanka as directives to local organisations to follow humanitarian/development principles such as "Do No Harm" and "Peace and Conflict Impact Sensitivity" in their work.

Against this backdrop, it has been astounding that most post-tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation work has been designed and implemented with apparently no regard for the good practices documented and advocated for globally by the dominant humanitarian and development institutions. In Batticaloa, we have been extremely concerned that there has been inadequate consultation with community groups, let alone local development practitioners and civil society activists. Decisions about large-scale projects affecting the lives of thousands of families are being taken hastily by locally-based officials of international agencies (such

as those of the United Nations and GTZ) in collaboration with district-level representatives of the Sri Lanka government. This has been most alarming in relation to the decisions being made about temporary resettlement of displaced people. A sense of urgency has been created around this issue by the officials of international organisations (irrespective of whether this urgency is felt by the people who have been affected) and decisions about location and types of shelters are being made without any consultation with the communities themselves. It has been terrible to witness these decisions being implemented, with displaced people being loaded into trucks to new locations with neither adequate prior information nor any influence in determining where they might wish to be sheltered. The absence of the provision of clear and accurate information through reliable channels has created much uncertainty and worry for the displaced people.

There has been inadequate safeguarding of democratic principles, gender equality or human rights of affected people, regardless of the "operational principles" endorsed by the agencies or the instruments of international law ratified by the Sri Lanka government or other states involved in bilateral aid provision. This undermines the principles of good governance and the long term democratic orientation of the region, implicitly endorsing a less consultative and more authoritarian approach to governance. In terms of "smaller-scale" impacts, the lack of consultation in decision-making presents significant risks for the effectiveness of interventions in the mid to long-term. In terms of a development perspective, such approaches to "decision-taking" are illustrations of mismanagement and bad practice. Experiences from countries such as Bangladesh have shown that rushed decision-making based on "technical requirements" without consultation processes with affected populations has resulted in making situations far worse in

the long term. For example, although the Bangladesh camps where the Rohinga communities were settled met their material survival requirements, they did not provide any other opportunities for human development and increased the suffering of the displaced persons. Given the availability of global literature documenting experiences from disaster contexts offering widely accepted good-practice guidelines, it is unacceptable that such bad development practice continues on the part of the state and international agencies.

Internationally, there has been a move towards the ìplanning for and withî displaced populations rather than the ìplanning ofî their temporary settlements, so that displaced populations can live with relative dignity and security, and work towards self-reliance in their new or temporary communities (Chalinder, 1998). There needs to be an awareness of the diversity of the displaced population (for example, caste, class, religious and gender differences) and their diverse needs, as well as the interactions between the new settlements and host populations. It is imperative that current (hasty) decisions should not lead to more serious long-term problems in the future.

Key issues to keep in mind when planning for temporary settlements are those of protection, security, socio-cultural context, the needs of especially vulnerable groups, access to services and livelihoods, environmental concerns, relationship with local population, and coordinated service provision. Protection needs of the displaced populations (especially potentially vulnerable groups such as women or children) should be part of all needs assessments taking into account the possible negative impacts of relief operations (Chalinder, 1998; Darcy, 1997).

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