

**Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development
(FORUM-ASIA)**

Asian Solidarity and Human Rights for All



Press Statement

On the Jakarta "Tsunami Summit"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 7, 2005

PLEDGES WELCOME. NOW ACTION

FORUM-ASIA welcomes the agreements reached at the Jakarta 'Tsunami Summit' held on January 6, 2005. We note with positive hopes, the appointment of a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to mobilize international relief support as a positive step towards more "concerted efforts, spurred by spirit of compassion and sacrifice and endurance".

However, FORUM-ASIA expresses several key concerns of civil society, particularly human rights NGOs, as constructive contributions toward further ensuring the successful implementation of Jakarta commitments.

1. FORUM-ASIA welcomes commitments made by many political leaders at the Summit. It is imperative that pledges be followed by the completion of time-defined and legally binding agreements. In this regard, we fully support the call of the UN Secretary General, "We need the rest of the pledges to be converted into cash quickly"
2. FORUM-ASIA urges the establishment of regional and national mechanisms that involve the full participation of the affected communities, community-based people's organizations and NGOs at all stages and levels - decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
3. FORUM-ASIA affirms that community-based people's organizations, civil society, and the private sector are equal partners in the rehabilitation efforts. It is important

that long-term sustainable livelihoods and people's empowerment should be taken into account while addressing urgent needs and cultural sensitivities of affected communities.

4. FORUM-ASIA congratulates the United Nations for once again taking the lead and central role in the region's humanitarian efforts. All operations of UN must be conducted in a cost-effective manner in full partnership with community-based organizations and affected communities. All parties involved in the operations should strictly adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Humanitarian Assistance and the Guiding Principles on the Right to Humanitarian Assistance.

5. FORUM-ASIA welcomes "the initiatives of several countries on the moratorium of payments of the external debt of the affected countries" However, we urge the donor community to positively consider the immediate and unconditional debt cancellation/reduction to affected countries. This is crucial for a self-sustained and dignified approach to rehabilitation and recovery. We also urge the Paris Club of creditor countries (next Wednesday) to come up with concrete plans of implementation of the Jakarta commitments.

6. FORUM-ASIA calls on governments of all affected countries to immediately enforce law and order and stem the rising criminal activities in devastated areas, particularly rape of women, kidnapping of children for trafficking purposes. We urge governments to confront ongoing corruption by authorities involved in the humanitarian relief operations. We also stress that vulnerable groups like elderly, orphans, disabled and migrant workers should be given adequate protection.

7. Finally, FORUM-ASIA calls the attention of the international community to the situation of areas in internal conflict, in particular in Aceh and north of Sri Lanka. Where already not done, parties to conflict should immediately agree on a cease-fire. Humanitarian assistance must be used in a way that promotes dialogue for peace-building. Humanitarian aids and services should be distributed to all affected communities without discrimination on grounds of political ideology, race, ethnicity, religion, caste, sex, etc.

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FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights NGO in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). It works for solidarity towards the defense of all human rights and promotion of human development in Asia.

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