

To: Toronto Public Library Board – May 9, 2005

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Tsunami Disaster Relief for Libraries – Toronto Public Library Contribution**

Purpose:

To provide information on the library community's response to the devastating effects of the December 2004 tsunami, and to recommend a financial contribution to rebuilding efforts for affected libraries.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

The \$10,000 donation would be accommodated within the 2005 operating budget.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Toronto Public Library Board provide \$10,000 to assist in the rebuilding of school and public libraries in those countries affected by the December 2004 tsunami;
- (2) the donation be made through the Canadian Library Association as the organization collecting funds on behalf of the library community in Canada; and
- (3) the appropriate staff be authorized and directed to take the necessary actions to give effect hereto.

Background:

The December 2004 tsunami in south-east Asia destroyed villages and towns on coastal areas of Indonesia, Thailand, Maldives, Sri Lanka and India, and led to considerable loss of life. This devastation has prompted large-scale international relief efforts.

The first focus was on immediate relief efforts, and the City of Toronto coordinated efforts at the municipal level. The Library participated in the initiatives launched by the City where appropriate. In discussions with the federal and provincial governments, it was agreed that the most significant and appropriate contributions from the City would be based on the medium to long-term needs that are identified by federal agencies for the restoration and reconstruction of regions devastated by the tsunami. Accordingly, City Council endorsed the approach that its contribution of staff expertise and financial assistance be based on the medium to long-term

needs for the restoration and rebuilding of tsunami-stricken communities, as identified by the federal government.

Comments:

The international library community is taking a similar approach in focusing on longer-term needs. Reports from the tsunami-affected countries have documented widespread damage and destruction of library facilities and collections as well as the loss of life for library staff. In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, all of the major libraries suffered extensive damage. At the State Library of Aceh (Badan Perpustakaan Daerah Propinsi Aceh), 23 staff members were killed and all of its children, youth, adult and reference collections were lost. At least two of the eight public libraries were destroyed. The Documentation and Information Centre of Aceh Library (Perpustakaan Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh) has lost all of its collections. In Sri Lanka, priority has been given to rebuilding school libraries. One hundred and seventy six schools were affected in that country, with 59 totally destroyed and 117 partially damaged. The Sri Lanka Disaster Management Committee for Libraries, Information Services and Archives has been formed to coordinate rebuilding efforts.

The facilitating and coordinating agency for the international library community is the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). IFLA has created the IFLA Relief and Development Partnership. Their role is to identify suitable library projects, to provide technical and other advice, and then to refer the projects to national agencies for funding. In Canada, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) has assumed the role of coordinating fundraising. CLA has established a charitable fund to rebuild libraries and restore library service in south-east Asia, and has allocated \$10,000 to tsunami-related development efforts. CLA will launch its fundraising drive at the upcoming annual conference, June 15 to 18, 2005 in Calgary, Alberta.

Conclusion:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board provide \$10,000 to assist in the rebuilding of school and public libraries in those countries affected by the December 2004 tsunami; and that the donation be made through the Canadian Library Association as the organization collecting funds on behalf of the library community in Canada.

Contact:

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Josephine Bryant  
City Librarian

List of Attachments:

Not applicable.