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**Minutes of the NGO Meeting  
with Collector involved on Permanent Shelter Construction  
(20<sup>th</sup> May 2005)**

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**Chaired by: Dr J Radhakrishnan, I.A.S., District Collector, Nagapattinam**  
**Venue: Mini Conference Hall**

This meeting is one of the series of Friday Reviews that take place at the District Collector's Office in order to monitor progress in response to December 26<sup>th</sup> tsunami devastation in Nagapattinam. This meeting was conducted specially with the NGOs involved in construction of Permanent Shelters.

The District Collector informed the NGOs that MoU has been signed with two of the NGOs to commence permanent shelter construction. There is a need to accelerate the process of construction that wherever in-situ construction is accepted by the community and is sensible, the NGOs may commence construction immediately.

#### **House Design**

Regarding the design of houses there is no hard and fast rule that all the NGOs should follow only one common design, but may follow a separate design after getting a formal approval from the District Administration. However, the designs submitted by some NGOs looks very poor. Such NGOs should either hire the service of professionals in making a design for them or follow the design guidelines made available by the District Administration or the NGO Coordination Centre. The copies of Design Guidelines can be had from NGO Coordination Centre. The same is also available at [www.ncrc.in](http://www.ncrc.in) and at [www.tsunami2004-india.org](http://www.tsunami2004-india.org). The shelter designs with twin-type houses (one common wall that separates two houses) need to be discouraged as this might turn out to be problematic in future.

#### **Quality of Work**

The district administration is fully confident with regard to quality assurance in construction work by the NGOs. However, the communities would also compare the quality of work done in one's own village against the work done in the adjacent villages. In this context, the quality and design should not invite criticism. This applies to all construction works such as permanent shelter, school building etc.

#### **Relocation and Land Acquisition**

Regarding to relocation there would be villages like Samanthapettai, where the cost of the houses (concrete houses) owned by the community is fairly high that the community may not be willing to leave the houses and move out. Demolishing such houses would be easier said than done. Merely as a matter of right if they want to possess a house in the relocated area, NGOs need not encourage it. It might be almost impossible to make them relocate later and the houses constructed for them might remain unoccupied. In order to avoid this, it is better to list out the beneficiaries who lost their huts, in the first phase, and immediately start constructing their houses only. It is advisable for the NGOs to go strictly by the list provided by the district administration and

not to deviate. Regarding the new locations, there are several villages like Vilunthamavadi, Vanamadevi, Thirumullaivasal etc where the Surveyors from Collectorate have to visit and technically assist the official formalities to be completed. Mr. Raman (Spl. Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition) shall coordinate this work. The local Thasildar and RDO shall also help to speed up this process. The delay in land allocation procedure from the side of District Administration is due to the high cost of private lands available in some areas. The District Administration finds it very difficult to take a position to clear this issue immediately as it would invite allegations later that the lands were over paid. More over, where temple lands and Wakford land are to be acquired the District Administration has to approach them and get their clearance.

The technical specifications to be adhered to in constructing houses and other buildings were shared in the meeting. In case where certain lands allocated are in low laying area, the NGOs should fill up such places before commencing construction. In such cases they might include such additional cost in the budget also. Many sites are available for soil for filling for these land area.

### Action Required

- The **permanent shelter construction work to be put on fast track**. Those NGOs who have adequate capacity and materials need not wait to get everything cleared but should **start constructing at least 10- 20 houses to begin with**. The best way to finish a work is to start doing it. The deadline for completion of construction work would not be relaxed. The NGOs must understand that people are going to compare the speed of progress between and among districts.
- Those **NGOs who have not got their 'House Designs' approved, to send their designs to the Collectorate and get it approved**. This has to be completed at the earliest preferably before the next meeting. Any NGO that is ready with building plan may ask for a meeting with the AC, R & R even after 7.00 o'clock in the evening and get it approved as early as possible.
- All the NGOs have to **give the name of the person in charge at the site of construction** with his / her phone / **mobile number** to the Collectorate.
- All the NGOs involved in Tsunami Response should **open a separate bank account** exclusively meant for tsunami response related operations.
- **Surveyors** from Collectorate have to visit and technically assist the official formalities to be completed. Mr. Raman, Additional Collector, Land Acquisition shall coordinate this work. The local Thahasildar and RDO shall also help speed up this process.
- The **Tata Relief Committee** has been asked to find out if the old tree belt in Thideerkuppam (and the area behind the existing TRC Office) can be cleared and permanent shelters constructed there. The TRC staff shall find out and propose if that land was OK. The **Development Promotion Group (DPG)** has been given green signal to go ahead with construction work. **TNRC** has to get approval of the community in the design they have developed.

- In the matter of **sales tax exemption** for the materials procured for construction of permanent shelters, the district administration would find out the possibility of getting it. However, the **NGOs need not wait** in anticipation of some decision with regard to obtaining sales tax exemption.
- **Some villages** such as Madavaiveedu, Poombukar are **still to be allotted** to NGOs for permanent shelter construction. If there are any NGOs willing to take up such villages, they may approach the Additional Collector, R & R.

### Appeal

VESA made an appeal to all NGOs involved in permanent shelter construction to **involve the local people** who have been trained in construction works. The list of such people can be had from VESA. VESA would also make the list available to the NGO Coordination Centre and the Collectorate.

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### List of Participants

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