



Photo: Roderico Ofrin

Dear Colleagues at the WHO country offices and in the field.

The tragic events of December 26 have caused death and destruction all around the region. So many hundreds of thousands are displaced and have lost relatives and homes. We all have relatives and friends who were affected and only gradually we are finding out about their situation. I express my heartfelt sorrow for those bereaved.

Since a week WHO staff have almost immediately mobilized themselves to respond to the enormous challenge posed by the aftermath of the Tsunami. Country offices, their staff in the affected areas, SEARO and HQ staff, and our colleagues in the WHO Tsunami Operations Room at SEARO have been working day and night to move supplies and people to help out at country level and in the field.

I have been very much heartened and take pride in the selfless response of all WHO staff and their associates to dedicate their professional skills and energy to help the people affected. At SEARO, in the Tsunami Operations Room, I am increasingly impressed with the team spirit and commitment demonstrated. It has been tough so far and the challenge of restoring people's physical and mental health will remain tough for the next six months.

Today, it gives me great pleasure to thank you for your dedicated efforts.

Wishing you continued strength for working during this emergency,

Dr. Samlee Plianbangchang
Regional Director
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World Health Organization

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