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ROTARY CLUBS ASIAN DISASTER FUND RAISING REACHES £5 MILLION

RAPID RESPONSE BRINGS AID QUICKLY TO TSUNAMI SURVIVORS

Exceptional response raises funds approaching £5 million, of which more than £1 million of aid was delivered to survivors within 14 days of the disaster, using Rotary colleagues in the affected areas

3168 Aquaboxes, 1159 Shelterboxes and 75 Emergency boxes delivered providing shelter and clean water for 20,00 people

Funds raised by Rotary Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland for the Asian Disaster survivors have reached £5 million. Rotary Clubs responded quickly and continue to work tirelessly to assist communities affected by the earthquake and tsunami that devastated south Asia's coastal regions on December 26. Funds raised have been used immediately for Shelterboxes, Aquaboxes and Emergency boxes, in direct response to requests from Rotary Clubs in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India. More than three thousand Aquaboxes and over eleven hundred Shelterboxes have been shipped to India and Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Maldives in the last two weeks to provide temporary homes and clean water for 20,000 victims of the Asian Tsunami. A further thousand Shelterboxes will be delivered this week and a further 4000 Aquaboxes are on order. Each Aquabox can supply a family of four with pure water for three months, and each Shelterbox includes a tent and basic necessities for up to 10 people.

Rotary is able to get aid quickly where it is most needed as it works through its volunteer service club network at the grassroots level to provide immediate aid and assistance to those impacted by disaster. Rotary has hundreds of clubs and thousands of members in the affected countries, including 57 clubs and 1,600 members in Sri Lanka, 90 clubs and 1,750 members in Indonesia, 362 clubs and 8,900 members in Thailand, and 2,511 clubs and 89,000 members in India. Rotary Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland are working with their colleagues in the affected areas as well as with relief agencies such as UNICEF and the Red Cross, airlines and the military.

Gordon McNally, President Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland said "The earthquake and subsequent Tsunami is arguably, the greatest natural disaster to befall our planet in the one hundred years of Rotary's existence. The response to the disaster by Rotarians has been phenomenal - hundreds of Rotary Clubs have held collections in shopping centres, at motorway service stations and at sports stadiums. In Devon alone more than £300,000 has been raised. The public response has been incredible and millions of pounds have been raised, thanks to the generosity of the public and to the generosity of Rotarians and their families and friends in giving time to collect that money. Perhaps more importantly a great deal of tangible aid has already gone to the disaster area in the shape of Rotary Shelter Boxes and Rotary Aquaboxes providing essential shelter and clean water. The need however remains immense and Rotary Clubs are now planning to meet immediate, medium and longer-term needs."

Information about Rotary relief initiatives will be continuously updated on the Rotary Web site (www.rotary-ribi.org). Other examples of Rotary efforts include:

* Assistance with supply and repair of fishing boats in Sri Lanka, an initiative of the Rotary Club of Teddington and the Hamptons

* A relief center and Web site (www.reliefforsrilanka.blogspot.com) set up by the Rotary Club of Colombo Regency, Sri Lanka. The club has dispatched teams transporting food, clothing, candles, and basic medicines to many of the hardest hit areas."

* The establishment of relief centers and medical camps in the hardest hit areas of southern India.

* Formation of a Disaster Relief Task Force in Indonesia to collect and distribute medicine, food, water, clothes and other essentials

* A truck caravan that is delivering relief essentials to devastated coastal communities in Thailand.

Photographs of aid being used in disaster area available on request

Interviews with Gordon McNally available on request

For further information, to arrange interviews or photographs please contact Judith Diment on 01628 672965 or 07860 162313 or email judithdiment@aol.com

For detailed information on fund raising activities by local Rotary Clubs see www.rotary-ribi.org

Notes to editors

Founded in 1905 in Chicago, Rotary is a volunteer service organization with a worldwide membership of 1.2 million in 32,000 clubs in 166 countries. It celebrates its centenary on February 23rd.

A standard Aquabox costs £49.00 and can supply 1100 litres of purified water sufficient for a family of 4 for three months. An Aquabox 30 comprises a rigid plastic container with approx. 75 litre capacity and 30 Filter / Purification sets to give a 33,000 litre capability. For more information see www.aquabox.org

A Shelterbox costs £490.00 and contains a ten person tent, sleeping bags, water purification equipment, basic tools, lighting and kerosene fuelled cooking equipment. For more information see www.shelterbox.org

An Emergency box provides blankets, clothing, food and essential items