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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**August 7, 2007**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

For Cathie O'Toole, CGA A/Director Finance

**DATE:** July 30, 2007

**SUBJECT:** **Federation of Canadian Municipalities-Municipal Cooperation  
Program for December 2004 Tsunami Relief-Sri Lanka**

## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

In March 2007 the Executive Management Team endorsed HRM's support for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Canada/Sri Lanka Municipal Cooperation Program. This program is co-sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency and by municipalities across Canada.

Its aim is to assist municipalities in Asia devastated by the December 2004 Tsunami which killed over 20,000 people in Sri Lanka alone.

## **BACKGROUND**

On December 26, 2004 a massive earthquake underneath the Indian Ocean triggered a series of tsunami waves. The destruction caused by these waves on the Eastern and Southern parts of Sri Lanka's coast rendered local authorities and public utilities paralyzed. Over 1 million people in 70 of the 311 Local Authority Areas were affected. The cost of reconstruction is estimated at US \$1.6 billion by the Government of Sri Lanka.

In Canada all levels of society responded immediately. On the municipal level, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) was mandated by its members to coordinate their technical or financial assistance to the tsunami disaster, as the FCM has provided coordination of partnerships and exchange between municipal governments in Canada and developing countries since 1987.

At the invitation of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) the FCM developed the Canada/Sri Lanka Municipal Cooperation Program (MCP), which represents the outcome of an Intergovernmental Scoping Mission to Sri Lanka and Indonesia in early 2005. The program addresses the need of local authorities for

- effective leadership, operations, and relations with the public;
- effective planning and management of their assets and financial resources;
- revenue generation.

The program goal is to also support national post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka and to create an enabling environment for peace building by increasing local government capacities and promoting good intergovernmental relations.

Five Districts were selected (Galle, Kalmunai/Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Matara/Hambantota). These local authorities will act as anchor communities and are expected to disseminate and communicate their models to other local governments. In addition MCP will provide support on a provincial level for the Sri Lankan government.

The MCP is a partnership of Canadian municipalities and Sri Lankan local authorities, communities, and sector leaders. Within it, Canadian municipal practitioners provide technical assistance to aide local governments in restoring basic local services and basic management capacity as well as in improving people's participation in the rehabilitation of communities. All management and programming activities integrate three crosscutting themes (CCT): peace building, gender equality, environmental sustainability.

The expected results are:

1. Local Government Capacity Restored in Selected Local Authorities
2. More Supportive Local Government Enabling Environment
3. Program Knowledge Shared and Effective Communication

The MCP has a budget of CAD\$ 11,624,300, funded by CIDA (77%) and the FCM and its members (23%). It was ratified in September 2005 and launched immediately. Conceived as a two stages approach it will run until April 2009. A detailed program plan was approved in November 2006 and provides a framework for the long-term projects results comprised in five components:

**Core Components:**

1. Support to Local Authorities
2. Canada-Sri Lanka Municipal Strategic Fund

**Secondary Components:**

1. Support to Provincial Councils
2. Support to Other Enabling Institutions
3. Outreach & Knowledge Development

## **DISCUSSION**

As the focus of this mission request was to assist the finance departments of the selected local authorities two finance staff managers were encouraged to apply to be part of the FCM team. Bruce Fisher, Manager of Tax and Fiscal Policy and Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager Financial Services were selected by the FCM to participate in the Sri Lankan mission.

Two separate teams composed of three participants each are assigned to the areas of Galle/Kalmunai and Batticaloa,/Trincomalee. Representatives of municipal finance departments from the City of Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, the City of Hamilton, Ontario and the City of Nelson, British Columbia round out the teams.

The first mission took place in June 2007 and was a great success. Part of the process to create capacity in the local authorities involves automation of records and to provide training so the Sri Lankan finance departments can use computers to do their accounting and billing processes. Currently most records are maintained in manual ledgers. Funds provided by FCM and CIDA will purchase the computers and training necessary to do this work.

In August a study group from Sri Lanka will arrive in Halifax. Their main purpose will be:

- 1) to see how automation is handled by Canadian municipalities;
- 2) to learn various customer service models in place in Canada and,
- 3) to learn more about council/staff interaction methods and tools.

They will be in Halifax from August 21<sup>st</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup> inclusive. The team will then split into two and travel to the City of Mount Pearl and the City of Hamilton for a further one week. The teams will then reconvene in Toronto at FCM headquarters for debriefing and departure to Sri Lanka.

It is hoped that a visit by the Sri Lankan study group will provide an opportunity to highlight the good work Halifax is doing to support the disaster area. The FCM has indicated the Sri Lankan delegation would welcome media coverage of their visit to Canada. HRM Corporate Communications will work with the FCM to identify some media coverage opportunities while the group is visiting our municipality.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications associated with this report. Staff time will be provided as an in kind contribution and any impact will be absorbed within the existing operating budget of Finance.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

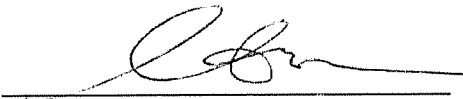
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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