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Séisme en Asie - TUI provides long-term aid in the crisis region of Southeast Asia: Rebuilding of a village in Sri Lanka planned

Hanover/Zurich (ots) -

TUI AG, Europe's leading travel group, has decided to set up a long-term aid programme for the crisis region in Southeast Asia. A total of \approx 1.25 million will be made available for the measures to be carried out.

Aid will be focussed on rebuilding a village particularly badly affected by the flood disaster in the Tangalle district on the south coast of Sri Lanka. This independent aid project is being initiated and realised in cooperation with the relief organisation "Plan International" TUI will in effect sponsor the community by providing the financial resources for the rebuilding.

The further aim is to encourage a large number of TUI's 18 million guests and 65,000 employees to support the project. For instance, TUI will inform employees and customers about Plan International sponsorship of children in Sri Lanka. Sponsors as well as all other people supporting the project will be able to find out the latest information about the aid project on a specially set up internet site.

Considering the serious destruction of large parts of Sri Lanka, TUI will in addition support an initiative of Aitken Spence & Co, a company in which TUI has a share. Besides other activities, the firm operates a tourism business in Sri Lanka.

Aitken Spence & Co. is arranging aid measures for devastated regions for instance in the northwest of the island. The various projects not only help in such areas as setting up accommodation, schools and medical wards, but also provide support for fishermen and farmers in the form of small credits, material goods as well as medical training of medical personnel and many other things.

"Long-term targeted aid is urgently needed to secure the future of those affected above and beyond the emergency relief that they are now receiving. As a globally operating travel company we feel we have a responsibility to actively support rebuilding in the areas that have been destroyed," according to Dr Michael Frenzel, chief executive of TUI AG. He continued: "In Plan International we have found an experienced partner that has already successfully carried out development work in Sri Lanka in the particularly badly affected crisis regions and is capable of taking action immediately." The initiative by Aitken Spence & Co. is an exemplary project by a national company for spontaneous aid. It deserves our full support."

TUI will decide at another time on spending corresponding funds in other countries affected by the flood disaster, such as Thailand, Indonesia, India and the Maldives.

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