

## Visiting Presidents View ITT Clean-Water Installations in Sri Lanka:

# “They are making a real difference.”

As part of their tour of the regions ravaged by last year's deadly tsunami, former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush visited Koggala, a small fishing village on the south-east coast of Sri Lanka, on February 21. The site was selected to give the ex-presidents a first-hand look at exactly how equipment donated by ITT Industries is bringing clean water to tsunami survivors in the devastated country.

“Your swift actions likely led to a great reduction in the proliferation of waterborne disease in Sri Lanka,” said President Clinton. “These small-scale, portable clean water systems are making a difference here and can do the same in developing countries around the world.”

The ITT systems include nearly 60 portable ST1 water treatment units and reverse osmosis desalination systems, which are being used throughout Sri Lanka to transform contaminated well water and seawater into clean drinking water.

Clinton and Bush were asked by the current President George W. Bush to lead the U.S. effort to provide private aid to the hundreds of thousands of tsunami victims. The tour served as a fact-finding mission and a media event to remind the world that there is much relief work still to be done. The Koggala stop was the only one to focus on the relief efforts provided by companies in the private sector.

The arrival of the former world leaders in Koggala was greeted with great excitement. Hundreds of men and women in traditional sarongs and sarees lined the presidents' motorcade route from Matara, and Koggala townspeople turned out en masse to be part of the proceedings.

Mark Steele, president of ITT China and on-site leader of ITT Industries' relief effort in Sri Lanka, detailed how the technology in Koggala and dozens of other sites throughout Sri Lanka is providing clean water to more than half a million people. Melvin Gilbert, commissioning engineer for ITT's Advanced Water Treatment group, described the systems' capabilities.

“You should be very proud of what you have done here,” said President Bush. “It's truly a great accomplishment.”

In earlier visits to countries affected by the massive waves, both President Bush and Clinton expressed shock at the massive

level of devastation, saying it was “heartbreaking” and “worse than expected.” In Koggala, however, they saw reason for hope as local Sri Lankan engineers – trained by ITT Industries product experts – operated the water-purifying systems that are helping to keep waterborne disease and further deaths at bay.

“I was absolutely convinced that we would lose another 100,000 people (to disease), but it's nice to be wrong sometimes,” Clinton said. “This type of initiative almost certainly alleviated what everyone thought was going to happen – the secondary tragedy of waterborne diseases such as dysentery and cholera.”

The former presidents also praised the cooperation between ITT Industries and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the government agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance to people struggling to make a better life or recover from a disaster.

“Working on this project has been an incredible experience for me,” said Steele. “It's been truly gratifying to

see first-hand how we worked together with

other concerned partners to help the people of Sri Lanka, and how the people of ITT Industries pulled together in a tireless effort to mobilize our water treatment systems and bring clean, drinkable water to people in need.”

The visit ended before the noon sun arrived in Koggala. Earlier on the tour, President Clinton had urged people around the world not to forget these people and places when all the cameras are gone. As the two former presidents departed to their next stop in the Maldives islands – where ITT drainage pumps are working day and night to clear contaminated wells of seawater – a large group of local residents gathered near the ITT Industries equipment.

It had been a historic morning, but the truly important work was now at hand – collecting the clean water they would need to get through the day. ■



*Mark Steele, president of ITT China (in blue shirt), explained to former presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush how our small-scale water-purifying systems are bringing clean water to more than half a million people in Sri Lanka each day.*



*Engineer Melvin Gilbert (white shirt) answered questions about how the portable systems operate.*