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New world awaits after tsunami: Costello

By **MELISSA FYFE**

THE world was on the cusp of an amazing opportunity if it could harness the charity and goodwill that flowed so generously after the tsunami, World Vision Australia chief Tim Costello told a forum last night.

With some "moral imagination" and political will, the world could break down old notions about entrenched poverty, said Mr Costello, and make a real difference to people's lives in less fortunate nations.

More than 250 people heard Mr Costello and other speakers at the "After the Tsunami" public forum at the Melbourne Town Hall last night. It was sponsored by *The Age* and the Asialink Centre, and hosted by editor-in-chief Andrew Jaspan.

The stakes post-tsunami were high, Mr Costello said. "If we get it wrong, we will hurt the poor, the most vulnerable," he said.

The key would be getting the public to understand that the huge amount of money would be

spent in complex situations and over many years.

"The emergency phase has come to an end and we have prevented follow-up waves of epidemics," he said.

A retired Indonesian lawyer and former member of parliament, Nono Anwar Makarim, pleaded for Australians to extend their support beyond the tsunami.

Dr Makarim was close to tears as he thanked Australians for their support. "Please stay for the long haul, not just this crisis. Walk with us," he said.

More than 250,000 Indonesians lost their lives in the Boxing Day disaster.

Indonesia's ambassador, Imron Cotan, thanked Australia for its prompt response to the tsunami. The tragedy had brought the two nations closer after past tensions, he said.

Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty spoke of his pride as he saw his colleagues put their "shoulders to the wheel" in Thailand.