
MEDIA RELEASE

Building a Foundation for the Future: Ambassador of the European Union Visits Housing Beneficiaries in the North of Sri Lanka

5 November 2013, Mullaitivu, Sri Lanka: The recently appointed Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, H.E. David Daly, visited the conflict affected village of Iranapalai in Mullaitivu District in Sri Lanka's Northern Province on 30th October 2013. During his visit, Ambassador Daly met returnee families who are in the process of rebuilding their homes through the support provided by a Housing Recovery Programme funded by the EU in partnership with the Government of Australia and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The total funding by the three donors for this 5 year programme is approximately € 35 million. Senior officials from the EU, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), SDC and UN-Habitat also participated in the field visit.

During his visit, the EU Ambassador, together with the home owners and a representative of AusAID, laid the foundation stone to reconstruct a new house in addition to planting a tree sapling that commemorated his first visit to the region. While visiting a house which was near completion, Ambassador Daly said: *"Sri Lanka has always fascinated me as a country and I am truly pleased to be here and witness some of the developments that are taking place. By 2015 the EU would have funded the reconstruction of approximately 10,000 houses in North and 10,000 in East Sri Lanka. This would not have been possible without the participation of the people of Sri Lanka, the community itself, and the other development partners. I am optimistic by what I have seen and I hope to see more such constructive partnerships in the future."*

The EU has provided € 23.6 Million for a period of five years (2011–2015) for this Housing Programme through a partnership with UN-Habitat. The first phase of the Programme, commenced in January 2011 and has supported over 5,000 families in rebuilding their homes in the Northern Province. The second phase of the programme, commenced in January 2013 and focuses on the districts of Mullaitivu, Killinochchi, Mannar and Batticaloa. From its inception in 2011 to completion in June 2015, this housing recovery programme would have assisted almost 10,000 families. By 2015 the EU will have funded the reconstruction of about 10,000 houses in North and 10,000 in East Sri Lanka.

In addition to housing, the initiative also provides vital community infrastructure facilities such as common wells, access roads, community centres and preschools.

The 'home owner driven' process of reconstruction, jointly implemented by UN-Habitat and SDC provides families with funds and technical assistance to reconstruct homes. Families benefitting from this project contribute equally with their own labour, time and resources and are responsible for managing skilled construction workers, such as masons and carpenters, and purchasing building materials. This participatory process empowers families to take charge of their own reconstruction and recovery.
