

European Union Delegation Visits UN-Habitat Housing Beneficiaries in Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka.



25 June 2014, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka: A delegation from the European Union (EU) office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives visited the conflict affected village of Welikkakandy in Batticaloa District in the Eastern Province on 25th June 2014.

During the field visit, Mr. Willy Vandenberghe, First Counsellor and Head of Operations for the EU Delegation in Sri Lanka met returnee families who have reconstructed their homes with support from the Housing Recovery Programme funded by the EU in partnership with the Government of Australia and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The programme is implemented by UN-Habitat and SDC in the North and East

of Sri Lanka. The total funding by the three donors for this 5 year programme is approximately € 35 million.

Mr. Willy Vandenberghe handed over three newly constructed houses to the homeowners -- Mrs. R. Mageswary, Mrs. R. Navamani and Mrs. N Sivaldchumy. Each homeowner has received a grant of LKR.550,000 to reconstruct their conflict damaged house through a homeowner driven process of reconstruction. Mr. S. Giritharan, Additional Government Agent of Batticaloa District, Mr. U. Uthayashrither, Divisional Secretary, of Eravurpattu DS Division and senior officers from the EU and UN-Habitat also participated in the field visit.



Discussing the reconstruction of their house, Mrs. R. Navamani stated "We lead a very difficult life, without proper shelter, especially during the rainy season. We are now able to enjoy a secure life in our new permanent home thanks to the support provided by this project. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the donors for this assistance".



During the past five years, the EU has provided € 23.6 Million for this Housing Programme through a partnership with UN-Habitat. The first phase of the Programme, commenced in January 2011 and has supported 5,068 families to rebuild 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. 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 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.