

**OCHA DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS PRAISES PROGRESS IN SRI LANKA  
AND APPEALS FOR DONOR SUPPORT**

(Bangkok/Geneva, 3 August 2012): At the end of a three-day mission to Sri Lanka, John Ging, OCHA Director of Operations, praised the significant progress made by the country since May 2009.

Discussing the impressive steps taken, including the resettlement of over 440,000 people displaced by three decades of conflict, Mr. Ging expressed his support for continued partnership with the authorities, at all levels, to jointly agree upon and meet remaining humanitarian needs. He also welcomed the commitment of the Government to addressing durable peace and development issues through the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC).

“The scale of what Sri Lanka has accomplished over the past three years – the pace of resettlement and the development of infrastructure – is remarkable and very clearly visible,” said Mr. Ging, in Colombo.

During his mission, Mr. Ging met senior Government officials, including the Minister of Economic Development and Chair of the Presidential Task Force on Resettlement, Development and Security in the Northern Province (PTF), Mr. Basil Rajapaksa, and the Secretary of the PTF, Mr. S.B. Divaratne.

John Ging also travelled to Jaffna in the north, where, in the Sapapathipillai Welfare Centre, he met people who remain displaced after more than two decades. In Thellipalai, he spoke to people returning to the land and houses they had fled twenty years ago. The scale of the challenge in rebuilding their lives was immediately apparent, as the homes they are returning to are uninhabitable and their land overgrown. In both places, people asked for the same basic assistance – toilets, clean water, shelter, electricity and livelihoods support.

“In 2012, it is absolutely unacceptable that tens of thousands of people are living in such appalling conditions without access to the most basic services,” said Mr. Ging.

Despite these urgent needs, humanitarian partners are downsizing due to funding shortfalls. Only 18.4 per cent of the funds required under the Joint Plan of Assistance to the Northern Province for 2012 have been received to date.

“This is a critical moment for Sri Lanka,” noted Mr. Ging. “Full implementation of the Joint Plan of Assistance is key to consolidating the gains made in recent years and establishing a platform for sustainable development and economic prosperity. I appeal to all donors, including those who have already been so generous with their bilateral and development aid, to increase their humanitarian contributions.” He added, “We need their help to restore dignity and hope for those who have endured and lost so much and now urgently need support in rebuilding their lives.”

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