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**Colombo**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **U.S. Government funding benefits 200,000 IDPs in the North**

**Colombo, August 19, 2009:** The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), is providing \$2 million for short-term assistance to benefit 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). This brings USAID's contribution of non-food aid assistance this year to a total of \$8 million.

Rebecca Cohn, USAID Mission Director said, "USAID is supporting the work of NGOs to ensure that the needs of displaced Sri Lankans are met. Our new funding will support the welfare and safety of IDPs until they can return to their homes."

A USAID grant to Internews will produce and disseminate news and information to IDPs in Manik Farms. A second grant to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) will address humanitarian needs in the North in partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Gareth Price-Jones, program manager for UMCOR said, "USAID funds will address critical needs to improve conditions in the camps and provide lifesaving interventions. For example, one of our projects, in partnership with the Sri Lanka Ministry of Health, provides medical supplies and equipment for 180,000 IDPs in Vavuniya and Jaffna."

In 2009, USAID provided \$4.5 million to UMCOR to support the following activities:

- Cash-for-work activities, community outreach health programs, emergency transportation services and emergency health awareness benefitting more than 180,000 IDPs through Medical Teams International (MTI);
- Health emergency response kits filled with bandages, medicines and basic supplies to treat 50,000 patients in the IDP camps through MTI;
- Sanitation facilities and emergency shelters benefitting 31,200 IDPs through Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB), CARE and People in Need (PIN);
- Personal hygiene kits, baby kits, and water bowsers through the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED);
- 700 temporary shelters and bathing areas for 5,600 IDPs through the International Organization for Migration (IOM);
- Emergency relief supplies for 800 medical evacuees through World Concern; and
- Referral services and mobility aids to benefit IDPs with disabilities through Handicap International.

*The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided development and humanitarian assistance in developing countries worldwide for nearly 50 years. Since 1956, USAID/Sri Lanka has invested nearly \$2 billion to benefit all the people of Sri Lanka.*

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