

**PRESS RELEASE**

**India contributes relief items towards UN operations in Sri Lanka**

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (17 August 2009) – The United Nations has received a generous donation of relief items by the Government of India to assist hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as those returning to their homes in Sri Lanka.

The 600-Metric ton consignment, including plastic mats, jerry cans, items of clothing and footwear as well as packets of spices, was transported by sea to Sri Lanka last Saturday (8th August 2009) and handed over to the World Food Programme (WFP) and The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), to facilitate delivery. The agencies will distribute them among the population of concern in the north and east during the coming weeks and months with a particular focus on those returning to their homes under the Government's 180-day plan.

“This contribution is extremely important now,” said Neil Buhne, UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator. “The goods provided will help to meet the needs of the displaced in the welfare centres, but can also be used to support the return of the displaced to their homes. We are very grateful to the Indian government for helping us to better support the national effort to help the IDPs return to their normal life.”

The United Nations remains fully committed to supporting the Government of Sri Lanka to protect and assist some 500,000 displaced persons in the country, through the distribution of food and non-food items as well as the provision of shelter, education, health and livelihoods etc. with the ultimate objective of ensuring their safe return home.

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