

Re-Greening the North: UN-Habitat Promotes Tree Planting in Kilinochchi, Mullativu, Mannar and Jaffna Districts

June 2015, Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka. Three decades of conflict caused significant negative impacts to the environment in Sri Lanka's Northern Province. With the end of the conflict in 2009, reconstruction efforts in the North have further exacerbated the pressures on the environment leading to the rapid depletion of forest cover.

With the aim of re-greening conflict affected villages, UN-Habitat has initiated a plant distribution programme to encourage tree planting amongst communities. This programme is implemented through UN-Habitat's post conflict reconstruction programme funded by the Government of Japan, European Union, Government of Australia and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.



The tree planting programme entitled “Trees for Tomorrow” is encouraging tree planting at household level with the objective of increasing the production of timber and non-timber products such as fruit for household consumption and as an alternative livelihood. UN-Habitat has distributed seedlings and saplings including Coconut, King Coconut, Mango, Mahogany and Teak. People in 210 Grama Niladhari Divisions from Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Jaffna have benefitted from this programme.

Enthusiastic community participation in the tree planting campaign has significantly widened the scope of this programme. Trees have been distributed to both households and communities to

create gardens in public land at community centres, preschools and schools. With the aim of increasing awareness of environmental challenges and influencing attitudes and behaviour, two awareness programmes have also been conducted in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts in collaboration with the Central Environment Authority.

Positive feedback on the tree planting programme has been received from community members. Many households have requested additional fruit bearing plants and seedlings such as mango and coconut to improve their home gardens. The Environmental Officers of the Central Environment Authority were pleased to be involved in the programme and stated that it created a platform for communities to actively participate in re-greening their villages.

From 2013 to 2015, over 190,000 plants and seedlings have been distributed to community members in Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Jaffna.