



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Programme des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains

INDONESIA

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PRESS RELEASE

Dutch donors hand over more than 600 UN-HABITAT houses on the remote island of Simeulue

Sambai, Simeulue Island, Indonesia, 5 July – In a joyful ceremony in Sambai village on Simeulue Island UN-HABITAT, UNDP and the Aceh Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency celebrated the completion of houses together with Dutch donors and survivors of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.



Daniel Biau (UN-HABITAT, right) and Simon Field (UNDP) plant a tree in front of a reconstructed house

The director of the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division Nairobi, Daniel Biau, who visited Aceh Province to commemorate two years of UN-HABITAT's and UNDP's Aceh Nias Settlements Support Programme praised the successful collaboration work between UN-HABITAT, UNDP, the Aceh Nias Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR) and the people of Simeulue and their local authorities. The Aceh Nias Settlements Support Programme (ANSSP) has so far completed reconstruction of 3,500 houses and more than 1,000 are currently under construction in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

In Simeulue, an island off the west coast of Sumatra, the recovery process has been particularly challenging. On the remote island the number of casualties was relatively small, because oral tradition had passed on the knowledge that people must run uphill after earthquakes to avoid tsunami waves. However, the destruction, which the disaster had left behind, was overwhelming. Whole villages had been wiped out. The shipment of material by sea and on the few bad roads was difficult and skilled workers were hard to find.

Therefore, as Daniel Biau stressed, it was of even greater importance to put the people in the center of the recovery process. In the approach, which UN-HABITAT calls the "People's



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Housing Process”, the communities are actively leading the reconstruction of their villages, from the first planning to the building and finishing.

Ms Hagar Ligtoet, from the Netherlands Embassy put it in right words when she said: “the energy of the people themselves has made this project what you see today. It is their sweat and their commitment which build these houses. We only delivered the finance, the UN provided assistance, but you build the houses.” Mrs Hagar led the Dutch donor delegation, which was also represented by Jan de Vletter, the director of SGHI and Mark van der Hiel, advisor to AEDES.

The celebration to hand over 627 houses in Simeulue was presided by Assistant Governor of Aceh Province Usman Budiman, Representative from BRR Djoko Sasono and by Simeulue, Bhupati (District Chief) Dr Darmili. After a group of men had given a presentation of the local martial art and school girls in traditional dresses had performed a dance, symbolic keys to the houses were handed over to the beneficiaries.



Daniel Biau (UN-HABITAT) hands over the symbolic key to a village leader.

Simon Field, team leader UNDP Aceh, thanked the people, the Assistant Governor and BRR for their leading role in the recovery process in Aceh and Nias.

The Assistant Governor Usman Budiman thanked UN-HABITAT and UNDP for their work and expressed the wish that the good cooperation of all parties involved in the ANSSP shall continue for the challenges ahead. Mr van de Vletter (SGHI) confirmed his satisfaction with the effective use of the Dutch contribution through AEDES.

UN-HABITAT in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has already started the next phase of recovery on Simeulue Island with the reconstruction of more than 600 houses.