

RECONSTRUCTION

New houses with sanitation completed in Simeulue

The Jakarta Post

JAKARTA

Pak Salman and his wife proudly showed off their newly built house to visiting guests on Simeulue Island, Aceh, which was devastated by a tsunami in 2004.

Salman is a member of the Bakti Usaha 01 housing cluster in Situbuk village, where he is actively involved in the construction of new homes for the neighborhood, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) said in a statement made available to *The Jakarta Post* on Monday.

The 36-square-meter house, painted green, has a family area, two bedrooms and a bathroom. Outside is the tap for piped water and an impressive septic tank that treats waste water biologically and safely.

"When we move into this new house, the children will have a room of their own and I will start planting trees in our backyard," *Ibu* Salman excitedly told the guests.

The family is one of the 459 to benefit from the Simeulue Settlements Support Program (S3P).

The program is a cooperation between UN-HABITAT and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and is part of the ADB-financed Earthquake and Tsunami Emergency Support Project.

The program is strongly community-based, mobilizing communities at every stage of the reconstruction process. Communities supported the studies on environmental and social safeguards that were undertaken at the start.

Once the program was approved, UN-HABITAT signed community contracts with cluster groups of beneficiaries. Planning, land mapping, construction, water supplies and sanitation were undertaken, guaranteeing integration and sustainability.

The program was conducted in five villages — Batu-Batu, Busung, Kahad, Situbuk and Sua-Sua. Construction work began in June 2008 and is now completed.

During the official handing over ceremony on April 28, 2009, UN-HABITAT program manager Srinivasa B. Popuri conveyed his gratitude and appreciation for the support and the cooperation of all stakeholders who were involved in the community rebuilding settlement program.

"The precious experience and lessons from the process is that the communities themselves are actively involved in rebuilding their own houses. This is the philosophy of UN-HABITAT's 'The People's Process'," he said.

Senior ADB urban development specialist Florian Steinberg agreed that "to build and reconstruct houses on an island like Simeulue is challenging: heavy rains affect the progress, and the procurement of construction material is difficult".

He said he was satisfied "to see that through commitment and hard work of all stakeholders, including the community, the local government of Simeulue and the UN-HABITAT team, the assignment could be successfully completed."

UN-HABITAT assisted a total of 1,186 households in nine villages on the island. First, it rebuilt 727 houses as part of the Aceh Nias Settlements Support Program (ANSSP), which was implemented in cooperation with the UNDP and funded by housing cooperations from the Netherlands, under the umbrella of AEDES, the Dutch association for public housing.

The Jakarta post
Tuesday, 12 May 2009