



European Union

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PRESS RELEASE

EU provides assistance to drought-affected people in Sri Lanka

Colombo, June 20th, 2014 - Following a prolonged period of drought in several parts of Sri Lanka, the European Commission is providing €250,000 to help the most vulnerable families meet their food security needs. Lack of adequate rainfall has caused extensive damage to the paddy crop over the last six months, thereby creating a food insecurity crisis for hundreds of thousands of people.

“The effect of the drought is likely to linger on for some time as water reservoirs have dried out”, said David Daly, the Ambassador of the European Union in Sri Lanka. “The funds we are providing will ensure people have enough food to meet their immediate nutrition needs as well as the means to restore their livelihood in the coming months”.

The assistance will benefit close to 6,000 people in the northern districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Munnar and Vavunia. It will be delivered mostly through cash-for-work programmes, a mechanism through which funds are channeled to beneficiaries in exchange for participating in community infrastructure projects. The money will help families meet their immediate food needs, while the disaster-resilient infrastructure built in the process will help mitigate future risks arising from extreme weather conditions. A special emphasis will be given to the most vulnerable villagers, and those who are unable to work will receive unconditional cash grants. Farmers who have lost their crops to the drought will also be provided with seeds for the next sowing season.

The project is being funded by the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO) through its Small Scale Response mechanism and will be implemented by ZOA, and international NGO which has a long established presence in Sri Lanka.

Background

This is the third consecutive year in which northern Sri Lanka is facing a natural disaster. Earlier, floods and an extended dry weather spell had already worn down the resilience of communities, who had only begun to recover from years of civil war. The extreme weather conditions have not only affected farmers, but also daily wage workers who rely on agriculture work for income. Besides, livestock herders and fishermen have also been hit as pastures have withered and water bodies remain parched.

ECHO's Small Scale Response fund is a global mechanism which allows ECHO to provide rapid funding of up to €300,000 for humanitarian aid in countries affected by natural and man-made disasters.

Since starting operations in Sri Lanka in 1994, the European Commission has provided over €166 million worth of humanitarian aid through ECHO

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