

UNFPA helps pregnant IDPs

Island, Wednesday, March 10, 2010

COLOMBO, 10 March - UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is stepping up its support for the health and safety of women and girls who are returning, particularly those who are pregnant, from the welfare camps in the North.

At least 2,500 pregnant women have moved out of camps for displaced since the start of the year, returning to their homes or moving in with host families. Some 150 will give birth in the next month, according to the UNFPA.

"Health services are limited in these resettled areas most health facilities were damaged during the conflict that ended last year, and with limited public transport, access to existing health services continues to be difficult.

"In response, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, provincial health officials and the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka, has begun to operate mobile reproductive health clinics in resettled areas, offering prenatal and postnatal care, voluntary family planning, services for HIV prevention and psychosocial counselling," it said.

In restoring health infrastructure, the UNFPA said it had provided a range of reproductive health equipment and supplies to the Mallavi Base Hospital and Kilinochchi General Hospital so that mothers can deliver their babies safely.

The Fund also continues to distribute personal hygiene packs for women and girls and maternity kits for pregnant women to help in maintaining personal hygiene.

After visiting several resettlement areas, UNFPA Representative Lene K. Christiansen said, "UNFPA is pleased to be working with our partners in restoring health services and ensuring that the unique health concerns of women and girls are not overlooked during the resettlement process."