

Official press Release from the DGHS Ministry of healthcare and nutrition on the current status of the IDP health care issue as of 29.10.2009 and the response to challenges.

With a view of addressing all the health care needs of the IDP population, health sector plans were implemented under the guidance of the national IDP steering Committee chaired by Dr. Ajith Mendis (DGHS) which meets once fortnightly in Colombo. Against the backdrop of rampant misinformation both locally and internationally it was deemed as of paramount importance that the national IDP steering Committee informs public of its activities periodically.

At present there are 175,000 IDP's (approximately), in all zones at Cheddikulam which is a reduction of the count of the population of nearly 35,000 from last fortnights. With the governments resettlement drive swinging into full action mode, in coming weeks more internal movements of population would take place. A resettlement kit inclusive of all necessary items for resettlement and a sum of money is handed over to the moved IDPs so they could immediately kick-start their natural habitation. In dealing with this humanitarian effort, in response to the ministry's call for assistance WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, Italian Govt., IOM, Sarvodaya and many other local and international agencies offered help and has to-date done tremendous amount of work for the betterment of the Healthcare facilities of the IDP's.

During the last many months Cheddikulam hospital has been fully revamped to cater for all the required needs of the existing IDP population especially since it was the closest Base Hospital to the welfare villages and the theatre is fully functional now. Provision of safe clean drinking water was a main priority requirement which was fulfilled with the establishment of the new water purification system established in the Cheddikulam Base Hospital premises with the support of the Italian Govt. The void that was prominent with the lack of accommodation for the medical staff was annulled by the speedy construction of the quarters for nursing officers, medical officers and consultants. Maternal and child health activities have taken a front seat approach with full efforts of the government and the international and local NGOs having taken all action necessary for the delivery of the comprehensive MCH package.

The new developments since last steering committee meeting:

A new Primary Health Centre was established with the assistance of the IOM (International Organization for Migration) in zone 6B and patient care activities have already started.

Provision of Artificial limbs to the IDP amputees was successfully conducted by the friends in need society (NGO) at the zone 1 Menkfarm hospital. This was the 4th program of its nature conducted by the NGO with the previous programs held in Mannar and Vavuniya in which nearly 260 amputees benefitted.



An event of significant note has been planned by “Vision 20-20” of the Ministry of Health with the collaboration of the college of Ophthalmologists with more than 100 cataract surgeries planned to be carried out at the new theatre complex at Cheddikulam hospital.

A rehabilitation program for ex- combatants has been initiated and stakeholder group meetings conducted. A full program for the rehabilitation and re-intergration would be launched soon with assistance of a willing donor agency as part of the resettlement process.

The Death rates of the IDP population has been static with equality noticed comparably with general population of the country.

The MOH would like to reiterate that the commitment of the MOH is unabatedly strong to provide Preventive and curative healthcare to the IDP population especially by establishing 26 healthcare centers in the IDP zones with dedicated health staff(119 medical officers, 7 consultants, 40 nursing officers, 39 Public Health midwives and 13 Public health Inspectors) . In spite of the initial difficulties noted and the many negative observations harped upon by many international observers, the MOH has pulled together all parties, International and Local under one umbrella and has served at this time of need quite honorably. The MOH has joined in the national efforts with co-effort from other sectors to bring solace, security and harmony to the population that had undergone these unfortunate circumstances.

This communiqué was prepared by the Disaster Preparedness and response Unit of MOH at the request of the DGHS Ministry of Health.