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Rebuilding the Lives of Fishermen of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu

40 sets of boats, engines and fishing nets were handed over to the fisherman, including the members of female headed households, in Killinochchi and Mullaitivu on 27 and 28 January 2015 by the UNHCR representative, M. Golam Abbas in the presence of Government Agent, District Secretary Mr. N. Vethanayakan, Divisional Secretaries – Maritimpattu and Poonakary, Commissioner of Cooperatives Societies of Northern Province, Fisheries Department Representatives, Staff of Sevalanka Foundation and Members of Fishermen Federations of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu.

Years of conflict, tsunami and multiple displacements have disrupted the economic and social lives of fisherman in the Northern Province. UNHCR assistance to the fisheries sector is geared towards reviving the livelihoods and improving the overall living conditions of returnee communities by creating immediate employment opportunities. UNHCR assistance includes distribution of fishing gear (fishing nets, boats and engines), construction of fully equipped ice plants, resting and auction areas for fishermen and capacity building of the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Federation. In 2014, UNHCR has invested over LKR 45,546,775 (USD 345,051) in the fisheries sector of the Northern Province benefiting 14,113 returnee families.

Delivering the keynote address during the handing over ceremony, UNHCR representative said *“UNHCR aims to assist both IDP and Refugee Returnees by providing them with the necessary tools and other resources, to seize opportunities and to become economically empowered.”* Also speaking at the occasion Government Agent Mullaitivu stated that the assistance provided by UNHCR had helped the fishing community to increase their economic opportunities.



End.

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