

## Government launches massive SA housing project

### Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakshe laid the foundation stone recently for The Salvation Army's Galagoda Wattha housing project in the Galle district of that country. This is the start of an entire community created for 1,000 families which will include houses, community centers, a medical clinic, playgrounds, income generation opportunities and other community infrastructure.

The 244-acre site allocated to The Salvation Army by the Sri Lankan government is currently a cinnamon and pepper plantation. It is prime land, ideal for housing thousands of people who lost everything in the tsunami which hit South Asia on December 26, 2004.



The launch of the housing project marks the turning point between relief and recovery/development in the international response to the disaster. It is one of the first major permanent housing projects to commence in Sri Lanka since the tragedy.

The way is now clear for thousands of people to begin the move out of their temporary accommodation in schools, tents or other shelters onto the plantation to help in the building. This will be a participatory process, with the families working alongside the contractors, and will enable those affected by the tsunami to be involved with the creation of their new community. This process will contribute to increased ownership and enhance interdependence.

Initially, tents will be supplied to the families, who will arrive in batches of 50, but within a month they will take up ownership of their new permanent homes.

The Salvation Army is grateful to the many international donors who continue to supply funds for the ongoing relief effort. Without this support the Galagoda Wattha housing project would not be possible.

— Sarah Miller, National Press Officer, United Kingdom Territory London, England