

PRESS RELEASE

Safe water for thousands: 1.66 Billion Rupee water project commissioned in Ampara

COLOMBO 7 January 2010 – Today, the Government of Sri Lanka and UNICEF officially commissioned a new water supply scheme in Ampara district.

The Thirukkovil Water treatment plant will provide safe drinking water to 38,000 people in the Thirukkovil area. In doing so the 1.66 billion rupee project, funded by UNICEF, will play a critical role in safe guarding the health of the region's children, greatly contributing to the reduction of the incidences of diarrhoea, hepatitis and other water related diseases. While also ensuring that local residents especially women and children, don't spend hours each day fetching water.

"This project will increase the water coverage from 58 to 90 per cent in this region, greatly improving the quality of life for the people" said the Minister of Water Supply and Drainage, Al-Haj Athaullah at the opening ceremony.

"Water borne diseases are one of the most serious threats to child health especially when there is limited access to safe water," said UNICEF's Representative in Sri Lanka, Philippe Duamelle. ". "Today the health and life of thousands of women and children will be enhanced by giving them access to safe water".

As humanity faces ever greater water challenges and difficulties on sanitation, projects that so greatly increase the supply of safe water become even more important.

The Thirukkovil supply scheme has the capacity to supply 6,500 cubic meters of fully treated drinking water to the Thirukkovil Divisional Secretariat area and suburbs. Before this project there was no reliable safe water supply in the area. Communities were depending on dugwells and other sources of water which covered only 58 per cent of the water supply needs of the region. With the Thirukkovil water supply scheme the coverage will now increase to 90 per cent.

The main components of the new project include:

- Sagamam Water Intake, consisting of pump house, generator room, and suction chamber.
- Thirukkovil Treatment Plant consisting of the aerator, sedimentator, laboratory, sludge disposal system.
- Thamaraiikulm site consisting of a 500 cubic meter tank for storing the treated water, generator room, pump house and a 2.7km pipeline connection.
- The scheme will distribute water to communities in Thirukkovil, Mandanai, Thambiluvil, Kudinilathidal, Vinayagapuram, Thamaraiikulam, Sangamamgramam and Sagamankandy areas.

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About UNICEF

UNICEF works in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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