



**For the first time 600 volunteers
assist in building 60 homes on ONE day for
Habitat for Humanity Youth BUILD 2015
*Record 600 volunteers building on one day on 21 March 2015***

Colombo, 21 March 2015 – For the first time in Sri Lanka hundreds of volunteers from across the island and overseas participated in Habitat for Humanity’s Youth BUILD 2015. This was one of the largest initiatives in Sri Lanka’s history, and not only assisted in the building of homes for internally displaced people in Trincomalee, but also served to bridge communities, build relationships and spread the spirit of volunteerism.

Habitat for Humanity Youth BUILD, now in its fourth year in the Asia-Pacific region, is the largest volunteer-driven movement in this area and draws support from young people in 15 countries and one Special Administrative Region. The campaign heightens awareness of the poverty housing situation in the Asia-Pacific region and inspires people to take action to tackle the growing problem. Each year, Habitat Youth BUILD raises the bar by inspiring more supporters to get involved in raising awareness, funds and support for Habitat’s cause in exciting ways.

Sri Lanka participated in this mammoth initiative for the first time this year. On Saturday 21st March, 600 young people volunteered their time to help build homes for 60 families in Muthur, Trincomalee. The volunteers were a diverse group of young people comprising young professionals from both the private and public sectors, students from universities and schools and international volunteers travelling to Sri Lanka especially for the build.

In addition to the volunteers, renowned actress and Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka’s Youth Ambassador, Pooja Umashanker was also on site. Pooja a strong advocate for Habitat had this to say - “Human beings. The single most biggest asset on planet earth. I know in this heart of mine that we are all called to be the ULTIMATE BEING. We are packed at inception with a potent element called LOVE. It’s with this potential, we at HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SRI LANKA walked into a beautiful village called SAMPOOR in Trincomalee. I believe the Youth of Sri Lanka PLAYED their part of spreading love in this village. They ACTED on the fact that every human has the RIGHT TO SHELTER and they have taken it upon themselves to SHARE the blessings that they have received freely out of this super awesome experience.”

Habitat Sri Lanka's National Director – Dinesh Kanagaratnam was very excited about the turnout, "When I look back, I would say that it is a great achievement. We got 500 youth to get up very early in the morning and come to a common pick-up point, so that we could all travel to Trincomalee. We left Colombo at 4am – all 24 buses! The 70 international volunteers (50 from the New York University of Abu Dhabi and 20 from Nagoya International School - Japan) joined us at the site. It was wonderful to see both schools and corporate organizations work together for a good cause. We saw the element of team building really being put into practice and this is the beautiful aspect of Habitat for Humanity's volunteer program. We urge you all to join the program and experience the difference it makes!"

The event was recognized by UN Global Compact (UNGC) as a monumental opportunity for corporate organizations to foster social responsibility and sustainability practices. A number of corporate organizations rallied behind the Habitat Youth Build, especially Cargills (Ceylon) PLC, who was the Platinum Sponsor. Other sponsors include Glitz (Gold Sponsor), Multilac (Silver Sponsor), Dipped Products PLC (Silver Sponsor) and TNL Radio and Rhythm FM (Radio Media Sponsors).

About Habitat Youth BUILD 2015

The Habitat for Humanity Youth BUILD 2015 movement invites young people across the Asia-Pacific region to rally against the plight of poverty by volunteering, fundraising and speaking out in support of families in need of decent homes. The campaign encourages caring and concerned youth to take action together to build homes, communities, on a Habitat build site and online their social networks.

habitatyouthbuild.org