

PRESS RELEASE

Mexican Donors See Their Funds Rebuild Homes and Lives in Post-Tsunami Aceh



Hand-over ceremony in Geunting Timur

Aceh Jaya, Indonesia, 26 June -- Delegates from an historic fundraising initiative in Mexico visited Aceh recently to see how they enabled survivors of the 2004 tsunami rebuild their homes. The funds were managed through UNDP and UN-HABITAT.

Six delegates from the fundraising campaign Alianza por Asia (Alliance for Asia) attended a colourful ceremony to celebrate the completion of 1,140 houses in Pidie, Aceh Jaya south of Banda Aceh. They were accompanied by the Vice Governor of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province, Muhammad Nazar and the Mexican Ambassador to Indonesia His Excellency Pedro Gonzales Rubio.

Alianza por Asia was formed in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. It is a joint initiative of 37 Mexican civil society organizations, foundations, companies, financial institutions and communications groups. The campaign raised more than US\$ 4 million in private donations from Mexican citizens to support the reconstruction of homes in Indonesia. It represented the first-ever public fundraising opportunity for the people of Mexico to contribute to humanitarian work outside their country.

The funds were channeled to the beneficiaries through UNDP/UN-HABITAT Aceh-Nias Settlements Support Programme (ANSSP), which awards grants for housing reconstruction and



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community infrastructure rehabilitation. For the Alianza por Asia delegates, their visit to Pidie was a chance to see exactly how their funding helped some of these victims of the Tsunami.



Ambassador Gonzales (2nd from right) and part of the Mexican delegation in front of a UN-HABITAT house

The Alianza por Asia delegation comprised of Mr Jose Ignacio Avalos, President of Un Kilo de Ayuda (One Kilo of Help); Mr Miguel Laporta, Senior Executive of Un Kilo de Ayuda; Mr Gabriel Altamirano, CEO of Televisa Foundation; Mr Jorge Machado, CEO of Azteca Foundation; Ms Liliana Garcia, CEO of Fomento Social BANAMEX; and Mr Miguel A Toledo, videographer of TELEVISA.

Upon arrival in Pidie, the delegation was welcomed by Mr Mirza Ismail Bupati (District Chief) of Pidie and Mr Salam Ishak, Bhupati of Pidie Jaya. They also participated in the ceremony to handover of the keys to the representatives from nine villages in Pidie where the houses have been reconstructed. The delegation then visited Geunteng Timur village, where they attended a colourful housing completion ceremony attended by hundreds of villagers. Souvenirs were also exchanged and speeches were made.

José Ignacio Avalos, a leading delegate from the Alianza por Asia campaign, explained: "After the tsunami, I felt I had to do something to help the people of Aceh. No matter where we are in the world, we have a strong connection as human beings. There are a lot of similarities between Pidie and Mexico, and I feel happy to be here and to see these houses have now been built."

As part of his speech, Binod Shrestha, Programme Manager UN-HABITAT, said: "This fundraising was a genuine expression of helping hands to those in need. The people of Aceh and this programme would like to thank the people of Mexico."



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The Vice Governor, too, expressed his profound gratitude to the Mexican people and had a message for the people of Aceh: "From now on we have to start to be self-reliant. We should have the courage to change our own destiny, so that we don't depend on the assistance from others in the future."

Mirza Ismail, the Bupati of Pidie district, stressed that the best way of honoring the Mexican donation would be a thorough maintenance for the reconstructed houses.

The visit to Pidie formed part of the group's week-long trip to Indonesia. During this time, the delegation also met with UNDP Resident Representative Bo Asplund and senior officers of BRR, the Aceh Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency.

The UNDP/UN-HABITAT ANSSP programme started in February 2005. The programme supports a process of Community Action Planning (CAP) to ensure a needs-driven, participatory approach to reconstructing houses and community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the tsunami. The programme's strategy ensures that affected families are at the centre of the recovery process. To date, 3,447 houses have been completed in Aceh and Nias, and a further 1,012 are currently under completion on the islands of Nias and Simeulue. Funding from Allianz por Asia to ANSSP has contributed to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of 2,012 houses in Aceh and North Sumatra provinces.