Specialised care for displaced children

Tuesday, 07 July 2009
Last Updated Tuesday, 07 July 2009

Over 10,000 children screened Teams to carry out assessment programs The Government has laid emphasis on the protection and care of conflict affected and displaced children by deploying teams consisting of specialized personnel from the fields of health, child care, law enforcement etc. to address their emotional, physical, psychological and social needs.

National Child Protection Authority Chairman Jagath Wellawatta said these teams are to carry out assessment programs and address short-term and long-term needs, based on relevant reports on a priority basis. More than 10,000 children have been screened so far, with their short-term needs being addressed and reports concerning their current status being obtained to make arrangements for their long-term needs, he added. These special teams which include pediatricians would look into IDP children's physical and mental health conditions, possible abuse, identify tsunami and un-accompanied children and other needs. Immediate attention would be given to the safety of orphans and children separated from their parents to ensure that they do not fall prey to undesirable elements. Priority would also be given to reunification after identifying either their parents or their next of kin (only in selected cases) without doubt, Wellawatta added. According to him, the teams are working at the Ramanthapuram Welfare Village, and are proceeding according to demarcated lots visiting every household. The screening process in this welfare village is almost complete and officials would begin their mission in another village soon, he added. These teams consisting of personnel from Colombo are sent to the relevant areas on a weekly basis with one team taking over as the other team leaves after one week. These visits are to continue on a cyclical basis with the teams revisiting the previously inspected villages to ensure continuity. The teams will also provide immediate health needs and recommend hospitalization for certain cases if the need arises. Well trained volunteer teams are to be deployed to carry forward the work and ensure continuity. The progress of the program which commenced on June 1, is being supervised by a 20 member panel from universities, the National Child Protection Authority and the Department of Probation and Childcare Department. The Government has also taken steps to provide unhindered access to education for displaced schoolgoing children. The Examinations Department has started a process to equip children with knowledge and prepare those who are to sit the upcoming GCE A/L (Advanced Level), G.C.E.O/L (Ordinary Level) and Year Five Scholarship examinations. They have distributed educational material including past examination papers and model answer sheets containing guidelines among students to prepare for the examinations in addition to special classes. A temporary identity card for examination purposes is to be introduced to the candidates. A total number of 750 students housed in camps are to face this year's G.C.E. A/L while around 5,000 students will sit the year 5 examination. Courtesy: Daily News Courtesy: defence.lk