A New Home, 
A New Life and New Hope

Nona Kasina, a 35-year-old housewife from Talapitya, Galle, is one among the thousands of tsunami survivors in Sri Lanka looking forward to the year ahead in her new home. The tsunami destroyed the roof over Nona Kasina’s head but not her spirit. The mother of three, bereft of all hope just a year ago, celebrated moving into her new home this October with a housewarming party. Invites included friends, relatives as well as local government and UN-HABITAT officials who helped Nona realize her dream — a new home. Nona’s husband, the family’s breadwinner, was out on work most of the time as the house was built. Nona knew little about buildings or about managing large sums of money. But confronted with the task, she learnt to cope. Along with her daughter Safina, a high-school student, Nona helped out with house plans, oversaw the construction work, and managed the funds — SLR 250,000 given by UN-HABITAT. “Our new home has a higher roof than what we had earlier. Now, it is cooler indoors. The kitchen is more spacious and has a chimney. The new toilet has better drainage,” point out Nona and her daughter.

As the lead agency within the United Nations system for coordinating activities in the field of human settlements, UN-HABITAT is part of the gargantuan effort to place communities and families like Nona’s at the centre of the post-crisis rehabilitation underway in Sri Lanka.