Situation Overview

Four days after a 6.9-magnitude earthquake struck in Matanao, Davao Del Sur in Mindanao, more than 124,000 people need assistance in Region XI (Davao). Over 33,000 people are displaced, of whom nearly 15,000 people are staying in evacuation centres while over 18,000 people are staying with host families. Numbers are expected to rise as local authorities continue to assess damage and validate the number of those affected.

The 15 December earthquake has compounded previous displacement as well as damage to homes, schools and infrastructure from three strong earthquakes which occurred in October. Most of those displaced by the December earthquake currently camp out in makeshift tents in open spaces near their homes, or in evacuation centres, usually open areas near their barangay (village) hall or church, adding to displaced communities who lost their homes and have been staying in tents and evacuation centres since October.

As of 19 December, over 14,000 homes have sustained damage, of which more than 2,700 are destroyed, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). Two hundred ninety schools are also damaged in Regions XI and XII (SOCKSARGEN) and concerns have been raised by parents regarding the building structures as tremors continue to occur. Since the earthquake struck, almost 800 aftershocks have been recorded, including two greater than magnitude 5.

Government response and humanitarian coordination

Local and provincial authorities continue to lead response efforts, assisted by the Philippine Red Cross and humanitarian partners. National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (NDRRMCs) continue to monitor the situation and are distributing shelter and relief items, while the Department of Health Region XI continues to assess health facilities, provide health and psychosocial support, and distribute medicine and relief assistance. Police and fire protection authorities are assisting with the distribution and delivery of relief aid and with rapid damage assessment. As of 19 December, the Department of Social Welfare and Development distributed food and relief items to affected families worth PhP3 million ($59,000). The private sector under the auspices of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation has provided tents and bed linens.

The Mindanao Humanitarian Team, composed of in-country UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations, is assisting local and provincial authorities, including by conducting a rapid needs assessment together with local authorities in the most affected municipalities. Initial assessments from humanitarian partners report that priority needs of affected people are tents/tarpaulins, water, water containers/jerry cans, emergency lights, mosquito nets and blankets. Livelihoods have also been affected since the October earthquakes, especially daily wage earners working in structures that were severely damaged and are still closed, such as public markets. As strong aftershocks continue, the safety and psychological well-being of affected communities is a concern.

For more information, contact:
Mark Bidder, Head of Office, bidder@un.org, Mobile: +63 917 174 3536
Gina Maramag, Public Information Officer, maramag@un.org, Mobile: +63 917 174 3546