High-Level CERF Mid-Term Review
Field Mission Report
Super Typhoon Goni (Rolly) and Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses)
Albay and Catanduanes
27 - 31 January 2021
Super Typhoon Goni (Roly) and Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses)

REGION II (CAGAYAN VALLEY)
Floods and landslides wreaked havoc in the northern provinces of Cagayan and Isabela on 13 November due to the rains brought by Vamco (Ulysses) and previous tropical cyclones and depressions.

The already swollen Cagayan River in northern Luzon rose quickly, inundating low-lying communities when authorities released water from Magat Dam, one of the largest in the country, to prevent the dam from reaching its critical spilling level. Local authorities called it the worst in the region in four decades.

CENTRAL LUZON & NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
Large swaths of Region III (Central Luzon) and the National Capital Region (NCR) were submerged in floods in scenes reminiscent of Tropical Storm Ketsana/Ondoy in 2009. In Marikina City (NCR), the mayor reported that 40,000 houses were either partially or fully submerged.

REGION V (BICOL)
Heavy rains from Vamco affected the Bicol provinces where flooding incidents were reported in 37 municipalities. Catanduanes, which was the worst-hit province by Typhoon Goni, experienced flash floods and landslides. The provincial governor lamented that response efforts are back to zero as house repairs and temporary shelters were again destroyed.

Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) 11 November
Super Typhoon Goni (Roly) 01 November
Field Mission Report: High-Level CERF Mid-Term Review

27-28 January 2021: Province of Albay
29-31 January 2021: Province of Catanduanes

Key Participants: United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator Ambassadors of Canada and Germany, Heads of Agencies/Representatives of OCHA, IOM, UNICEF and WFP as well as other partners including Philippine Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services-Philippines, A Single Drop for Safe Water and Coastal Core.

INTRODUCTION

From 27 to 31 January, the RC/HC led a high-level CERF mid-term review mission organized by OCHA to Albay and Catanduanes. He was joined by Ambassadors of Canada and Germany, representatives of UNICEF, IOM, WFP, OCHA as well as implementing partners.

In the aftermath of Super Typhoon Goni, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) approved an allocation of $3.1 million (PhP 150 million) for the Philippines to provide life-saving assistance to 55,000 most affected people in Albay and Catanduanes. The funding allocation to UNICEF, IOM and the WFP allowed the three agencies to prioritize water supplies, sanitation services, hygiene, emergency shelter and food to address time-critical needs.

KEY OUTCOMES

• The high-level field visits in several areas (Barangays or local villages) in provinces of Albay and Catanduanes and the conduct of CERF mid-term reviews were well received by local authorities, partners, and beneficiaries. The activities were recognized as timely in highlighting initial achievements and mindful of the key critical gaps as CERF implementing agencies and local partners continue to provide lifesaving assistance to the affected population, at-risk communities, and people-in-need.

• Adding to the success of the high-level field CERF mid-term review is the recurring recognition of how implementing agencies and partners have valued localization of aid and the importance of re-aligning key projects that would continue to augment, complement and supplement overall local governments’ response actions.

• The first allocation of CERF intervention in Bicol was highly complementary with the overall local government’s humanitarian response and recovery actions. It was appreciated for its added value in the immediate provision of support in forms of repair or reconstruction of WASH facilities, set-up of emergency shelter and distribution of repair kits, cash assistance for emergency livelihood, psychosocial support to at-risk communities, and cross-cutting protection support through community engagement as well as accountability to affected population.

• The local authorities, partners, beneficiaries in Albay and Catanduanes valued the needs-driven approach in designing response and recovery interventions. The approval of the CERF and the prioritization of lifesaving activities by UN and local partners were consistent with the results of the inter-agency joint conduct of needs and vulnerability assessment days after series of typhoon landfalls.

• Both the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office of the two provinces have acknowledged the systematic, reliable, and predictable use of a common tool as well as the mobilization of a well-balanced team working with the government in conducting assessment. The joint undertaking has resulted in a more targeted, contextualized, and calibrated typhoon response plan. Provincial authorities recommend building capacity of local responders to conduct rapid needs assessment in less than 72 hours after the disaster.

• The CERF in Bicol once again showcased the high standard collaborative undertakings of UN agencies (IOM, UNICEF, and WFP) with local partners such as Philippine Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services-Philippines, A Single Drop for Safe Water and Coastal Core. The overall implementation of CERF has so far sustained the spirit of bringing various agencies to work together to support affected local governments.

• One good practice that has emerged was the use of a common service platform to register beneficiaries for cash assistance.
Field Mission Report: High-Level CERF Mid-Term Review

Using cash assistance to support the most vulnerable families affected by the typhoons has proven to be an effective and dignified way to provide aid while helping boost local economy. The combined CERF projects of WFP, IOM, and UNICEF in Albay and Catanduanes are utilizing WFP’s SCOPE as a flexible and reliable beneficiary registration and transfer management platform. Joint approach to cash interventions is paying dividends by preventing duplication, making the beneficiary registration process easier as it is done only once and using a unified questionnaire developed by the three agencies.

- There are other collective initiatives that the CERF implementing agencies and local partners are currently implementing in various areas. These include using the Child and Women Friendly spaces for cross-cutting interventions and using of a common service platform to conduct series of community engagement as part of CERF’s accountability. Both of these examples are potentially good practices as they consistently stress collective approach and maximize local resources as well as capacities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **On convergence, collective approach and use of common service platforms:**
  - The use of SCOPE for beneficiary registration and information management continues to create an enabling environment towards a digital database for beneficiaries under CERF intervention with the end goal of improving and preparing for future emergency and recovery responses or even specialized interventions.
  - The use of Child and Women-Friendly Space or CFS for cross-sectoral interventions (community engagement, psychosocial support, and capacity building) continues to gain positive momentum in supporting the vulnerable groups in various areas.

- **Conduct of a more grounded, participatory, and sincere Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Population activities (inclusive access to participation, information needs, preferred communication channels and overall accountability mechanisms) remains committed to the CERF’s overall centrality of protection.**

- **On general coordination and humanitarian-development nexus:**
  - All CERF’s implementing agencies continue to maximize established partnership and local coordination mechanism with the provincial government and authorities, other actors/organizations, and networks at the field level.
  - CERF is the entry platform used to provide lifesaving assistance and this will eventually link up to the provision of support to early recovery especially on local economy, livelihood assistance, relocation support to local government for permanently displaced population from other humanitarian and development agencies.
  - In terms of early recovery and long-term solution, both the field visit and mid-term review highlighted the need to:
    - Support repair or purchase of fishing boats and nets for the fisherfolks in Albay and Catanduanes. For the poorest families, fishing remains the main livelihood or source of income.

- There are other collective initiatives that the CERF implementing agencies and local partners are currently implementing in various areas. These include using the Child and Women Friendly spaces for cross-cutting interventions and using of a common service platform to conduct series of community engagement as part of CERF’s accountability. Both of these examples are potentially good practices as they consistently stress collective approach and maximize local resources as well as capacities.
• Strong community engagement and consistent accountability to affected population activities have provided CERF’s implementors feedback from affected communities and opportunities to address those based from preferred channels.

• **Highlights from Albay**
  - CERF serves as the trigger to advocate for strong and interdependent humanitarian-development nexus. Some agencies have secured additional funding from DFAT and USAID to expand ongoing response and explore potential development intervention.
  - The provincial government recognized the catalytic value of CERF and how it unlocked other bilateral donor funding. It recommended for CERF to consider improving its early action criteria and act as a guarantor that unlocks multilateral funding mechanisms with similar protocol and approach that support disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and local resilience.
  - Establish permanent relocation and construct permanent evacuation centers which are two durable solutions identified by the disaster risk reduction management office of Albay. The local authorities have secured purchasing of the possible residential or community lots but will need additional funding support to construct, repair or retrofit the houses.

• **On localization, partnership, and ownership:**
  - Engagement with the faith-based groups, civil society organizations and other local networks has been widely recognized in the overall CERF projects’ implementation.
  - CERF project implementation in Bicol has been supportive of localized aid approach resulting in inclusive partnerships with local authorities and maximizing local capacities and resources.

• Construct core permanent shelter with slab roof, which has been locally tested to be capable of withstanding impacts of typhoons.
• **Highlights from Catanduanes**
  - Engaging development actors to support recovery and rehabilitation of Catanduanes.
  - Invest in early recovery to sustain positive gain in addressing lifesaving needs of the at-risk communities.
  - Focus on livelihood, permanent shelter, relocation, repair of schools, and enhancement or building of permanent evacuation centers.
  - Restore or support the recovery of abaca industry in Catanduanes, as 80 per cent of abaca plants has been damaged by Super Typhoon Rolly. Abaca takes two to three years to grow back. The local authorities are asking for support in setting up abaca nurseries.
  - Needs assessment conducted in the first few days was instrumental for ensuring a targeted and calibrated response plan. Provincial authorities in Catanduanes recommend building capacity of local responders to conduct rapid needs assessment in less than 72-hours after the disaster.