Press Release

UN and humanitarian partners in the Philippines call for US$107.2 million to provide life-saving aid to 530,000 people in areas devastated by Typhoon Rai (Odette)

Manila, 24 December 2021--The Humanitarian Country Team in the Philippines today launched the Humanitarian Needs and Priorities plan to respond to the needs of 530,000 people in the worst affected areas in CARAGA and Eastern Visayas following the onslaught of Super Typhoon Rai (local name Odette).

Response efforts are already underway after this Super Typhoon made landfall on 16 December, pummeling six of the Philippines’ 17 regions. At least 177 persons were killed and 275 injured; over 630,000 people were displaced, with 372,000 of them taking shelter in evacuation centers; and some 200,000 houses were damaged. Some three million people, including one million children, were left needing assistance.

The Humanitarian Needs and Priorities plan (HNP) calls for US$107.2 million to support the Government in responding to the most urgent humanitarian needs for the next six months. The plan has been developed based on preliminary assessment findings and early estimates of people in need to enable humanitarian partners to kick-start immediate life-saving and protection activities, focusing on women, girls, and people with disability living in areas hardest hit by Typhoon Rai.

On 22 and 23 December, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez went on a mission to CARAGA and Surigao Province to witness first-hand the damage wrought by the typhoon. During the mission, he spoke with local officials, frontline responders, and typhoon-affected people.

“I saw roads covered by debris, houses without roofs and people on the border of Butuan and Surigao begging for water and food,” said Gonzalez.

“This super typhoon evoked memories of [Typhoon] Haiyan,” added Gonzalez. “While the Government was more prepared for a typhoon of this magnitude this time around, the needs remain overwhelming.”

With the Government leading response efforts, the HNP seeks to provide for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), life-saving food needs, emergency shelter, including the efficient management of evacuation camps, decentralized communication to restore access to islands and places which are currently cut off, and support for coordination by the government, among others.

“The response set out in the plan will also prioritize COVID-19 protective measures,” said Gonzalez. “This is a crisis within a crisis. It happened at the end of the year when the Government has been able to keep down COVID-19 infections and inoculated a significant number of the population. We will work with the Department of Health (DOH) to ensure that these hard-won gains are not lost.”
The UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) is allocating the US$12 million of humanitarian funds to UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, and IOM. CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to ensure that urgently needed humanitarian assistance reaches people caught up in crises. CERF’s Rapid Response window allows the UN to kick-start relief efforts immediately in a coordinated and prioritized response when a new crisis emerges.

On behalf of the Philippine Government, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. expressed appreciation for the CERF support. “Typhoon Odette has brought great suffering to Filipinos who are looking forward to a better Christmas this year following the dramatic reduction in the number of COVID-19 cases and the progress made by the government in its vaccination drive. But with the support of the UN and humanitarian partners, we will get back on our feet.” Locsin said.

Notes to editors


Photos are available here: https://bit.ly/3z27OHF

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