Quarterly update on emergency response and preparedness in the Philippines

The first quarter of 2012 sees another natural disaster strike the Philippines

On 6 February, a moderate size, shallow earthquake (6.9 magnitude) struck off the coast of Tayasan in the Negros Oriental province, Region VII. This triggered landslides on steep slopes in the municipalities of Guihulngan, La Libertad and Jimalalud. Within 24 hours of the main shock, 896 aftershocks were recorded by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). The earthquake damaged roads, bridges, and weak structures and disrupted power and water supplies, communications, and port operations, affecting more than 320,000 people.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) immediately activated its Emergency Operations Center, providing targeted assistance to Local Government Units (LGUs) in undertaking search and rescue operations and distributing relief items to those in need.

The joint rapid needs assessment conducted by the NDRRMC and the Philippine Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) identified camp management for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a priority. Coordination mechanisms for both government line agencies and other service providers needed strengthening.

Based on assessment findings and in response to a specific request from the Government, IOM and WFP provided food, shelter repair kits, large tents and
FUNDING

Central Mindanao

37 million requested (US$)

4 million funded (US$)

11% covered

**Six months after typhoons Nesat and Nalgae, assessment positive with regard to damaged basic facilities, but need for repair of infrastructure remains in the provinces of Quirino, Bulacan, Pampanga and Ifugao**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key statistics: Negros Oriental Earthquake</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of evacuees in Evacuation Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of evacuees outside of Evacuation Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of totally damaged houses</td>
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<td>No. of partially damaged houses</td>
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Source: NDRRMC, 20 February 2012

**Joint NDRRRC-HCT rapid needs assessment of Negros Oriental Earthquake**

| Dates | February 13–14, 2012 |
| Locations (municipality) | Guihulngan City, La Libertad, Jimalalud, Tayasan |
| Assessors | OCD, DSWD, ACF, IOM, OCHA, Plan, WFP |
| Logistic support | Philippine Air Force |
| Immediate needs identified for IDPs | Food, shelter repair kits, WASH kits, NFIs, psycho-social support, camp management, IDP profiling, coordination |

Generators. IOM and OCHA trained government officials on camp management, IDP profiling, information management and database management.

During the first quarter of 2012, PHIVOLCS recorded 24 earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 5.0 in regions II, IV-B, V, VII, VIII, XII, and XIII (see map on page 1). PHIVOLCS is closely monitoring the activity of the Kanlaon Volcano. This volcano lies between Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental provinces, and may have been stirred by the Negros Oriental earthquake. Some scientists suggest that the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck about 100 kilometers northeast of Pinatubo in July 1990 influenced the volcano's eruption one year later, in June 1991. [Sources: NDRRMC, PHIVOLCS].

**Follow-up needs assessment on Typhoons Nesat and Nalgae**

The Government and the HCT strengthened their collaboration on the rapid needs assessment throughout the 2011 rainy season by jointly documenting the impact of natural disasters and identifying the needs of those affected. With improved validation and analysis of the assessment information, the effort led to a quicker prioritization of needs, which guided collective humanitarian response planning.

In 2012, the NDRRMC and HCT have furthered this collaboration by conducting a Multi-Cluster Follow-Up Assessment on Typhoons Nesat and Nalgae (locally known as Pedring and Quiel). The objective was to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of early recovery and rehabilitation needs six months after the typhoons battered northern Luzon. It also surveyed residual humanitarian needs that may have been under-assessed or under-served in the earlier stages of the emergency.

The outcome highlights that basic facilities, such as electricity and water supply systems and health services have been fully restored in all assessed provinces of Quirino, Bulacan, Pampanga, and Ifugao. However, a significant proportion of damaged roads and bridges have not been repaired. In Ifugao, agricultural productivity in the remote communities continues to be significantly affected by the damage to the irrigation system. The four provinces also need targeted interventions to improve access to livelihood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint NDRRMC/HCT rapid needs assessments undertaken in 2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disaster/Title</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flooding/Joint Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>Flooding/Joint Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash floods, flooding/Rapid Needs Assessment</td>
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Source: Various assessment reports
On 28 February, the Government launched the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2011-2028

opportunities that will strengthen the resilience of communities to natural disasters.

The assessment report has been shared with the development community through the UN Country Team to inform long-term disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness programming.

Enhancing national and local capacity for emergency response

On 28 February, the Government launched the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2011-2028 (DRRM Plan), which sets out goals and objectives for reducing disaster risks in the Philippines. The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) led the formulation of this plan, as stipulated in the Republic Act 10121 (also known as the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, approved in May 2010). The Plan is based on the NDRRM Framework, which is the principal guide to DRRM programming in the country. It will be orchestrated through national and sub-national conferences on DRRM and climate change adaptations, as well as action planning by the four Vice-Chairs of the NDRRMC.

The HCT is ready to support and complement the Government’s efforts in implementing the DRRM Plan. Activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of the government and humanitarian community to respond to emergencies have been ongoing. Among these activities are the NDRRMC/Inter-Agency Simulation Exercise led by OCD and WFP (24-26 January, Subic Bay) and the upcoming Balikatan 2012 Command Post Exercise on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (16-27 April, Manila) led by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the United States Pacific Command. The latter will have a focus on multinational civil-military coordination between the armed forces, government departments and international humanitarian partners. This will be achieved by using a scenario of a massive earthquake and tsunami hitting Metro Manila.

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Washi (known locally as Sendong), and in order to provide a more coherent and coordinated assistance to the Government, the HCT is making a consolidated effort to ramp up its response preparedness. The Philippines has been selected as one of the pilot countries for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Initiative on the Development of National and Local Capacity for Emergency Preparedness. The initiative is a call from UN Member States for the international community to support the national and local authorities to enhance preparedness. In this way, countries can fulfill their key role as first responders in emergencies and coordinators of international support.

The Philippine technical team, co-chaired by FAO and WFP, supported by OCHA and the UN Coordination Office as the Secretariat, will drive this initiative forward in the coming months in close consultation with OCD and key government response agencies.

Northern Mindanao – Washi overview

More than 1,200 families continue to reside in school premises

More than three months after Tropical Storm Washi hit the Island of Mindanao and affected the livelihoods of some 600,000 people, more than 283,000 families are still...
While preparations for the next school year are about to start, a total of 17 schools remain in use as emergency shelters. Failure to address shelter issues is likely to lengthen the emergency phase.

Inadequate conditions in the emergency tent sites and the IDPs’ prolonged stay in evacuation centers, including school premises, continue to be the key concern for the Washi response.

The use of schools as temporary shelter may have a knock-on effect may have implications for the new school year, which starts in June. Many activities are planned on campus during the summer holiday period, including summer camps, cleaning, and the preparation for the next school year, beginning in June. It is crucial that the IDPs can move to transitional shelters by the end of March and the Government and the humanitarian community are trying to speed up the relocation of IDPs from schools in...
The WASH cluster continues to support local authorities rebuild the water supply infrastructure in Iligan

both Iligan and Cagayan de Oro (CDO).

Earlier this month, 87 families staying at Ubaido Laya Elementary School in Iligan and 41 families residing in Maqabalan Elementary School in CDO were relocated to temporary shelters in their respective cities. In CDO, a further 12 schools are still occupied by 631 families and another five in Iligan are home to 614 families.

The construction of permanent houses in CDO and Iligan is ongoing, with the Department of Public Works and Highways carrying out site development. In CDO, the first 550 families are expected to move into their permanent homes by the end of April. The beneficiaries themselves are constructing the homes through cash-for-work programmes.

Re-doubling efforts to restore the water supply system in Iligan City

Washi damaged the main drinking water supply system in Iligan City, including three major production wells and the associated power supply in Upper Hinaplanon. The storm destroyed the Motor Control Center and transformers, and damaged distribution pipes and connections to various barangays. As a result, the water supply was cut off in 10 out of 28 barangays served in Iligan.

Since Washi, the Iligan City Water Service (ICWS) and humanitarian agencies have been trucking water at a cost of approximately US$2,000 a day. With the help of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster, in partnership with the Humanitarian Response Consortium (HRC)/Oxfam and funded by UNICEF, ICWS has attempted to get the water supply system back on line by using a generator, while the permanent power infrastructure is being repaired using $370,000 from the National Calamity Fund.

When the generator and pumps were hooked up after the initial cleaning of the wells, there was no flow of water. Since then, a number of attempts have been made to resolve the problem, including dredging the silt from the river and further cleaning wells using an air compressor. The repair of the pump next week is hoped to restore a good flow of water.

The next phase of the project is to repair and re-establish pipes and connections in the barangays. Cash-for-work and food-for-work programmes will increase the size of the workforce under the technical direction of the ICWS to clear debris, haul materials and look for leaks.

This project highlights the importance of working together and establishing strong relationships amongst all partners, in this case, the ICWS, HRC and the WASH cluster.

City authorities in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan take on cluster system leadership

On 21 March at the City Hall, cluster system responsibility for CDO was officially transferred from Region X authorities to the City Government. In the presence of the Vice Mayor Ian Acenas, LGUs took the lead of the 12 clusters activated during the Washi emergency response. During this session, the regional units (OCD, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Labor and Employment) reiterated their commitment to the operation and future support to the new cluster leads. International organizations, active as co-leads, were also present, welcoming the transfer of responsibility and committing to working closely with their new partners.
In Iligan, the Mayor had appointed representatives of the LGUs as cluster leads as early as 15 February. Nevertheless, Region X authorities continue engage in the operation and support the City Government.

In mid-April, at the request of OCD, OCHA will organise a three-day training for the regional and local authorities in CDO and Iligan aimed at reinforcing local capacity and as part of the preparedness effort. The first day will be dedicated to the familiarisation on the Cluster Approach and its inscription in the national law, the second will focus on needs assessments, and the third will review information management technology and products in the context of a humanitarian emergency. This workshop will involve all cluster leads and selected technical personnel.

**Action Review: Lessons to learn from the Washi response**

On 22 and 23 March in CDO, OCHA organized the “Action Review Workshop” as part of the Washi humanitarian response. The 150 participants included representatives from the civil society; local, regional, and national government; and the national and international humanitarian community. The exercise provided an opportunity to obtain, document, and analyze events that occurred during the response. It also enabled relevant actors to learn from humanitarian actions, initiatives, successes, and challenges. The issues of preparedness, needs assessment, coordination, information management, resource mobilization, and reporting were among the topics addressed by the cluster working groups. The findings and recommendations will fuel the government-led Lessons Learned and Contingency Planning workshop to be held later this year.

**Central Mindanao**

**Peace process between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front**

From 19 to 21 March, the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Peace Panels met for the 26th round of talks in Kuala Lumpur. Discussions continued on substantive issues such as power, wealth sharing and governance. The parties agreed to the request of the Office of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to sit in as an observer during the talks. The Terms of Reference for the two consultants who will be part of their respective delegations were also signed. The next round of talks will take place in April 2012.

Earlier on 14 March, the International Monitoring Team (IMT) Batch Seven arrived in Cotabato City. The IMT is mandated by both peace panels to monitor the implementation of earlier agreements. IMT’s monitoring activities include security, socio-economic agreements, humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development, as well as civilian protection.

Part of the complementary work in support of the peace process is the government’s PAMANA (PAyapa at MAsaganangPamayaNAn/Peaceful and Resilient Communities) programme. One of its major objectives is to promote good governance by ensuring that communities, particularly those in conflict-affected areas, are served by responsive governments and benefit from transparent and accountable resource allocation. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and central Mindanao is part of the PAMANA zones and have thus far received assistance for 68 barangays.

**More explosions of improvised explosive devices in Cotabato City**

On 18 March, a grenade exploded near the Cotabato City Hall, injuring the security guard. On 22 March, two more grenades were found and detonated in barangay Bagua, Cotabato City. This was after a two-week hiatus from improvised explosive device explosions.

**Rido (clan fighting)**

In North Cotabato province, the Maraguiar and the Benasing families from Pigcawayan municipality decided to end their decade-old armed land dispute. The reconciliation ceremony held on 11 March was facilitated by the government’s military arm and the MILF.
In Rajah Buayan municipality in Maguindanao province, most of the families displaced in the first week of March due to a land and border dispute have returned to their barangay of origin. Around 177 families remain displaced, including those staying in host communities.

On 18 March, displacement was reported in Carmen municipality in North Cotabato after armed tensions broke out between two families. The municipal LGU immediately distributed relief supplies to 166 IDP families. On 28 March, DSWD XII and WFP reported that approximately 342 IDP families have been displaced due to this rido.

The Central Emergency Response Fund allocates US$3.9 million for humanitarian relief in central Mindanao

In March, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated $3.9 million against the Philippines (Mindanao) Humanitarian Action Plan 2012 from the underfunded emergencies window. Following a prioritization process led by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator at the HCT, six UN agencies and IOM received funding. UNHCR received a grant of $899,000 to support protection activities of civilian communities affected by and at risk of displacement in Mindanao, benefiting more than 150,000 people. WFP was given $893,000 to provide assistance to 398,000 IDPs, returnees and other food insecure households, including 79,000 children under the age of 5. UNICEF was provided $800,000 to provide clean water, sanitation and hygiene interventions for affected families.

A grant of $500,000 was given to IOM for emergency shelter and information management support. FAO received $297,000 to restore agricultural livelihoods in conflict-and food-affected communities. A grant of $297,000 was given to UNFPA to provide more than 17,000 people access to reproductive health services, while another $100,000 was given to the agency to address gender-based violence prevention and response to cases among internally displaced persons. Funds totalling $271,000 will support WHO’s efforts to provide access to essential health care for 120,000 people, including 24,000 children under the age of 5.

The CERF is a humanitarian fund established by the UN to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. Since the establishment of the Fund in 2006, the Philippines has received $35.9 million of which $11.3 million were granted in 2011. The Philippines is also one of the 126 countries that donate to the Fund [Sources: CERF].

The Government and the Mindanao Humanitarian Team kick start the contingency plan review

The Mindanao Contingency Plan developed in 2010 is currently being revised. The Mindanao Humanitarian Team (MHT) and the government will jointly comprise a Technical Working Group to plan this review. The MHT met for the third time on 14 March to discuss possible scenarios for the 2012 Contingency Plan. This review process is led by OCHA.