

Philippines Response to Tropical Storm Washi

Summary Report 12 January 2012



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THE DISASTER

Tropical Storm Washi (known locally as *Sendong*) swept across northern Mindanao from 16 to 18 December 2011. Washi had a devastating impact on many communities, which were not used to coping with storms of this magnitude. According to the latest estimates by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), some 1,141,222 people were affected by Washi, with 1,257 people dead, 173 missing, and 6,048 injured. Most of the casualties were in the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, where heavy rains caused flash floods in three major rivers. Remote areas outside these two cities were also affected.

Up to 430,000 people fled their homes and sought refuge in Evacuation Centres (ECs), with host families or in makeshift shelters. In addition to the 51,721 houses destroyed (14,705 of them totally and another 37,016 partially), the storm washed away bridges and made many roads impassable, cutting off some of the isolated and remote communities. The Department of Agriculture confirmed that some 8,064 hectares of crops (rice, corns, vegetables, fruit and root crop) were destroyed, along with twelve hectares of freshwater production and fishponds. The damage to infrastructure and livelihoods is estimated at US\$ 32.6 million.

THE RESPONSE TO DATE

The Government responded quickly to the disaster, drawing on a wide range of national, regional and local assets, and launched search and rescue, debris clearance and infrastructure rehabilitation in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. **The NDRRMC estimates that, as of 10 January, the Government and aid organisations have reached 429,309 people through various types of assistance, including shelter, food, water, non-food items (NFIs) and health and psycho-social services.**

The initial joint assessment, conducted by the Government and aid organisations within two days of the onset of the disaster, identified priority needs and vulnerable groups requiring urgent, life-saving assistance. The assessment found that some 370,000 people required immediate shelter and NFIs support and that 250,000 people needed emergency food assistance. Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene for some 150,000 affected people was also identified as a priority. Other important needs included: emergency health services; protection; logistics; and, coordination.

Since the onset of the emergency, the members of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management, NFI and Emergency Shelter cluster have focused on assisting the authorities with management of the ECs and identifying temporary and long-term solutions for the displaced. The cluster has been supporting decongestion of ECs and transitional relocation of some of the displaced to covered courts and parishes, prior to the resumption of the school term and is now shifting its focus towards the establishment of temporary relocation sites. At least three such sites (Calaanan and Lumbia in Cagayan de Oro and Santa Elena in Iligan) have already been identified, and in Cagayan de Oro, tents and bunkhouses are being erected by cluster members. Meanwhile, efforts are ongoing to secure additional land, which is urgently needed to enable provision of shelter to those who cannot return to their areas of origin.

Aid organisations operating under the Food Security cluster have provided emergency food to approximately 209,000 people, as of 10 January 2012. Airlifts organised by the Philippines Air Force are being used to deliver food assistance to the affected people in remote areas that remain inaccessible by road. WFP has established an additional field presence in Marawi City to better serve eleven isolated communities outside of Iligan. At the same time, the Nutrition cluster has continued to monitor the

needs of infants, children and pregnant and lactating women and mobilized micronutrients supplementation and rations of ready-to-use therapeutic food for 12,500 children aged 6-59 months.

Actions undertaken by members of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster, in support of Government efforts, have resulted in the **restoration of water supply systems to some 95 per cent of the population in Cagayan de Oro**. The cluster has been also supporting water trucking in both Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, construction of sanitation facilities in and outside of ECs and the overall promotion of hygiene practices. To date, aid agencies distributed 7,083 hygiene kits and 7,807 jerry cans in Cagayan de Oro and another 3,001 hygiene kits and 4,630 jerry cans in Iligan.

The Health cluster members have been providing life-saving medical care (through deployment of mobile health teams) and mental health and psycho-social support to 300,000 affected people, including 10,000 pregnant and lactating women, 20,000 children and 5,000 family planning professionals. The cluster has also responded to the outbreak of Leptospirosis (over 594 suspected cases and 16 deaths reported, as of 10 January) by providing medicines and rapid test kits and establishing a referral system for diagnosis and management of suspected cases.

Several cash-for-work and food-for-work schemes have been rolled out by the Government and aid organisations. The programmes are meant to provide immediate income-generating opportunities to the affected people and, at the same time, support the ongoing emergency response activities, including clearing of debris, clean-up of schools and maintenance of WASH facilities. At present, efforts are being made to ensure that the schemes are fully coordinated and provide equal opportunities to all affected, in particular female- and child-led households, which remain the most vulnerable.

The Protection cluster based in Iligan has been focusing on protection and safety of the displaced and community-based activities to help stabilize communities and find durable solutions, while ensuring that specific needs of various vulnerable groups are being addressed in the process. Activities related to protecting children from abuse, exploitation and trafficking, supporting family reunifications and assisting children and their families to return to normalcy have also been undertaken. Other areas of focus of aid organisations under the Protection cluster have included the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) in areas of displacement and prospective returns, GBV risk-reduction and mainstreaming gender and GBV prevention into other humanitarian activities.

The Logistics cluster has been supporting the overall response by supplementing the Government and aid agencies' capacity to store and distribute relief items. **In addition to ensuring that goods can be transported from Manila, Luzon City and Davao to Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, and within Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, the cluster constructed an additional warehouse in each of these two cities to ensure sufficient space is available to hold incoming relief items until the time of their distribution.**

COORDINATION

From the onset of the disaster, the international response has been coordinated through Government-led clusters, co-chaired by aid organisations. On 18 December, the Office of Civil Defence (OCD) Region X established, with support from OCHA, an operations centre on the premises of the Department of Social Welfare (DSWD) Region X in Cagayan de Oro to provide coordination and management support to the ongoing humanitarian response. In Iligan City, DSWD established a disaster operations centre on 30 December to further support coordination and information-sharing there.

To further strengthen the overall coordination of relief efforts and minimise the possibility of gaps in the response, the Government with support from the Humanitarian Country Team has made clusters operational at the field level in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. The Humanitarian Country Team and the Mindanao Humanitarian Team continue to support the Government with overall coordination of the response.

Several information-management initiatives have been implemented in support of the Government's efforts. The information network led by OCHA was established to enable more focused and targeted collection of

data, in particular disaggregated data, analysis and information sharing amongst partners. OCHA information management support has been provided to individual clusters (e.g. Shelter) along with cartographic support.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Going forward, as the affected communities strive to recover, their resilience to natural hazards needs to be significantly enhanced. Although Northern Mindanao has historically been considered at low risk for natural disasters, the events of 16 December 2011 have proven that the area is not immune to such disasters. As a result, authorities at all levels are calling for renewed efforts and innovative approaches in disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Although the assistance is reaching an increasing number of displaced/affected people outside of the ECs, the displaced living outside of ECs and affected people in remote and isolated areas are still largely underserved. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that many of those affected outside of the ECs have not been provided with family access cards that entitle them to receive assistance. The Government has recently launched a data collection campaign meant to provide more information on the needs of these groups. The information collected will be used to determine the best ways to target the assistance. Meanwhile, many assets of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including helicopters, have been deployed to enable and improve access to the cut-off communities.

Shelter issues remain a major concern. As of 9 January 2012, it is estimated that some 24,477 people remain in ECs, down from 69,287 people in the immediate aftermath of the crisis. As most of the ECs were set up in school grounds, some of the displaced have been relocated to other temporary shelters, parishes and covered courts, to allow for the resumption of the school term. Over the course of the response, the conditions in ECs have improved, yet more can be done to address overcrowding, lack of sufficient sanitation facilities and privacy. **According to NDRRMC, as of 10 January 2012, as many as 222,000 people displaced by the disaster remain in makeshift shelters and with host families, and remain in need of assistance.**

Priority actions for the Shelter Cluster include: the allocation of additional land for transitory and permanent relocation sites; ascertaining the number of damaged homes; identification of viable and adequate shelter solutions; prioritisation of people to be relocated; and, informing the displaced of the options available to them.

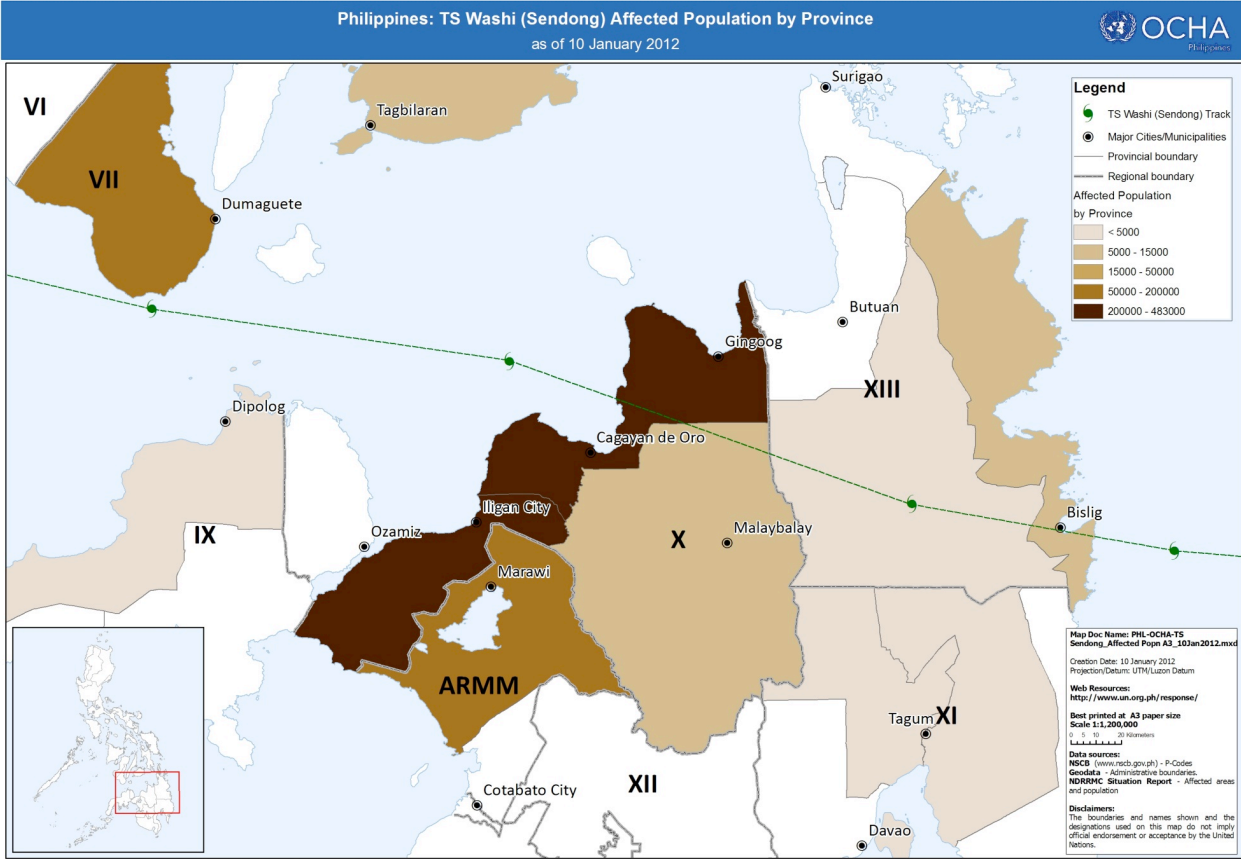
FUNDING

Foreign governments, Filipino communities abroad and private individuals and businesses have provided US\$22.4 million in support of relief efforts, according to the latest figures of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The new total includes \$11.5 million in cash and \$5.3 million in-kind contributions and \$5.6 million worth of pledges.

On 22 December 2011, a Flash Appeal was launched by the Humanitarian Country Team requesting some \$28.6 million for vital relief activities to be implemented within the first three months of the emergency, with shelter, food, water, sanitation and hygiene projects accounting for nearly 77 per cent of the total.

During the first week of the response, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator approved the disbursement of \$3 million for rapid response from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). These funds were used to jumpstart the response and enable the provision of life-saving assistance. Additional contributions from ECHO (\$933,000), Japan (\$1.5 million), Spain (\$650,000) and USA (\$800,000) bring the total of funding received against the appeal to \$6.9 million or 24 per cent, as of 10 January 2012.

Detailed funding tables can be accessed via the website of OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS): <http://fts.unocha.org/> All humanitarian partners including donors and recipient agencies are encouraged to inform FTS of cash and in-kind contributions by contacting fts@un.org.



For more information on the humanitarian response in The Philippines, including past situation reports, maps and contact details please visit: <http://ph.one.un.org/response/>