

AID AGENCIES APPEAL FOR \$39 MILLION TO ASSIST SENDONG-AFFECTED IN MINDANAO

(Manila, Bangkok, Geneva, New York: 3 February 2012): The United Nations and its humanitarian partners issued today the second emergency revision of the Humanitarian Action Plan for Mindanao, responding to the dramatic increase of needs in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Washi, known locally as Sendong. The revised appeal seeks \$39 million necessary to continue providing vital assistance to more than 300,000 people over the period of six months. The amount represents a \$10.6 million increase from the \$28.4 million requested initially.

“I have been tremendously encouraged to witness the tireless efforts of the Government, aid organisations, civil society and the affected communities themselves to provide vital assistance to hundreds of thousands of Sendong survivors” said Ms Jacqui Badcock, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Philippines, adding “sustained, generous financial support is crucial to enable provision of basic goods and services and the rebuilding of resilient communities”.

Tropical Storm Washi lashed the Philippine island and neighbouring areas from 16 to 18 December last year, bringing torrential rains which triggered flash floods and landslides. Nearly 48,000 houses were damaged and livelihoods of as many as 625,000 people were affected. More than 550,000 were forced out of their homes. Seven weeks after the disaster, some 21,900 survivors remain in largely overcrowded evacuation centres in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities and more than 400,000 people continue seeking refuge in makeshift shelters and with host families in their areas of origin. Some have also returned to their damaged houses in highly hazardous and disaster-prone areas, recently declared by the Government as ‘no-build’ zones.

Hours after the disaster hit, the Government and aid organisations launched a large-scale relief operation and have since been providing life-saving assistance to more than 430,000 people, including emergency shelter, food, water and sanitation, medical and psycho-social care, protection, education and other relief goods. But further sustained assistance is needed given that hundreds of thousands of people remain without homes and livelihoods.

The revised appeal document presents an adjusted plan of action developed by the Government and aid agencies, following a second phase of multi-cluster rapid assessments and sector specific assessments as well as review of available secondary data available and the response to date. Under the plan, the humanitarian community prioritised provision of assistance to all affected, including the displaced in evacuation centres and transitional sites as well as people seeking refuge in makeshift shelters and with relatives in areas where their houses stood prior to the disaster and host communities themselves. The special needs of vulnerable groups (women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities) and people in cut off and underserved, remote rural areas, some of which are also affected by on-going conflicts, are also being addressed. The Government-endorsed response plan, presented under the revised appeal, includes 48 projects, in 13 key sectors, submitted by 13 NGOs and 10 UN agencies and an international organisation.

“Many lives have been saved through our interventions to date” said Ms Badcock, warning “but, unless this assistance is sustained and adequate shelter solutions are provided to all the displaced, many will remain vulnerable and unable to sustain themselves and their families”. Ms Badcock urged donors to “back the new response plan and the affected communities of Mindanao generously”.

To date, \$9.6 million (or 25 per cent) have been provided against the appeal, including \$3 million disbursed from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in support of immediate, life-saving activities.

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