

# SERVE THE PEOPLE BRIGADE

## CORDILLERA DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 4, 2009

## URGENT APPEAL FOR SUPPORT AND IMMEDIATE REHABILITATION FOR THE VICTIMS OF TYPHOON PEPENG IN THE CORDILLERA, PHILIPPINES

*This is the second Urgent Appeal for Support issued by Serve the People Brigade since October 9. All Update Reports and Acknowledgements are posted at the Cordillera Peoples Alliance website, [www.cpaphils.org](http://www.cpaphils.org)*

We are pleased to share with you that your generous donations, hard-earned money, solidarity and spirit of volunteerism provided relief goods, first aid and medical missions; and significant assistance to road clearing and retrieval operations, **benefiting a total of 1,142 families or 6,903 individuals in Baguio City and the provinces of Benguet (Itogon, Tublay, Kapangan, Bokod, Mankayan, Buguias, Tuba) and Mountain Province (Tadian, Betwagan) from October 9 to 26, 2009.** Total cash donations since October 9 has now reached **P771,892.00**, while donations in kind (food, clothing, shoes, kitchen utensils and other supplies) totals the amount of **P 1,246,761.00**. **Food-for-work** was also provided for communities rehabilitating their roads, irrigation systems and stonewalls in the said provinces. Community psycho-social processing and debriefing, including indigenous rituals has kicked off in Mountain Province and parts of Benguet. As of this writing, the second batch of relief goods for 100 families and food for work were delivered to the very isolated community of Labey, Bokod via Kilometer 21 in Tublay municipality. 150 families were given relief goods in Boklaoan, Kapangan earlier this week.

Meanwhile, even at the height of typhoon Pepeng, the Regional Development Council-Katinnulong dagiti Umili ti Amianan (RDC-KADUAMI), already distributed relief goods to disaster victims to about 2,000 families in Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur provinces. Rice relief packs were distributed to 1500 families in La Union in October 12. This was in coordination with the ICRED (Ilocos Center for Research, Empowerment and Development) and the STOP-Exploitation (Solidarity of Peasants Against Exploitation). Kaduami-Cagayan Valley took part in rescue and relief operations in partnership with the Center for Relief and Rehabilitation Services (CRRS)-in Cagayan Valley. During the EED-Task Force Indigenous Peoples' Indigenous Knowledge Fair held in Quezon City from October 16-18, Kaduami staff also exhibited the appeal for the





typhoon victims in Northern Luzon and helped in the solicitation drive. The goods were centralized to TAKDER. RDC-KADUAMI solicitations for relief and rehabilitation continues. At the Petron Station in Veterans Loop, a Baguio City, a big box for donations is stationed where employees and clients can drop their donations-in-kind.

CPA worked closely with many volunteers in Tadian, Mt. Province, including the municipal and provincial local government units for the retrieval of 53 residents who were buried in the massive landslide on October 8. All bodies were retrieved as

of October 15, followed by indigenous rituals before the burial.

Serve the People Brigade-Mountain Province and the Cordillera Peoples Alliance chapter therein reports that in Betwagan, aside from distributing relief goods, the Brigade was also able to conduct a short lecture on climate change and indigenous peoples. The areas yet to be visited by the Brigade for relief and rehabilitation are North, South and Central Guinzadan, Gutang, Bangnen Oriente and Proper of Bauko Municipality; Sabangan; Alab and Guinaang of Bontoc; and four barangays of Besao. The barrios in Sadanga can be reached only by foot for at least 30 minute hike without heavy loads. Abungo and Maket-an are also accessed only through an hours hike uphill. The distribution of the relief packs were done for the following priority areas: Kayan, Bunga, Abongo, Maket-an, Sumadel, and Lubon in Tadian municipality; Betwagan, Bekigan and Belwang in Sadanga municipality; Ambasing in Sagada municipality and Tapapan in Bauko municipality.

Through the Cordillera indigenous peoples' traditional practice of support system (*ub-obfo, mabtad, binnadang*) in times of calamities and emergency, such as the devastation wrought by Typhoon Pepeng, members of communities continue to mobilize and collectively work on the retrieval of people and properties buried in landslides, clearing of roads and houses blocked by landslides, and in the coming days, rebuilding and rehabilitation of destroyed houses, irrigation canals and ricefields. These intensive work is done in the spirit of free labor. Affected communities, however, have insufficient tools and food-for-work for these activities. In fact, some devastated communities lost their most basic needs to survive. Thus, the Brigade has also initially provided support for the food-for-work of communities in Itogon, Benguet and Baguio City as of October 16, 2009.

### PEPENG AFTERMATH

While we were spared here in Northern Luzon from the havoc of Typhoon Ramil, Typhoon Santi (international name Mirinae) left 14 dead while it left lesser damage than those of Pepeng and Ondoy. Needless to say, many provinces in Northern Luzon have not yet recovered from Pepeng (Parma). Another typhoon will definitely result in more deaths, greater destruction of environment and livelihood sources, and properties.

After Pepeng, rice producing regions I, II, III, V and the Cordillera have now lost 164, 259 metric tons of palay, covering 126,603 hectares and worth PhP2.8 billion. PhP9



million worth of farmers' investment were put to waste.<sup>1</sup> Cordillera's agricultural damage caused by typhoon Pepeng is pegged at PhP1, 058,953,446 or equivalent to 445, 156 metric tons, while rice producing regions I and II incurred 1,691,629 and 1,106,074 metric tons of destroyed palay<sup>2</sup>. As stated in our earlier update reports, there is almost no surplus from the recent harvest to tide over indigenous communities in the Cordillera interiors until the next rice planting season. Hunger threatens the isolated communities that can only be reached by traversing dangerous landslides and road cuts. In labey, Bokod, Benguet province, for instance, able-bodied community members did such to reach the relief goods distribution center at the provincial capitol. The Serve the People Brigade is the first to reach the heart of community, where hunger looms amidst the survivors.



The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) reports that as of October 25, 346 casualties were recorded in the Cordillera, while the national figure for death tolls is 465. Thirty-four (34) were recorded missing in the region, with a total of 988 totally damaged houses and 6,723 partially damaged houses. Infrastructure damages (roads and bridges) have amounted to PhP263,305,000, health facilities at PhP2,250,000 and schools at PhP144,219,400.

Considering these accounted damages and the unaccounted damages incurred in the Cordillera interiors, there is a great deal of rehabilitation to be done in the next few months to secure communities' basic needs of food, shelter, among other things. It is in this regard that the Serve the People Brigade continues to seek donations for sustained relief operations while looking at the rehabilitation of priority areas in the region. The priority areas for relief are the following, to benefit 150 families or 900 individuals:

- Benguet:** Mankayan, Buguias, Itogon, Bakun, Bokod, Atok,
- Mountain Province:** Tadian, Betwagan
- Apayao:** Conner municipality

Food-for-work for the repair of damaged canals, houses and ricefields is also a priority activity for the continuing relief rehabilitation of these areas.

These communities were prioritized based on the reports and monitoring of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance chapters in the provinces and by teams dispatched by the Serve the People Brigade, especially since these are also the areas least reached or covered by mainstream media and relief distribution. Most of these communities have also received very minimal relief response by appropriate government units. CPA member organizations in these provinces responded to immediate rescue efforts, coordinated with the local government officials, and requested for immediate relief and various assistance. The municipalities

<sup>1</sup> Department of Agriculture, October 11, 2009 Report

<sup>2</sup> Krisis iti Taraon: Krisis ti Mannalon. APIT TAKO Situationer, October 2009

of Mankayan and Itogon in Benguet have been ravaged by large mining for a century and now become the most vulnerable to natural calamities and climate change. Others are threatened by corporate mining with applications filed at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that process and approves mining permits and contracts.

### **OUR CONTINUING APPEAL FOR SUPPORT**

From October to December, the Serve the People Brigade-Cordillera Disaster Response Network will continue to conduct relief missions, medical missions, and support in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of houses, irrigation canals and rice fields. At the same time, it will conduct psycho-social processing for the victimized communities and information campaign on disaster preparedness, disaster management and climate change. To do this, the Brigade shall sustain the pool of volunteers and continue to raise donations in cash and in kind. It will continue monitoring of updates and needs of affected communities, documentation of activities, and issuance of update reports and press releases.

The following relief items are the priority needs to sustain the relief activities in the said areas:

- Food Items:** rice, sugar, sardines, dried beans, dried fish, cooking oil, salt, bath and laundry soap
- Non-food items:** water container, cooking pot, blanket, basin,

Meantime, the needs for rehabilitation, aside from food-for-work, are the following:

- Shovels, sledge hammers, pinch bars, bolos, wheelbarrows

### **For Financial, Material Donations and to Volunteer:**

Please visit us at **No. 55 Ferguson Road, Brgy. A. Bonifacio, Baguio City and look for Mr. Santos Mero, Serve the People Brigade Coordinator and CPA Deputy Secretary General (09152054262)**. You may also call or text the Hotline at mobile number **09209286370** or Telephone Number **63- 074-304-4239**, Fax number is **63-074-443-7159**. You can also reach us through email at [cpa@cpaphils.org](mailto:cpa@cpaphils.org) for queries.

### **Financial donations may also be channeled through:**

**Cordillera Peoples Alliance**  
**Savings Account: 1-326-72354-8**  
**RCBC Baguio Peso Account**  
**Swift Code: RCBC PHMM**  
**Routing Code: 120280014**

**Those based in Metro Manila and who wish donate, please visit our extension office at:**

**TAKDER Office**  
**No. 879 EDSA**  
**Quezon City**  
**Cellphone No. +639184176079**  
**Email: takder@gmail.com, sinalimbay@gmail.com**  
**Look for Mr. Richard Gadit**

TAKDER shall arrange for the transport of relief goods to the Disaster Response Center in Baguio City.

You may also lend your vehicles for the relief and rescue missions, and we welcome the assistance and support of paramedics, doctors, and all volunteers who would like to be part of the relief and rescue drive. We thank you sincerely and look forward to your positive response on this urgent appeal.

We thank all individuals, families, organizations and institutions who responded to the first Appeal for Support. Thank you for helping the Cordillera people rise from the ruins of this tragedy. Serve the People Brigade continues to draw strength from your support and solidarity. # *With reports from Regional Development Council-Katinnulong dagiti Umili ti Amianan, Serve the People Brigade-Mountain Province*

## **SERVE THE PEOPLE BRIGADE -CORDILLERA DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK**

**Cordillera Peoples Alliance**

**Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera**