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UN cites government for quick, effective response

THE Philippine Government was lauded by the United Nations (UN) for putting a quick and effective rescue and relief operation in place for those affected by Typhoon Ondoy.

In her speech during the Manila Flash Appeal launch at the Sofitel Hotel in Pasay City on Oct. 7, Dr. Jacqueline Badcock, UN Resident Representative, noted that "the sense of national unity, from the highest levels of government to village communities, has been inspirational."

Anne Veneman, executive director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), echoed Dr. Badcock's observation. She said the response of the government was commendable, considering the fact that it had to reach so many people in widely separated areas all at the same time.

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., chairman of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), thanked the UN and acknowledged the assistance it had extended to the Philippines at a time when the capabilities of the country was strained to the limits.

The Flash Appeal was formally launched in Geneva the day before. Its purpose is to generate \$74 million worth of assistance, in cash and in kind, from the international community to address the immediate needs of approximately one million people who suffered the most.

Dr. Badcock noted that "extensive search and rescue operations were launched immediately, involving the Armed Forces of the Philippines, [other] representatives of the government, the Red Cross, Filipino non-government organizations (NGOs), and local volunteers."

"Humanitarian assistance was also quick to arrive, from government departments and agencies, NGOs and private individuals," she added. "All this has been underpinned with a remarkable sense of volunteerism and solidarity."

"Yet despite the determination of the people of the Philippines to help themselves, the unanticipated scale of the floods understandably overwhelmed local capabilities," she also said.

Thus, she explained, the urgent call for assistance was issued, but not after the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team had made a rapid assessment of the flooding wrought by the typhoon in Metro Manila on Sept. 26.

According to Dr. Badcock, the UN has been consulting and working closely with the NDCC and other agencies of the government.

"We are mindful of the fact that the speed at which this initial Flash Appeal was finalized means that we do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of the needs in all areas due in part to the inaccessibility of some of the worst-affected areas," Dr. Badcock went on. "The appeal will thus be revised in the coming weeks to ensure that projects and our overall strategy are in line with the latest data."

Also on hand to field questions from the media were Social Welfare and Development Secretary Esperanza Cabral, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, and Health Secretary Francisco Duque III.

The launch was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, agencies of government, and socio-civic organizations, among others. ■

Statement by...

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Our military forces and civilian agencies have supported local Philippine efforts by distributing relief supplies and helped in rescuing victims from inundated areas of Manila. As part of this effort, the US Agency for International Development, has so far allocated \$1.8 million to respond to the disaster. As a longstanding friend and partner of the Philippines, we stand ready to continue our cooperation and assistance in the coming days. ■

AP Interview: White House...

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vote for the legislation. The bill passed narrowly, 219-212. The climb to 60 votes in the Senate is expected to be even more steep, and it comes as the administration is under pressure to make progress on climate change before international negotiations in Copenhagen in December. The Senate bill would cut greenhouse gases 80 percent by 2050.

The White House effort started earlier this year. The first big meeting between Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who introduced the bill last week, and administration officials took place over dinner in March at his Georgetown home. Browner, Energy Secretary Steven Chu, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, White House science adviser John Holdren and State Department climate negotiators Todd Stern and Jonathan Pershing attended.

There has also been a permanent White House representative at a weekly meeting of nearly 20 senators working to advance the legislation, Kerry said.

"Now there will be a more unified meeting process between senators and the administration in order to lock things in," said Kerry. "We are getting into the stage of negotiations where people need to close."

Browner was scheduled to meet later Thursday with a group of five Democratic senators concerned about the cost curbing greenhouse gases will have on their home-state industries. Their votes are crucial for the measure to pass.

"It's important for us to get right from the senators their thinking," Browner said. "As the bill starts to move ... we want to make sure that we in the administration know what members are most focused on and what's going to be key to ensuring their support for comprehensive energy legislation."

Browner would not handicap the bill, saying only that she wanted the legislation "to be as far along as we possibly can be."

In a sign of how important a domestic bill is to the White House's efforts, Browner has no plans yet to attend the U.N. conference in Copenhagen—and she says she won't be going if the bill is still working its way through Congress. (AP)

Higher RP...

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cit in the range of 4 percent to 5 percent of GDP without pushing the debt-to-GDP ratio higher in 2010 and beyond.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves last week expressed commitment to keeping the deficit at P250 billion or 3.2 percent of the total output of goods and services within the country this year, partly due to concerns that the country's debts already represent some 56 percent of GDP. ■

Reach out a helping hand...

for the immediate relief efforts in the wake of Typhoon Ondoy that hit the Philippines recently.

Please donate generously. Your donations will help purchase relief supplies and ration packs for distribution to heavily damaged areas with the help of local officials and volunteers.

- Guidelines:
- Donations can be received online via credit card or Paypal through www.abscbnfoundation.org or ondoyrelief.multiply.com
 - Mail checks payable to: **ABS CBN Foundation - Sagip**
150 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
 - Pledges and inquiries can be made through the toll free number **1-800-527-2820**



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BENEFIT EVENTS

- Oct. 1 SF, CA "Band Aid Pilipinas" - organized by Sonia Delen and Intramuros Bar and Restaurant
- Oct. 2 LA, CA "Bayanihan" - organized by Jeric Mercado and Sibil Events, Sequence Events and Vybe Nation Events
- Oct. 3 SF, CA "Dance For A Cause" - held at Intramuros
- Oct. 3 SF, CA Filipino Curcillo
- Oct. 4 Hayward CA The Filipino Invitational Basketball League (FIBL) fund drive - organized by Mike Perez and the FIBL
- Oct. 4 LA, CA The Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra (FASO) Benefit Concert - organized by Cora and Roger Oriel and the Asian Journal
- Oct. 7 SF, CA Young Filipino Professionals Association Mixer Benefit - organized by the YFPA
- Oct. 8 San Mateo CA "Everyone's A Hero" benefit concert
- Oct. 9 SF, CA Benefit for Victims of Typhoon Ondoy - organized by Keesa Orampo and the San Francisco Bay Area Community and Elected Officials
- Oct. 9 Redwood City CA Benefit Concert at the Fox Theater - organized by Galo Clemente
- Oct. 9 LA, CA "Magkaisa Laban Sa Ketsana" - organized by Blare Productions, Incognito Global and Manta Ray Events
- Oct. 11 LA, CA "United We Stand" Benefit Show - organized by Dhee Mirabueno and Kamote Productions
- Oct. 11 LA, CA Marathon Benefit Concert - organized by Jet and Edith Montelibano
- Oct. 12 Las Vegas NV Benefit Concert of the Phil. Medical Association of Nevada - feat. Martin Nievera - organized by the PMAN
- Oct. 18 Oakland CA Oakland Raiders Mabuhay Fiesta - Benefit for SK
- Oct. 18 Seattle WA Filipino Community Center, Seattle, WA Fund-raiser - organized by Alma Kern
- Oct. 24 San Mateo CA Phil. Madrigal Singers for Typhoon Victims
- Oct. 30 Berkley CA Filipino Women's Network 100 Most Influential Filipinas Gala