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Lack of drainage systems exacerbated impact of deadly typhoon in the Philippines – UN



30 September 2009



Poor drainage systems and garbage disposal problems aggravated the impact of a typhoon that struck the Philippines at the weekend and killed hundreds of people, the United Nations disaster prevention agency says as it stressed the need for governments to make greater investments before other catastrophes strike.

National authorities have stated that at least 246 people died in the Philippines as a result of Typhoon Ondoy (internationally known as Ketsana), with the metropolitan area around the capital, Manila, among the hardest hit areas. More than 730,000 people have had to flee their homes and seek shelter with relatives or in evacuation centres.

An eight-member UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC (<http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1414>)) team arrived today in Manila to help local officials coordinate relief efforts, which have been focused on providing water, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as food stocks and health care.

Loren Legarda, a Philippine lawmaker and the Asia-Pacific champion for disaster risk reduction for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR (<http://www.unisdr.org/>)), called on her Government to introduce more prevention measures to cut the risk from climate-related disasters.

“Realities on the ground deserve priority for action,” she said yesterday, according to a press release issued by ISDR in Geneva.

“We must order massive cleaning of esteros [creeks] and all waterways to reduce our vulnerability to flooding and implement the solid waste management law. The public must be educated on simple doable actions such as proper waste disposal and waste segregation.”

Margareta Wahlström, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, called for more actions to reduce the risks from disasters.

“Spending on disaster risk reduction is not a cost, but an investment for safer and more secure cities,” she said. “Under-investment in building and maintaining drains can trigger bigger disasters.”

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29 September 2009

As the rising death toll from the tropical storm that struck the Philippines over the weekend climbs to 240 people, the United Nations Children's Fund (<https://www.unicef.org/>) (UNICEF) today announced it has rushed emergency relief supplies to the value of \$143,000 to the affected children and their families.