

Gov't updates Media on Yolanda Rehab Efforts

Three days before the two-year mark of the onslaught of the Super Typhoon Yolanda (international name: "Haiyan") in the Eastern Visayas region which left 14 provinces devastated in November 08, 2013, a joint press briefing was conducted for the updates and status of the Yolanda Rehabilitation Program on November 5, 2015. This was initiated by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) where the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery (OPARR), originally tasked to spearhead the Yolanda Rehabilitation Program, was transferred.

The media briefing was attended by the different agencies forming the five (5) clusters of the Yolanda Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (CRRP). The briefing focused on the Resettlement Cluster's status of constructions of the permanent shelter for the survivors living in the typhoon-hit areas. Prior the media briefing, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) Chairperson Atty. Chito M. Cruz said during the NHA 40th Anniversary Gawad Parangal Night on October 15, 2015 that the NHA, with the help of DPWH, has developed standard disaster-resilient housing designed to withstand typhoon winds of 250kph. This is in compliance with the instruction of President Benigno S. Aquino III to Build Back Better communities for the beneficiaries.

Atty. Cruz reported that after the Typhoon Yolanda ravaged the Eastern Visayas region, the housing needs for the 14 provinces in the six (6) affected regions reached 205,128 housing units, with a total funding requirement of Php 61.252 Billion. This will be developed in 153 sites with 17,641 substantially completed housing units as of the end of October 2015. The Chairperson also reported that as of October 30, 2015, a total of Php 26.996 Billion was already released to the NHA to fund the 92,554 housing units targeted to be finished by December 2016.

Meanwhile, during the Kapihan sa Media ng Bayan forum the following day, November 6, 2015 at the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) Building, NHA GM Atty. Sinfonso R. Pagunsan mentioned the major challenges faced by the NHA in implementing the housing component of the Yolanda Rehabilitation. GM Pagunsan explained that the lack of suitable lots is one of the toughest challenges the Authority is facing, since the NHA has to make sure that these lots are located in safe zones and are away from shores and fault lines. Nevertheless, the General Manager, together with Department of Budget and Management Secretary, Florencio "Butch" Abad assured everyone that the construction of the permanent shelters in the typhoonstricken provinces are on-track.