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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

Philippines – Landslides

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

February 21, 2006

BACKGROUND

- Several weeks of unseasonably heavy rainfall triggered two massive landslides on February 17 in the eastern Philippines village of Guinsaugon in Saint Bernard Municipality, Southern Leyte Province. All 1,500 residents of Guinsaugon were reportedly affected, with the majority missing and many feared dead. According to the Philippines Geosciences Bureau, the landslide area is 4 meters deep and covers approximately 3 square kilometers, making the area unstable and difficult to traverse. Relief and rescue efforts are underway, but mud-clogged roads and ongoing downpours are hampering operations. Continued heavy rainfall is forecast for the coming week.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Affected Population	84 people confirmed dead, 19 people injured, 982 people missing, 1,645 people in shelters	NDCC ¹ – February 21
Damaged or Destroyed Homes	281 homes destroyed	NDCC – February 21

Total USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance to the Philippines \$249,075
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance to the Philippines \$249,075

CURRENT SITUATION

Numbers Affected

- As of February 21, the Philippines National Disaster Coordination Council (NDCC) reported 84 confirmed deaths and 982 people missing, including 246 elementary school students. In addition, the landslides completely destroyed 281 homes in Guinsaugon. Four NDCC-established evacuation centers are currently housing 1,645 residents in Saint Bernard.
- According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), precautionary evacuations of up to 15,000 people may occur in three additional Southern Leyte municipalities—Sogod, Liluan, and San Francisco—based on threats of new landslides.

Humanitarian Needs

- According to NDCC, water, blankets, medicine, and food are needed for more than 1,600 people from the affected villages, as well as for potential additional evacuees from neighboring villages. In addition, rubber boots and earth-moving equipment are required immediately for relief and recovery operations.

USAID/OFDA Deployment

- A USAID/OFDA Disaster Assistance Expert is currently in Southern Leyte Province is working closely with the NDCC, the U.S. Military, and the Philippines National Red Cross (PNRC) to prioritize relief needs and coordinate USG humanitarian assistance. Similar coordination is ongoing in Manila between NDCC, the U.S. Embassy, the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group in the Philippines (JUSMAG), and USAID/Philippines.
- A USAID/OFDA Military Liaison Officer is currently at U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) Headquarters in Honolulu helping to coordinate the USG response with PACOM.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- The USG is responding to the landslide emergency through USAID and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). USAID and DOD are working in close collaboration to assess damages and priority needs, deliver humanitarian assistance, and support local relief efforts.

USAID/OFDA Assistance

- On February 17, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Paul W. Jones declared a disaster due to the impact of the landslides. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/Philippines to PNRC for emergency relief activities. PNRC is utilizing additional emergency relief supplies previously provided by USAID/OFDA.
- Through two airlifts on February 20, USAID/OFDA provided emergency relief commodities, including 100 rolls of plastic sheeting, 1,000 water containers, 1,000 blankets, and 400 body bags. This assistance is valued at nearly \$150,000, including transport to the Philippines. U.S. Marine helicopters transported these commodities from Tacloban to the affected area on February 21.

¹ Government of the Philippines National Disaster Coordination Council (NDCC)

DOD Assistance

- The Philippines Disaster Relief Command Center at Cebu has been designated a Combined Support Group, serving as the focal point for the coordination of all relief efforts.
- DOD has diverted military assets as part of the Balikatan 2006 joint military disaster training exercise in the Philippines to assist with relief efforts in Southern Leyte. On February 18, a 12-person military assessment team deployed to the disaster site.
- U.S. Navy vessels, including the USS Essex (LHD-2), USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), and the USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) as well as elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Joint Task Force (JTF) Balikatan arrived off the coast of Southern Leyte to provide humanitarian assistance on February 19. Helicopters assigned to JTF Balikatan have started the delivery of relief supplies and transport of rescue personnel.
- U.S. Marines are currently assisting in the search, rescue, and recovery effort on site in St. Bernard and Barangay Guinsaugon. The U.S. Military is also providing generators and lighting for rescue operations.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
PNRC	Emergency Relief Activities	Southern Leyte Province	\$100,000
PNRC	Emergency Relief Supplies, including transport	Southern Leyte Province	\$149,075
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES IN FY 2006			\$249,075
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES IN FY 2006			\$249,075

¹USAID/OFDA funding represents obligated amounts as of February 21, 2006.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/.