



Serve the People Brigade

Cordillera Disaster Response Network

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URGENT APPEAL FOR SUPPORT FOR RELIEF AND IMMEDIATE REHABILITATION FOR VICTIMS OF TYPHOON OMPONG (MANGKHUT) IN THE CORDILLERA, PHILIPPINES

UPDATE NO. 1

September 20, 2018

We are pleased to share that with the material and financial donations from various individuals and organizations, and the time dedicated by individual volunteers, the Serve the People Brigade (STPB) – Cordillera Disaster Response Network has delivered 260 food packs for immediate relief and support to victims of typhoon Ompong in three communities in Ucab (Garrison, Ucab Proper and Upper Ucab), Itogon, Benguet on September 20. STPB also contributed four sacks of rice to Malasin community for food-for-work in the community’s clearing on mudslides.

Cash donations were immediately used to purchase food items for the urgently requested relief mission in Itogon. Each food pack contained 10kg rice, 1kg monggo, 1kg sugar, 1 liter cooking oil, 1kg dried fish, ½ kg salt, 4 pieces corned beef, 100 grams coffee, and drinking water.

The relief mission was co-organized by the STPB with local peoples’ organizations – Neighborhood Organization of Indigenous Peoples, Garrison Ucab Neighborhood Association, and Sapat. Said organizations are affiliated with the Itogon Inter-Barangay Alliance (IIB-A), a municipal-wide member organization of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance – Benguet Chapter.

Earlier on September 18, STPB and Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services (CORDIS-RDS) in partnership with CARE Philippines distributed 30 sacks of rice and cash assistance to residents in Barangay Gumatdang, Itogon whose houses were either partially or totally damaged due to mudslides. STPB also contributed four sacks of rice to Malasin community.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE ITOGON TRAGEDY

During the relief mission, simultaneous programs were held in



the three communities, with sharing and discussions on the Itogon landslides, which claimed more than 46 lives and 64 still missing. The local people reiterated that it is the century-old large-scale mining operations of Benguet Corporation Inc. (BCI) that is causing tragedies in the town. They also expressed that it is



not the small-scale mining that is to blame. Instead, BCI must be held accountable for the continuing damages and loss of lives that it continues to cause the communities in Itogon.

The local people also shared that the big portion of land that moved during the height of typhoon Ompong was from the Keystone open-pit mining project of Benguet Corporation Inc, which operated from 1983 until the local communities successfully stopped it in 1991. Beneath the surface are the mined-out tunnels of BCI from its many decades of underground bulk mining operations. In fact, part of the area that was buried in the landslide was BCI's 070 Portal or entrance to the underground tunnels. BCI opened its Portal 070 to small-scale miners in exchange for some fees paid by small-scale miners. For profit, BCI encouraged the continued hazardous extraction of what is left in the underground pillars at the cost of small-scale miners' safety.

MANY MORE COMMUNITIES IN NEED OF RELIEF AND IMMEDIATE REHABILITATION SERVICES

STPB continues to monitor the damages wrought by typhoon Ompong, especially in far-flung communities. From the initial data consolidated by STPB network member Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services, at least 170,940 farmers were affected by severe damages to agricultural crops, and livestock and poultry. The Department of Agriculture reported an estimated 2 billion pesos worth of damages to agriculture.



Mud clearing in Gumatdang, Itogon, Benguet. STPB

Many areas in the region remain isolated due to closed roads caused by road slips, road collapse, landslides and fallen debris. As of September 18, power has been restored in 5 out of the 11 municipalities of Ifugao, 17% in Benguet and 60 % in Mt. Province. It is yet to be restored in many parts of the provinces of Abra, Apayao and Kalinga.

OUR CONTINUING APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

The Serve the People Brigade – Cordillera Disaster Response Network will continue to raise donations and sustain a pool volunteers to be able to conduct relief missions, medical mission and support in the



Destroyed rice crops in Cabaruan, Tabuk, Kalinga. CORDIS-RDS Photo

rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged houses and rice fields. As practiced in past disaster response services, the Serve the People Brigade will also be conducting psycho-social processing to help the communities overcome the impact of typhoon Ompong’s wrath. STPB will also continue its campaign on disaster preparedness, disaster management and climate change.



Damaged road in Dalupirip, Itogon. CORDIS-RDS Photo

The immediate needs identified by STPB’s provincial partners are immediate food relief, shelter repair kits, hygiene kits, food for work for the collective clearing and immediate rehabilitation of houses and other vital infrastructures, and livelihood assistance.

- **Food items:** Rice, monggo/dried beans, dried fish, sugar, salt, cooking oil, drinking water
- **Non-food items:** Laundry soap, bath soap, underwears, cooking pot, flashlight with batteries, light blankets and sleeping mats
- **Medicines:** paracetamol, pain relievers, anti worm or mebendazole, antacid, antibiotics such as amoxicillin, Cotrimoxazole and cloxaxillin, elastic bandages, gauze, hydrogen peroxide and betadine)

FOR FINANCIAL, MATERIAL DONATIONS AND TO VOLUNTEER:

Please visit us at **No. 55 Middle Ferguson Road, Baguio City** and look for **Mr. Santi Mero, Serve the People Brigade Spokesperson and Cordillera Peoples Alliance Vice Chairperson for Internal Affairs** or **Ms. Bestang Dekdeken, CPA Secretary General**. Contact us through mobile number +63 917 685 5886 (Santi Mero) or +63 917 155 1570 (Bestang Dekdeken), or reach us through email at cpa@cpaphils.org.

Financial donations may be channeled by bank (details below) or through Paypal (email account cpaphils.1984@gmail.com):

<u>PESO ACCOUNT</u>	<u>US DOLLAR ACCOUNT</u>
Name of Bank: Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC)	Name of Bank: Banco de Oro – Session Road Branch
Bank Address: Session Road, Baguio City	Bank Address: National Life Building, Session Road, Baguio City
Account Name: Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Inc.	Account Name: Cordillera Peoples Alliance
Account Number: 1-326-72354-8	Account Number: 105470156541
Swift Code: RCBCPHMM	Swift /Routing Code: BNORPHMM
Routing Code: 120280014	

Those based in Manila may contact:

Raven Desposado of TAKDER at 0956-996-5823, email takderkordi@gmail.com, or LINGKOD KATRIBU at email katribu.campaigns@gmail.com.

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Organizations

CARE Philippines
International Union for Nature Conservation-Netherlands
Land is Life
Philippine Nurses Association – Cordillera
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Individuals

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Franco, Carmelita
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