



World  
Food  
Programme

Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

Programa  
Mundial de  
Alimentos

برنامج  
الأغذية  
العالمي

United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot - Brindisi

## WFP News Release

6 October 2009

### WFP MOBILIZES HELICOPTERS, BOATS AND FOOD TO SUPPORT RELIEF EFFORT IN THE PHILIPPINES

**MANILA** – In the face of mounting logistical challenges, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) ramped up its relief efforts in the Philippines by shipping in helicopters and inflatable boats to provide food assistance to hundreds of thousands of victims of the two major tropical storms that recently ravaged the country.

“Many needy people live in areas that still remain inaccessible because of the widespread flooding,” said Stephen Anderson, WFP Country Director in the Philippines. “Without these boats and choppers, the massive government-led relief effort would not be able to reach people who are really desperate, sometimes neck-deep in water.”

Seven inflatable boats, the first of 30 that were requested last week by the Philippines Government, arrived in Manila today aboard a WFP-chartered 747 flying from the UN Humanitarian Response Depot in Brindisi, Italy. More relief goods are on the way.

Two of three helicopters, also requested by the Government, are scheduled to arrive tomorrow on a WFP-chartered flight from Antalya, Turkey. The helicopters, which require assembly, are expected to be fully operational by the end of the week.

Both the helicopters and the boats are part of WFP’s US\$ 26 million emergency operation in the Philippines. The three-month operation is supporting the Philippines Government’s relief efforts by providing rations of rice, beans, vegetable oil and high-energy biscuits in the worst-affected areas of Metro Manila and surrounding regions, through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). WFP is currently in the process of purchasing and delivering some 10,000 metric tons of food out of 26,000 tons needed.

In addition to food assistance, the agency is providing logistical support to enable the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) and other humanitarian agencies to access those in remote areas with vital supplies as quickly as possible. Additionally, WFP is also implementing an emergency telecommunications system to allow humanitarian workers to better coordinate relief efforts.

WFP’s US\$ 26 million operation forms a major part of the wider joint UN Flash Appeal that was launched today with UN agencies calling for a total of US\$ 74 million to help provide a swift and coordinated response to flood-affected populations in the Philippines.

Close to four million people were affected by the severe floods provoked by Tropical Storm Ketsana that struck the country on September 26. WFP plans to provide food assistance to one million of the worst hit victims.



“Without generous donor support, none of our efforts will be possible,” said WFP Country Director Anderson. “Several donors have indicated their willingness to support WFP's response. It is important that these commitments be confirmed as soon as possible.”

Since 2006, WFP has been supporting conflict-affected populations in the Southern Philippines (Mindanao), but also supports large-scale natural disaster response of the Philippines Government on a case-by-case basis.

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. In 2009, WFP aims to feed 108 million people in 74 countries.

WFP now provides RSS feeds to help journalists keep up with the latest press releases, videos and photos as they are published on WFP.org. For more details see: <http://www.wfp.org/english/?n=999>.

*WFP now has a dedicated ISDN line in Italy for quality two-way interviews with WFP officials.*

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