

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
28 November 2007

DepEd to turn-over new classrooms cum evacuation centers in Bicol

The Department of Education is set to turn-over school buildings in the Bicol region including some intended to double as evacuation centers in times of calamity, even as reports of damages to schoolbuildings caused by typhoon Mina in the Cordillera and Region 2 have hit the P200 million mark.

Funded under DepEd's Bicol Calamity Assistance and Rehabilitation Efforts (BCARE) in the aftermath of super typhoons Milenyo and Reming, a total of 545 new classrooms are expected to benefit some 50,000 students and teachers. Moreover, a total of 6,039 classrooms have already been repaired and are ready for use.

Under the BCARE, DepEd has allotted some P1.2 billion for the construction of new classrooms and repair of damaged ones in Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon.

In a recent report to the Cabinet, Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said the department is right on track on its target at 98% completion rate.

"BCARE is solely dedicated for the rehabilitation of the Bicol region and we made sure that we have new buildings which can also be used for evacuation especially in typhoon-prone areas like Bicol," Lapus said.

Meanwhile, Secretary Lapus ordered the immediate field assessment of damaged school buildings and lost textbooks in Northern Luzon that suffered the onslaught of Typhoon Mina. DepEd reported that based on initial reports, the Cordillera Administrative Region sustained some P102 million damages on school buildings followed by Region 2 which reported damages of P101.4 million. "We will request for similar CARE funding for them so that repairs can be undertaken immediately," he said.

In the Bicol Region, typhoon Mina caused the evacuation of some 10,944 families or 51, 674 individuals, using as temporary evacuation centers school buildings in the area.

In Legazpi City, DepEd has completed the construction of an all- concrete building which was designed to withstand earthquake and typhoon. The classroom cum evacuation center has comfort rooms, water supply and kitchen. Its ceiling is reinforced with 20-millimeter steel bars.

"The sturdy school building are elevated from the ground by a meter and can accommodate two classes during regular days and at least 60 people when used as evacuation center," Lapus added.

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Some 15 more new hazard-resistant building are currently under construction in the Bicol region. Lapus reported that the United Nations Children’s Fund will fund 12 more of these hazard-resistant buildings in Bicol.

In the province of Albay, Ligao City has the biggest number of new classrooms at 301, followed by 71 in Tabaco City and 56 in Legazpi City. In Camarines Sur, Iriga City has 64 new classrooms while Naga City has 71. Hit hard by the succession of typhoons last year, Sorsogon will have 89 new classrooms after the turn-over in December.

Of the 6,039 repaired buildings, 2,579 are in Albay, 1,620 in Camarines Sur, 204 in Camarines Norte, 358 in Masbate and 936 in Sorsogon and 342 in Catanduanes.

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