

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 24, 2008

New Bicol classrooms can last 50 years

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus inaugurates today typhoon-resistant school buildings in Camarines Sur that were designed to last for at least half a century – part of the department’s efforts to rehabilitate school buildings damaged by super typhoons Milenyo and Reming in 2006. The Calamity Assistance and Rehabilitation Efforts (CARE) was initiated by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to bring together all agencies that implement projects for typhoon-affected areas.

Through the Bicol CARE or BCARE, these typhoon-resistant classrooms that double as evacuation centers were constructed one each in Minalabac Elementary School and Baao West Central School. Eleven more schools are being constructed in Camarines Sur, one in Albay and two in Legaspi City.

“Since Bicol is frequently battered by typhoons, our school buildings should be made to serve not only our students but the community as well especially in times of calamities,” Lapus said. “We are witness to the damage a typhoon can cause houses in rural areas. Since our schools are always used as evacuation centers, we must therefore have the strongest structures to withstand the worst calamities.”

The two-classroom building is equipped with a kitchen, two toilets and bath, a ramp for the disabled, and with the provision of a roof deck, it can provide six families with a safe and decent living space during times of calamities. To prevent flooding inside the property, the building floor line is elevated one meter above the ground.

Another two-storey, four-classroom school building in Triangulo Elementary School in Naga City was inaugurated by Lapus during his visit.

BCARE is part of the CARE program of the government that addresses repair and rehabilitation of schools in typhoon-stricken areas. DepEd has identified 2,220 school sites where some 771 new classrooms are up for construction and 7,142 are for repairs in the Bicol region alone.

BCARE Commission Executive Director Dr Anthony Golez, during the latest coordination meeting held at the Department of National Defense, commended DepEd for being the first among BCARE agencies to complete its rehabilitation targets.

DepEd still awaits the relocation of Maipon Elementary School for it to start the construction of new buildings. The whole school was completely covered by mud flow during the typhoons. A new site is currently being sought. There are also other schools in isolated locations that limit delivery of construction materials.

PRESS RELEASE

Under the BCARE program, DepEd undertook construction of 771 new classrooms and repair of 7,142 damaged ones in Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon.

BCARE is similar to a mini-Marshall plan specifically put up to rehabilitate Bicol after suffering the brunt of the succession of super typhoons in 2006.

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PRESS RELEASE