

## UPDATE ON RELIEF AND REHABILITATION IN NUEVA ECIJA

FROM: FR. BEN NEBRES, S.J.

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I have been in touch with the impact of Typhoon Lando in Nueva Ecija, particularly in Cabiao and Gabaldon, which have been centers of work of Ateneo and Gawad Kalinga since late 2004 (Typhoon Yoyong).

**SITUATION:** Destruction, especially of crops, has been massive. In Cabiao 40% of rice crops and 100% of vegetable crops have been destroyed. Particularly painful is that it is just two weeks from harvest. The situation would be similar in the neighboring towns. Gabaldon was completely cut off till yesterday afternoon, because of massive landslides in Barangay Calabasa, which is the Barangay just before one arrives at the Ateneo GK Kalayaan Village. With the road passable now, a team from GK left early this morning and another team will leave tomorrow to distribute relief packs. I expect to join them, especially to support the Mayor, Rolando Bue.

**RELIEF WORK:** GK set up base in Cabiao early this week. GK's goal is to prepare and distribute 10,000 foodpacks at P200/each. So far 2,000 foodpacks have been delivered in Cabiao. Tomorrow, 2,300 foodpacks will be delivered to Gabaldon.

Ateneo DreamTeam will bring 2,500 foodpacks to Cabiao tomorrow for delivery to the most needy communities.

We are also helping get drinking water, as their water sources are polluted by the floods. Manila Water has been delivering some supplies and I contacted Gerry Esquivel of MWSS and they will also be helping.

Contributions of water would also be appreciated. These can be sent to the Ateneo College Covered Courts.

**REHABILITATION WORK:** Beyond the immediate relief, I have been coordinating with Mayor Baby Congco of Cabiao on the need for rehabilitation, namely providing seeds and other needed material, so farmers can start re-planting by beginning of November. As I mentioned earlier, the rice and vegetables were to be harvested in two weeks. Our immediate goal is to raise the funds to buy seeds at P1,300/hectare. Our goal is to provide seeds for about 1,000 farmers to replant in 1 hectare. Tanging Yaman Foundation through Fr. Manoling Francisco has given P200,000 and I have also given P200,000 from funds given me for social projects.

Several years ago when a similar flood destroyed the crops in Cabiao, Fr. Manoling and I were able to raise funds to help a couple of hundred farmers. They were able to replant and fortunately the next harvest was good. This saved them from long-term hunger and from the risk of losing their land, because of getting deeper into debt.

**REQUEST:** Please help us raise more funds:

- 1) We need contributions of P200 per foodpack to reach the 10,000 foodpacks goal and to go beyond as there are more families in need.
- 2) We need P1,300/seeds per farmer, so we can reach the P1,300,000 goal to help 1,000 farmers so they can replant.