

**Ondoy / Pepeng Reconstruction Donors' Conference**  
**Manila, 2 December 2009**  
**Remarks by Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, European Union**

Mr Secretary, colleagues, partners – thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on what we have heard today

First, I would just like to thank, and congratulate, the WB and all who worked on the PDNA for being able to put together such a mass of information in such a short time. The European Commission was glad to have been able to help, through both our financial support for the work and through an input by a satellite-imagery expert. I shall certainly continue to study the PDNA report with great attention, not only for the physical needs assessment, but also for the indication of important policy measures or institutional recommendations which are contained there – including in such areas as DRRM and local governance.

Mr Secretary, I would also like to underline our recognition of the magnitude of the catastrophe which hit Metro-Manila and Central Luzon with Ondoy, followed only a short while later by further devastating rains in Northern Luzon from Pepeng. Particularly in the metropolis, it was clear that the magnitude of the flooding was such as to have presented a gigantic challenge even to the richest and best-prepared cities in the world. All those from national or local government agencies, and all those civil society organisations and private citizens who worked, with that “bayanihan spirit”, to bring succour to those afflicted by the flooding deserve our most heart-felt congratulations.

This was a point which the President of the European Commission, Mr Jose Manuel Barroso, underlined in his message of condolence and support to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, already on 29 September.

Mr Secretary, I do not want to take up too much time here, so I will simply put on record the willingness which the European Commission has shown to provide immediate relief and rehabilitation assistance to those affected by Ondoy and Pepeng. In particular :

- the EC provided an initial grant of humanitarian assistance of €2.0 million already on 29 September, and then followed this with a further grant of €7.0 million approved on 17 November. That makes a total of €9.0 million in relief and rehabilitation assistance, or approx PhP 630 million. This of course is additional to the almost €10.0 million in humanitarian assistance provided by individual Member States of the EU – taking the total EU contribution to some €18.92 million, or approx PhP 1.34 billion
- the European Commission has also provided a grant of €245,000 (PhP 17 million) to help cover part of the costs of the PDNA, together with satellite imagery and expertise from the EC’s Joint Research Centre
- in the agricultural sector, we are just commencing, with FAO, a project under our Food Facility, which will help increase rice yield and productivity through the small-scale irrigation and integrated crop management systems in rainfed areas. This project, with an EC grant of €4.2 million (approx PhP 290 million) will certainly be of assistance in some of the typhoon-hit areas of Luzon – as will a number of other, smaller, projects under the Food Facility which are currently under consideration
- finally, the EC has for some 15 years already been working actively with both national and local authorities, and civil society, to help strengthen disaster preparedness and disaster-risk-reduction capabilities. Since our DipEcho programme began in 1994, we have committed some €4.7 million (PhP 330 million) for DRR activities in the Philippines, and just in mid-September of this year we joined with NDCC in a major consultation exercise to help identify our priorities in this area for next year. Coincidentally, this consultation took place only some two weeks before Ondoy hit Manila.

Mr Secretary, I would conclude my remarks by underlining that the European Commission has always, and will always, stand ready to assist the people of the Philippines hit by natural or man-made disasters. Thank you.