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PRESS RELEASE

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EU, UNDP turn over disaster-resilient houses to Yolanda-affected families in Ormoc

29 June 2016, Ormoc City, Philippines— Fifty-five families in Ormoc City will soon be able to move in to their disaster-resilient homes with the turnover today of housing units supported by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

EU First Counsellor and Head Development Cooperation Achim Tillessen and UNDP Philippines Country Director Titon Mitra led the turnover ceremony of the housing units to the local government unit of Ormoc City.

The construction of disaster-resilient core shelters is part of the EU's package of assistance, delivered through UNDP's Project Recovery, to help families affected by Typhoon Yolanda. With funding support of EUR 9.7 million (approx. Php508 million) from the EU, Project Recovery complements the efforts of national and local governments in enabling the timely and sustainable recovery of Yolanda-affected communities and also builds their resilience to future natural disasters.

Project Recovery aims to provide a model for disaster-resilient resettlement infrastructure. The project is constructing 165 disaster-resilient houses with level 2 water system and electrical support facility in three sites (55 houses in each site): Ormoc City, Tacloban City and the municipality of Hernani in Eastern Samar. The 55 houses in Ormoc City have been completed and the rest will be finished by third quarter of this year.

"I am very happy that I will now be able to live in a house that is beautiful and sturdy. We have a newborn child, a new house. This is a big change in our life because our family can now live in a safe and comfortable house," declares Rosemarie Encabo, one of the shelter beneficiaries in Ormoc City.

The houses are constructed with sweat equity from the beneficiary families to ensure better ownership of the project. Families are organised into Homeowners Associations that oversee and manage the houses' construction and livelihood activities to make their resettlement community sustainable. Beneficiaries are trained in construction which enables them to secure employment with local construction companies.

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The project also helps to build the capacities of the local government units of Tacloban City, Ormoc City and Municipality of Hernani in addressing shelter, land, and resettlement planning and management issues and needs.

Project Recovery focuses on: rebuilding disaster-resilient infrastructure; restoring livelihoods and jobs in farming and fishing communities; addressing land management issues and shelter construction models to ensure relocation of displaced populations; and strengthening capacities for and linkage of national and local governance disaster response and preparedness.

Mr Tillessen of the EU said, “The EU values its strong partnership with the Philippine Government, both at the national and local levels, and with UNDP particularly in helping disaster-affected communities recover. We are pleased to see the first batch of 55 families completing their houses which have been designed to be more disaster-resilient. We hope that EU’s support through UNDP will help secure a better and safer future for these families.”

“We thank the EU for their continued support and commitment, and the local government of Ormoc City for ensuring that this project is implemented smoothly. We are delighted to see that 55 families now have permanent homes that they themselves have built with their own hands. These families will now live in homes that can withstand 300kph winds. They have also acquired construction skills that hopefully will help them find productive employment,” UNDP Philippines Country Director Titon Mitra said.

For more information, please contact:

UNDP

Jaclyn Grey, Communications Associate, UNDP Philippines
+63917 581 0495 || jaclyn.grey@undp.org

Alma Evangelista, Team Leader, Recovery and Peacebuilding Unit, UNDP Philippines
Alma.Evangelista@undp.org

Website: www.ph.undp.org || Twitter: @UNDPPH || On Facebook: www.facebook.com/undp.ph

Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines

Thelma Gecolea, Public Affairs Officer

Phone: +63 2 859-5124

e-mail : Thelma.Gecolea@eeas.europa.eu

Website : <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/philippines>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EUDelegationToThePhilippines>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/EUinthePH>