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Massive evacuations underway as Typhoon Haiyan threatens Central Philippines

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MANILLA, Philippines (November 7, 2013) — Government authorities are preparing for the worst as the Philippines braces for Super Typhoon Haiyan to hit the Visayas Islands on Friday, where the estimated population is 18 million people. It may also impact quake-hit zones of Bohol where World Vision currently has relief efforts. It is predicted to be the strongest storm this year with winds up to nearly 150 mph. Storm signals are now active in 12 areas as Haiyan enters the Philippines.

“Our response teams are on standby to support government efforts if needed, and staff and assisted families have been advised to take safety precautions,” assures Ernesto Macabenta, World Vision’s associate director of operations in Visayas. World Vision staff are working with national and local government disaster units, alerting communities along the storm’s path to take precautionary measures.

“Learning from our experience with Typhoon Washi in 2011, many families have taken refuge in the South City Central School. They will be sleeping in evacuation centers as part of the city’s preemptive evacuations of communities in low-lying and flood-prone areas,” said Crislyn Felisilda, World Vision’s communicator in Cagayan de Oro City.

Haiyan is forecasted to surpass Typhoon Bopha’s strength; that storm pummeled northern Mindanao last year destroying 216,000 homes. With a rain diameter of 300 km, Haiyan is expected to bring 40 - 60 mm of intense rains as it heads west-northwest to make landfall over the eastern provinces of Samar and Leyte by Friday (GMT +8). Haiyan also threatens southern Luzon, including the Bicol Region and metro Manila.

Classes and work have been suspended in affected areas until Friday. Sea ports were closed for safety and to prevent casualties. Coastal communities were advised to halt fishing activities and evacuate if necessary while farmers were urged to harvest farm products. Local governments and disaster agencies are prepositioning relief supplies and have identified possible evacuation centers.

“Families should prepare their survival kits and make sure that they retrofit their homes. Here in Bohol, families should strengthen their tents and makeshift houses in areas that are not flood-prone,” said World Vision’s Disaster Risk Reduction advisor Joyce Dumayag.
Earlier rains brought by Typhoon Wilma this week submerged Bohol's quake-hit towns and evacuation centers, adding woes to displaced families.

Unfazed by rains and aftershocks, World Vision relief teams in Bohol continued emergency aid distributions in Sikatuna, San Isidro, Loboc and Sagayan for 7,000 families. Shelter kits are also on the way for 4,000 families in the next six months of the emergency response.

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About World Vision
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