

REHABILITATION OF TYPHOON VICTIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines suffer from the disastrous effects of typhoons every year. Experience has demonstrated that most losses are due to inadequate shelters. The Department of Social Welfare and Development, the welfare arm of the government, is responsible for emergency shelter assistance to the disaster victims especially those whose houses have been totally destroyed. The department has spearheaded a program designed to assist the rehabilitation of typhoon victims in selected pilot regions of the country through the construction of typhoon resistant core shelter units. The units are being built under self-help basis pooling labor resources of the beneficiaries and utilising indigenous materials under the supervision of trained foremen ensuring that standards are maintained. Modular design of the unit will facilitate its future upgrading and further extensions as the family's socio-economic conditions improve. Behavior of the units built since 1988 until so far in several typhoons has been very encouraging. This paper describes the above aspects.

INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Archipelago is one of the most disaster prone areas of the world. It has a distinct geography consisting of as many as 7107 islands of which 11 constitute 94 percent of the total land area. Not all the islands are inhabited. It is a mountainous country and, except for urban areas, many towns and locations are accessible only via narrow dirt roads which can easily be rendered impassable by landslides or even washed away by flash floods. When this occurs communities may be isolated from the rest of the country for days.

The Philippines is subject to frequent disasters of many types. It is vulnerable in varying degrees to hazards like typhoons, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, seiche, storm surges and sea level changes. Typhoons regularly affect the country. The annual average number of tropical cyclones originating from or entering into the Philippine area of responsibility is 19-22 and 5 to 9 make landfall each year causing widespread damage. Flooding often results from heavy rainfall associated with tropical