

## NEWS RELEASE

### **In the Wake of Typhoon Haiyan: TVIRD and MRL Reach Out to Affected Iloilo Communities**



**A sunny disposition.** *Ilongos, natives of Iloilo who are known for their pleasant and carefree demeanor, soak-up the sunshine in Haiyan-affected Pan de Azucar Island. (In photo): PDA Project Officer-in-Charge Mariebeth Sagala with children in TVIRD and MRL's host barangay, Talotoan. Both children and their parents queued for relief goods at the PDA Project site after the storm.*

**Concepcion, Iloilo / November 2013** – As the sun rises over Barangay Talotoan in the Municipality of Concepcion, residents of the immediate community assess the damage inflicted by Typhoon *Haiyan*, which battered the Philippines' Visayas Region, including the island of Pan de Azucar where TVIRD and MRL's joint venture project is located. With howling winds likened to a jet engine, *Haiyan* ravaged the

archipelago's central island group and obliterated several towns in its path, causing damages pegged at over Php22 billion (USD502 million) and a rising death toll of 5,500. Experts consider it the worst typhoon the world has seen while some survivors who lived to tell said it was "worse than hell."

"Residents here lost three things to *Haiyan*: their livelihood, their homes and their possessions. In one blow, they lost everything," according to PDA Project Officer-in-Charge Mariebeth Sagala who herself had to temporarily evacuate her employees due to extraordinary strong winds and rising floodwaters during the storm.

"We had to abort documenting the storm's effect on our project site when the floodwater came in. Trying to get home, some of us had to climb trees and jump across," shared project personnel Elvie John Bello. "I had to retreat to the evacuation center and found my family there, thank God."

Almost two weeks after the onslaught, island residents continue waiting for much-needed rations of food and clothing. Despite their worries over depleting relief supplies coming from public and other benefactors as well as relatives from other parts of the country, the people remain grateful for what they have received and for having made it through another day with the help of private entities.

#### **A "soup kitchen" serving Arrozcaldo**

The province of Iloilo has a population of 1.8 million of which about 40 thousand belong to the Municipality of Concepcion. Talotoan is one of 25 barangays (communities) under the jurisdiction of Concepcion. Through the cooperation of the LGU and other private individuals, TVIRD and MRL were able to provide immediate relief to some 230 households in its project's host barangay, Talotoan.

An earlier fund drive among employees of both companies was channeled towards providing relief goods, which were immediately mobilized by personnel who needed to overcome various logistical challenges. On-site employees also initiated a "soup kitchen" that served *Arrozcaldo* (a local rice-chicken porridge) to an estimated 1,000 island residents who lined-up to receive individual packages containing clothes, hygiene kits, food, soap and other necessities for rebuilding the community.

Packing and relief distribution lasted for all of two days while an extended feeding program was conducted in order to accommodate residents from the farther corners of Barangay Talotoan who have endured a number of days without a proper meal. The initiative soon earned the name "Mobile *Arrozcaldo*."

Given the country's geographic composition and meager provincial infrastructure, the delivery of aid remains a burden for both national and local government. And while foreign assistance come in

generous droves, pouring-in millions from the country's major trading partners like the United States and Japan, reports of local politics and conflicting mandates from national and local governments have afforded yet another hurdle to otherwise speedy relief.

Through its consular and diplomatic mission in the Philippines, Canada's Federal Government even resolved to fast-track visa applications of Filipinos affected by Typhoon *Haiyan*, citing that "they can benefit from the help of family and community here in Canada if we bring those cases to the front."

### **A little sunshine after the storm**

Two days before the typhoon, Barangay Talotoan Chairman Leo Ferraris and his officials rolled-out an information drive warning residents. They relocated the seaside residents but nothing prepared all of them for a storm of that magnitude. People were in panic when the winds hit Talotoan while structures fell apart around them followed by a sudden surge of floodwater. He detailed the horror of seeing his people tripping on rocks, being wounded and crawling towards the mountain to stay above water.

"It pains me that while I am Barangay Captain, I cannot personally help my constituents since all of us were affected," Ferraris lamented. "I thank the company for providing relief goods to my barangay, especially at a time when we were struggling. I am also confident that it will continue to help our residents in rebuilding the community."

Harry dela Cruz, a local fisherman, experienced four hours of violent wind and rains, and almost died trying to rescue his boat – his family's only source of livelihood. After his futile attempt, Dela Cruz finally decided to follow his family who took refuge in the mountain ahead of him. All of their possessions were destroyed.

Another fisherman, Juanito Valderama de Anon, said it was the first time in his 68 years that he experienced a wave completely destroying his house. Like Dela Cruz, he also fled to the mountain during the surge and took cover in a neighbor's house with his family and 50 other people.

"God bless this company for helping us; also its employees who gave us food and clothes," expressed Dela Cruz. After the storm, both fishermen received assistance from the company in order to rebuild their homes. Both are also hopeful for new livelihood that will help them rebuild their lives.

### **Postscript**

*According to earlier reports, TVIRD projects and employees in the country were spared from Typhoon Haiyan, save for minor road repairs in some areas in the Mindanao Region. While its Pan de Azucar Pyrite Project sustained minor damages during the storm surge, all its employees are safe and have begun surveying nearby Barangays Macatunao and Tambaliza. Major structures on site are intact while repairs and rehabilitation are underway for its camp house, core house extension, seedling nursery and material recovery facilities.*

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**Press photos:**



- 1 **Overcoming logistical challenges.** Relief goods from TVIRD and MRL offices as well as those sourced from Iloilo City had to be transported by sea to Pan de Azucar Island.



- 2 **Mobile soup kitchen.** On-site employees initiated a “soup kitchen” that served Arrozcaldo to an estimated 1,000 island residents. The extended feeding program for neighboring communities soon earned the name “Mobile Arrozcaldo.”

#### **About TVI**

TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc., is the Philippine affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration and production of precious and base metals from district-scale large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines.

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