

## **Kenro Oshidari – Regional Presentation**

### **February 2014 Session of the Executive Board**

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In today's Asia regional presentation, I want to start with the Philippines, and then inform you on wider emergency preparedness plans in the region.

Just right after the Board when we last met in November, the Super Typhoon Haiyan slammed into the Philippines.

While the speed of deployment of WFP staff to help was quick, the staggering level of destruction the typhoon left behind challenged the Government and even the most experienced humanitarian workers – especially in the first 4 to 5 days.

But now, looking back the three months after the typhoon hit, I am confident that WFP has met the acute initial relief needs of the affected people. WFP lowered the status of the emergency from L3 to L2, exactly two months after the disaster. As I said during the operational briefing 2 weeks ago, I truly believe this signifies a successful fast emergency response at the start, and fairly quick stabilization of the operation, as well as transition to recovery phase.

I would like to thank, once again, the generous support from many of you, both government and private sector donors. Let me stop here, as I would like to show you a short video so as to give you a glimpse of what WFP emergency operation on the ground looks like in a situation like this.

**START VIDEO: 3 MINUTES**

As to the future of this operation, we do not anticipate continuing on direct assistance to the Typhoon affected population much beyond the originally planned 6 months period. Instead, we plan to invest significantly into emergency preparedness and response capacity of the Government, and this is also what the Government requested us to do, recognizing our operational capacity.

## **Preparedness**

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Typhoon Haiyan level disaster can happen elsewhere in the Philippines, but also in many other parts of Asia, including other sources of destructions such as monsoon floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions.

We are also acutely aware that it is now a common trend of the governments of the region that they will hesitate on calling international assistance unless the situation is completely overwhelming. And this is another reason why it is increasingly important that we invest and help in the national capacity building of the Governments in responding to emergencies themselves.

When we last met, I broadly outlined our regional preparedness strategy for Asia being developed together with OCHA, for 5 specific countries.

To recap, our strategy encompasses scenarios of mega-disasters, triggering a L3 response in the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Scenarios vary from earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons in specific parts of each country.

At a regional level, WFP is collaborating with Association of South-East Asian Nations – ASEAN in delivering a three-week training programme for junior executives of National Disaster Agencies of ASEAN nations. By doing this, WFP is supporting ASEAN’s ambitious plan to grow into an efficient regional responder to disasters.

Slightly from a different angle, but still along the same theme of preparedness, I want to mention our efforts in Afghanistan.

As you are aware, Presidential election will take place in early April in Afghanistan, and withdrawal of foreign military will continue throughout 2014. It is our sincere hope that all goes peacefully but with the continuing security threats we are experiencing, we are obliged to plan for business continuity under all possible scenarios.

As part of our own preparedness, management staff from our teams in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Regional Bureau and HQ met in Islamabad in November last year for forward planning.

Building on our joint meeting in November, our logistics teams in both countries, the Regional Bureau and HQ have just concluded a logistics preparedness meeting for 2014 and beyond in Kabul just last week, with a view to plan for cross border arrangements, agreements, pre-positioning of food/non-food items, and take stock of other challenges, including situations where we may not be able to maintain international presence in the capital city.

We believe that our own preparedness measures can enable us to pro-actively manage a programme and allow us to access the food insecure people in Afghanistan even in an increasingly complex operational environment.

I thank you for your time and for your continued support to WFP in Asia.