

Key Humanitarian Messages on Bunkhouses – HLP Working Group

- Given the scale of destruction, some people need to be temporarily accommodated in bunkhouses, which are being built by the Philippines' authorities. The bunkhouses will primarily house families who live in no-build zones and people who are still in evacuation centres. For most of them, the bunkhouses are an improvement compared to their current living conditions.
- Compared to the total destruction caused by Typhoon Yolanda, only comparatively few people are directly affected by the bunkhouse debate. According to Government up to 60,000 families will be accommodated in bunkhouses, but 1.1 million families have urgent shelter needs. The constructive discussion around standards for bunkhouses should not take away from the massive needs of the majority of survivors who need our assistance to build back safer before the next typhoon arrives.
- Following a meeting with DSWD and humanitarian shelter cluster partners on the 16th December 2013, a guidance note on recommended standards for bunkhouses was drafted and agreed by the international humanitarian communities' Protection, CCCM, Shelter, WASH and Early Recovery/Livelihoods clusters.
- Based on international humanitarian standards and on experience gained in emergencies both inside and outside the Philippines, the clusters have recommended a number of changes to the government's bunkhouse programme which we believe will help meet the needs of the people, especially around protection, design, site planning and the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- The international community would like to work with the Government on two approaches regarding bunkhouses: Firstly to support work for future bunkhouse plans and secondly to support the improvement of existing bunkhouses, both from a construction and social perspective. This should also include a dialogue on improved communication with beneficiaries, selection of beneficiaries and access to services and livelihoods.
- The Government has already started to implement some of the suggested changes; for example the living space per family has been doubled in some areas. The international humanitarian community stands ready to provide assistance to ensure that the temporary settlement (bunkhouse) sites provide the inhabitants with adequate and safe living space.
- We would welcome and support an enhanced dialogue with local authorities and national Government to ensure that the affected communities are consulted at all stages and that evacuation and relocation is voluntary.
- Best practice around bunkhouses exists and has been used in previous emergencies in the Philippines. This has been developed and used by DSWD with the support of the humanitarian community, and we hope to be able replicate and build on this process with DPWH. Furthermore humanitarian organizations have offered to provide training for DSWD and DPWH on camp coordination and site management – IOM has 30 experienced site managers in country who can be mobilised at short notice. The humanitarian community has also offered to provide a dedicated focal point to DPWH and DSWD to act as liaison and technical support for site planning, site upgrading/improvement and planning for durable solutions.