

28 January 2010 -- President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has conveyed her message of sympathy to Haiti in the aftermath of the widespread death and destruction caused by the 7.0- magnitude earthquake that rocked the Caribbean nation on January 12.

In her statement, the President said she had sent a personal message to Haitian President Rene Garcia Preval, conveying her "profound condolences" and pledging support and assistance to rescue and recovery efforts in the country.

"It is our fervent wish that Haiti recovers quickly and fully from the tragedy," she said.

President Arroyo has also ordered the Department of Health to send a 21-man medical team (RP-MedTeam) that left Manila last Monday to assist in the ongoing humanitarian efforts in Haiti. They arrived in Port-au-Prince yesterday afternoon (Haiti time), and is currently looking after the medical needs of the Haitian people and the Filipino community there.

The team, led by Dr. Emmanuel Bueno, consists of general and orthopedic surgeons, anaesthesiologists, nurses, public health emergency specialists, sanitary engineers, an internal medicine specialist, a pediatrician, a psychologist and a social worker.

They had earlier air-freighted their supplies and provisions ahead of the team's arrival in Haiti. These supplies and equipment, worth PhP13 million (around US\$278,000), will be donated to the Haiti Government afterwards.

The medical assistance is on top of the US\$50,000 the Philippine government donated towards the relief effort.

PGMA Sends Aid, Message of Sympathy to Haiti

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In her statement, the President assured that her government has taken urgent action to ensure the safety of the approximately 290 Filipinos living and working in Haiti as missionaries, volunteers, United Nations administrative personnel, and business executives.

She has also directed the Philippine Ambassador to Cuba, MacArthur Corsino, to personally check on the safety of Filipinos in the country and coordinate rescue operations.END