



Swiss Re donates Php 2.8 million to rebuild homes for landslide victims and help prevent future catastrophes

Contact:

Swiss Re Manila Representative Office
Manila Telephone: +63-2579-4141

Corporate Communications, Asia
Hong Kong Telephone: +852-2582 3660

Group Media Relations, Zurich
Telephone +41 43 285 7171

Swiss Reinsurance Company
Manila Representative Office
19D Tower One, Ayala Triangle
Ayala Avenue, Metro Manila
Philippines

Telephone +63-2759- 4141
Fax +63-2759-4343
www.swissre.com

Manila (March 10, 2005): Global firms have not forgotten the plight of Filipinos whose lives were devastated by the December 2004 typhoons. The Swiss Reinsurance Company is donating Php 2.8 million (USD50,000) to this cause, half which will go to Ateneo de Manila University for the rebuilding of homes in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija; with the balance designated for the “Save the La Mesa Watershed Project” initiated by ABS-CBN Foundation as a step to prevention of future landslides.

Swiss Re’s Chief Representative for the Philippines Mr Jose Luis Moreno was joined earlier in the La Mesa Reservation Area by the company’s General Manager for Southeast Asia Dr Reto Brosi, to prepare the first of 10,800 trees for planting in the “Swiss Re Forest 2005” situated in the 2,700 hectare La Mesa Reserve.

Helping them prepare the seedlings for planting were 12 senior representatives from Swiss Re’s Philippine insurance company clients, as well as staff from Swiss Re’s Manila office. The donation is part of Swiss Re’s Sharing Solutions initiative, which uses corporate citizenship activities to provide funding, expertise and active staff involvement in supporting communities to achieve sustainability goals.

“No one can prevent typhoons, but landslides are preventable,” said Dr Brosi. He pointed out that deforestation can lead to watershed degradation and landslides. “Planting trees can mean the difference between devastation and safety and security for millions of people in case of future typhoons or heavy rains,” he added.

Mr Moreno said, “We are pleased to be contributing to the relief and rebuilding effort, and as a company committed to sustainability in all aspects of our business, we believe it is also important to play a role in long-term disaster prevention.”

The Ateneo de Manila-led reconstruction project covers 120 homes in Gabaldon, and works in cooperation with Department of Social

Welfare and Development and Gawad Kalinga. It is part of the multi-sectoral "Kalinga Luzon" partnership dedicated to rebuilding an estimated 25,000 homes for victims of various disasters.

Gawad Kalinga community members are also taught to practise proper segregation and waste management, and encouraged to plant trees to preserve the natural habitat.

The La Mesa Reservation Area borders on Caloocan, Quezon City and the Municipality of Rodriguez in Rizal. "Save the La Mesa Watershed" is a project designed to rehabilitate, protect and develop the watershed for water production, prevention of soil erosion and flood control, and to create a carbon sink to aid the reduction of air pollution.

The area will also serve as a bio-diversity nature park for use by the general public. The park will include a bird lagoon, fishing wharf and butterfly pavilion. In late 2004, an orchidarium was inaugurated and is already open to the public.

The watershed is protected and reforested by ABS-CBN Foundation through its Bantay Kalikasan program, under a 15-year renewable contract with the government.

Swiss Re and sustainability

Corporations worldwide are becoming increasingly aware of their role in society. In this context, Swiss Re is committed to creating economic value while preserving natural resources and acting responsibly towards society. Thus, Swiss Re has adopted sustainability as a core value.

Swiss Re supports and contributes expert knowledge to research by various scientific and academic institutions into climate change, water management and related issues. The company is active on such international platforms as the United Nations Environmental Program Finance Initiative and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Swiss Re has also given expert input on sustainable development to the governments, organisations and clients of various countries.

Internally, Swiss Re has developed a comprehensive internal environmental management system aimed at reducing its own environmental footprint. In October 2003, Swiss Re announced the "Greenhouse Neutral" program to make its operations carbon neutral over a 10 year period.

In addition, Swiss Re sponsors the International ReSource Award for Sustainable Watershed Management, which recognizes community-based watershed management programs. The award enables the realization of projects which can be used as benchmarks for similar projects to encourage the use and protection of watershed resources. Winners have included projects from Guatemala, Nepal and Brazil in 2002, and from Vietnam and China in 2003. Award winners for 2004 will be announced in May 2005.

In recognition of its sustainability program and related activities, Swiss Re has been confirmed as the insurance sector leader of the Dow Jones Sustainability index.

Notes to editors

Swiss Re

Swiss Re is one of the world's leading reinsurers and the world's largest life and health reinsurer. The company operates through more than 70 offices in over 30 countries. Swiss Re has been in the reinsurance business since its foundation in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1863. Through its three business groups Property & Casualty, Life & Health and Financial Services, Swiss Re offers a wide variety of products to manage capital and risk. Traditional reinsurance products, including a broad range of property and casualty as well as life and health covers and related services, are complemented by insurance-based corporate finance solutions and supplementary services for comprehensive risk management. Swiss Re is rated "AA" by Standard & Poor's, "Aa2" by Moody's and "A+" by A.M. Best.

Swiss Re has been associated with Asia since 1913, and now has over more than 600 staff in 13 offices in Asia Pacific.