It is now two weeks since super-Typhoon Haiyan - one of the largest storms on record - struck an area of 57,000 square kilometres, with eighteen million people covering five major islands and countless smaller ones, in the Philippines.

The severe winds and storm surge wiped out entire towns. Millions of people have been affected, over five million of them children. More than four million made homeless, with more than a million homes destroyed or damaged.

The Government reports today that more than 5,200 people were killed by the typhoon and they continue to try to verify the numbers of people dead and missing, as they reach communities on remote islands or in mountainous areas.

A massive disaster like this requires a massive response.

I have been there twice in the last two weeks and have seen for myself how the Philippines Government, Philippines Red Cross and other national and provincial agencies quickly mounted a rescue and relief operation the morning after the storm, with the support of the international community.

I have seen and heard harrowing tales of desperate need and profound loss. I have also heard reports of immense bravery and heart-warming compassion.

I saw how the international community pulled together with the communities and authorities to work out how to overcome major obstacles and saw more and more people being reached with basic assistance.

To support the Government’s efforts, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations provided vital supplies, logistics teams and equipment. Other countries gave exceptional support by deploying military assets.

The Philippines has one of the best disaster management systems in the world – but the sheer scale of this typhoon and the storm surge which accompanied it in some places, would have tested any country.
The logistical challenges have been enormous, with many roads blocked and airports unusable in the first few days. The impact on essential services, hospitals, banks and markets, as well as the lack of communication, fuel, transport, water and power, made it very difficult to scale up aid as quickly as was needed.

After two weeks, we have reached 2.5 million people with basic food assistance, over 1.1 million family food packs with rice and high energy biscuits have been distributed.

79 local and 59 foreign medical teams are providing emergency treatment across the affected areas.

Clean water is available to everyone in Tacloban City. Thousands of tarpaulins and plastic sheets have been distributed.

Fourteen international military and 96 humanitarian partners have sent personnel, ships and planes to help the authorities clear aid routes and distribute supplies.

A vaccination campaign for half a million children under five, for measles, polio and Vitamin A, is set to start on Monday.

A UN cash-for-work scheme has 6,000 people involved in helping the authorities to clear debris.

Coordination hubs have been established in Tacloban, Roxas, Ormoc, Cebu and Guiuan.

However, much more needs to be done. Food, clean water and shelter remain the top priorities.

Vast numbers of vulnerable people are still exposed to bad weather and need basic shelter. And they are worried that the typhoon season has not yet ended.

Families who have lost their homes will need substantial longer-term support from the international community to ensure they have the means to rebuild their houses.

I was concerned that 1.5 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition and close to 800,000 pregnant and nursing mothers need nutritional help. People living with chronic disease, and other vulnerable groups, need medication and specialist care.

Emergency maternal medical care must be prioritized to ensure safe childbirth. With the breakdown of normal health services, health care workers are monitoring for measles, polio, tetanus, respiratory illnesses and diarrhoea.

Limited fresh water supply and poor sanitation pose a serious threat of disease. Larger supplies of hygiene kits, chlorine tablets, and temporary emergency toilets are needed to help prevent outbreaks of water-borne disease.

And of course, women and children are at greater risk of neglect, abuse and exploitation during emergencies. Many schools, homes, and community centres have been destroyed and there are few safe spaces for children and their parents to find psychosocial support.
Systems need to be put in place to help prevent sexual and gender-based violence in crowded communal shelters.

Early recovery work to assist agriculture and fishing to restore livelihoods and get local economies moving again is critical.

And people have little or no access to basic information through cell phones, internet and radio, TV or newspapers.

Ensuring disaster survivors can communicate with each other and with aid agency responders is critical. We are working with telecommunications and broadcasting organizations to get services to affected communities.

The international community has demonstrated great solidarity with the Philippines people. I would like to thank all donors and all individuals for their generous support.

The appeal I launched last week has now been updated from US$301 to $348 million dollars with additional relief projects from UN and partner organizations.

And tonight, music star David Guetta joins us here at the United Nations to raise awareness and funds for people affected by humanitarian crises around the world, including Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. We hope that his support will help generate an even more generous response.

Thank you all very much.