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Residents walk past their destroyed homes in Hernani town, Eastern Samar province on December 17, 2021, a day after Super Typhoon Rai pummelled the southern and central regions of the Philippines. AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

‘Odette’ left 2.2M workers reeling in its wake — ILO

MANILA— The Filipino workforce is still reeling weeks after Typhoon “Odette” battered several areas of the country days before Christmas last year.

In a statement on Friday, the International Labour Organization reckoned 2.2 million Filipino workers were affected by Odette’s aftermath, but the impact wildly varied in areas. The central bank said agriculture and tourism-based activities would be disrupted as a result of the super typhoon.

“It is heart-breaking to see how Typhoon Odette has affected already vulnerable workers with limited capacity to earn, less income security, and lack of social protection,” said Hideki Kagohashi, enterprise development specialist of ILO Philippines.

“A human-centred recovery is vital, one which places decent work and sustainable

livelihoods at the heart of efforts to build back better,” Kagohashi added.

The ILO reported that the hardest-hit workers resided in the Western Visayas region, which saw 21%, or 672,000, of its labor force impacted by Odette. At least 19%, or 343,000 of the workers who live in Eastern Visayas were disproportionately affected while 18% of workers in Central Visayas bore the brunt of the effects.

In the Caraga region, nearly one-third of its workforce had been hit by the aftermath. The region housed world-famous surfing destination Siargao Island which was nearly decimated by Odette, leaving behind an

estimated P20 billion in damages.

The ILO reported that Odette left the labor market in worse shape since it hit the most vulnerable of the sector wherein 38% of workers, or 839,000 women, suffered as a result. Citing data, the ILO said that before calamity struck, 3 in 5 of the impacted women workers worked low-paying jobs in agriculture, wholesale and retail trade or domestic work.

The organization also noted young and older workers were impacted by Odette as well.

“The typhoon devastated millions of lives and livelihoods and has dealt a huge blow to the socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the onslaught of the typhoon, the United Nations called the impact ‘a crisis within a crisis’ since the country is barely recovering from the pandemic, and currently addressing a spike in cases,” the ILO said. (Philstar.com)