

Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction



The Philippines is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries with a recorded total of 373 disaster incidents from 1905 to 2006 or about 4 incidents per year.

Each year, billions of pesos are spent aiding typhoon victims and repairing damaged infrastructure nationwide. This significantly impedes the country's social and economic development.

One way to cope with the situation is to strengthen disaster risk mitigation, particularly the reduction of risks. This is embodied in the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Framework developed by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC).

Disaster prone

According to NEDA Regional Development Coordination Staff Director Susan Rachel G. Jose, the Philippine's exposure to disasters is largely due to its geographic and geologic settings. The country is an archipelago of more than a thousand islands. Located along the *Ring of Fire*, it is vulnerable to volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. It also lies along the Western Pacific Basin, where monsoons, thunderstorms, intertropical convergence zones often originate.

In addition, the country is experiencing the repercussions of rapid urban development. Director Jose stated that rapid urban growth, inappropriate use of resources, and poor location of settlements, economic activities, and infrastructure lead to pressure of scarce land, deforestation, and environmental degradation. These ultimately may result in landslides, floods, drought, erosion and subsidence which all pose disaster problems.

Losses

Both natural and man-initiated disasters cause social, economic, and environmental losses. A single typhoon may destroy human lives, bridges, and ecosystems.

On the average, annual direct damage from 1970 to 2006 was PhP 15 billion (at 2000 prices). Typhoons alone take about 0.5 percent of the country's yearly gross domestic product (GDP). These obstacles are twice troubling for a developing country such as the Philippines where financial resources are channeled for reconstruction and rehabilitation rather than meeting the backlog in basic services such as: farm-to-market roads, school buildings, and low cost housing. To illustrate, a one-billion peso Calamity Fund can construct 2,500 elementary level classrooms or 2,174 secondary level classrooms or 161.29 kilometers of new farm-to-market roads or 20,000 core resettlement units or 50,000 household provided with Level III water supply projects.

Knowing the inevitability of these phenomena and their tremendous costs, it is clear that the present handling of disasters should be improved.

Paradigm Shift

Presently, whenever an earthquake hits or a volcano erupts, emergency and hazard scientists respond to the situation by planning actions such as relief operations. However, merely reacting to disasters is not sufficient.

Director Jose proposes that disaster management should be more proactive. Instead of responding to disasters, disaster risks should be reduced. The country should enhance both its soft and hard infrastructures such as training local and regional planners and creating hazard

mitigating structures. Here, risk specialists, economic managers, and development planners would be involved to foresee possible situations and thus prepare the country to cope with any eventuality.

A proactive stance against disasters is more beneficial. The US Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates, \$1 of investment on hazard mitigation generates \$4 in future benefits.

Project Brief

NEDA through its Regional Development Office is currently implementing “Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in Subnational Development and Physical Planning” Project. Its main objective is to reduce the impact of disasters through a strengthened planning framework and procedures and improved capacity of regional and local bodies. Outputs expected include guidelines for mainstreaming DRR, DRR enhanced plans, as well as training sessions on the utilization of the guidelines.

Jn/JI	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Prep Phase											
	Inception Phase										
			Formulation, Review and Enhancement of Guidelines								
			Preparation of DRR-enhanced plans								
								Conduct of Trainings			
										Wrap up	

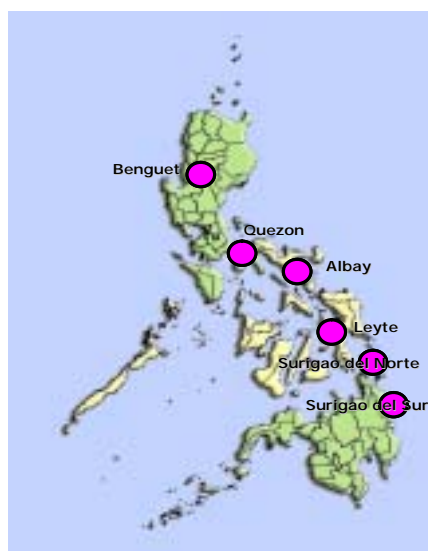
The project is to be completed in 11 months (July 2007 - May 2008)

Funding for the project would come from the European Commission (EC) Humanitarian Aid Department through its Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan for South East Asia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project would be implemented from June 15, 2007 to May 15, 2008.

Roles and Collaborations

The program involves various agencies and institutions to ensure efficient and effective execution.

Regions and provinces are tasked to provide the scope, methodology, and data during the inception phase of the program. After this, they review the proposed guidelines and act as sources of data for the case studies. Then, they provide inputs on the design of the training and participate in the trainings themselves. Lastly, they



Pilot areas for DRM implementation are among those hit hardest by calamities

test the applicability and usability of guidelines and formulate DRR-enhanced plans.

There would also be collaboration with the mapping and risk assessment activities of the ongoing Hazard Mapping and Assessment for Effective Community Based Disaster Risk Management (READY¹) Project of the NDCC. The maps and risk assessment data produced through READY will be used in preparing the sub-national plans.

To ensure complementarities with different sectors, various government agencies were tapped to sit in the Project Board. These are the DILG, OCD, MGB, PAGASA, and PHIVOLCS. Also sitting as member is a representative of the League of Provinces. Selected governors and RDC representatives will also sit in the Board as soon as all RDCs have been fully constituted.

The proposed pilot areas include Benguet, Quezon, Albay, Leyte, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur.

(Footnotes)

¹ Under the READY Project, the REDAS software has been reprogrammed to include other hazards.

Sources:

Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in Sub-National Development and Physical Planning in the Philippines, Director Susan Rachel G. Jose, Regional Development Coordination Staff, NEDA, 30 August 2007

<http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/238674/C1%20ECP%20Jose.pdf>