

Ms. Ma Aletha Ahumada Nogra from the Philippines



Mabuhay from the Philippines! I am Ma. Aletha Ahumada-Nogra, Civil Defense Officer III from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Department of National Defense (DND). The OCD is the executive arm and secretariat of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC). OCD is a civilian bureau situated under the DND, and the Secretary of the DND is the Chairman of the NDRRMC. OCD's mission is to lead and administer a comprehensive national civil defense and disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) program in the Philippines and its vision is to be a center of excellence in disaster risk reduction and management by 2020.

I am currently assigned to the OCD-DND Regional Center VI, which is comprised of six provinces, two highly urbanized cities, 117 municipalities, and 16 component cities. Our area of responsibility includes the four main islands (of the 7,107 islands of the Philippines) of Panay Island, Guimaras Island, Boracay Island, and a part of Negros Island.

Presently, I am serving as the Chief, Training Unit of OCD Region VI. As such, I am working closely with the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (LDRRMCs) on coordinating the implementation of various DRRM trainings prepared by the OCD Central Office. One of my tasks is to act as a resource person in the field of DRRM. Likewise, I provide technical assistance to various stakeholders in the conduct of capacity-building and enhancement programs in DRRM in the Western Visayas Region.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to ADRC for this opportunity to intensively learn about and really experience the best practices in disaster risk reduction in Japan. As a Visiting Researcher, I have personally seen how saving lives and minimizing property damage have become a way of life for Japan, which serves as a showcase that the rest of the world can learn from. I also had the privilege of attending the ACDR2013 and the International Recovery Forum (IRF) where presentations covered the many lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake and other mega disasters. I also thank ADRC for bringing together four nations (Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and India) through the Visiting Researcher Program so that we can learn from one another's strengths and weaknesses, and help make our countries more resilient to disasters.

This research is my humble contribution to ADRC and the Republic of the Philippines through the OCD and aims to advance our pursuit of safer, more adaptive, and more resilient communities as we strive for the goal of sustainable development for our children, and for our children's children.