

Ms. Carmelita Laverinto (Philippines)



I am Carmelita Laverinto, and I am from the Philippines. I am a certified public accountant by profession. I joined the government service in 2002, when I took a position with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD). At present, I am working as a Special Disbursing/Planning and Budget Officer in the OCD Regional Center 3 (OCDR3), and thus my area of

responsibility is the Central Luzon Region. I am in charge of all financial transactions relating to personnel services (PS), the maintenance of other operating expenses (MOOE), the quick response fund (QRF), and the trust fund (TF) of OCD Regional Center 3.

In addition to my work, I provide assistance in the preparation and conduct of training and seminars/workshops on disaster risk management and contingency planning, to different local government units (at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay (neighborhood) levels) as well as the conduct of earthquake drills in schools. I also assist in the coordination and conduct of Regional/Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (R/PDCC) meetings and other activities relating to disaster management within my area of responsibility.

The Philippines is considered to be one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Its location makes it vulnerable to a variety of natural disasters. Lying along the western rim of the Pacific and along the circum-pacific seismic belt, it is subject to storms, typhoons, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, droughts, and other natural hazards. Disasters are a serious threat to both people and property, particularly in densely populated areas. At least 60% of the total land area of the country is exposed to multiple hazards, and as a result 74% of its population is vulnerable.

The Central Luzon Region is one of the most dynamic regions in the Philippines. Located at a crossroads in the Asia-Pacific region, it serves as a gateway for European and American enterprises wanting to penetrate Asia. Central Luzon contains the

largest plain in the country, earning it the name "the rice bowl of the Philippines." The region is comprised of seven provinces (Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales) with thirteen (13) cities and 116 municipalities. Central Luzon is especially prone to typhoons and flooding.

The Office of Civil Defense Region 3 serves as the secretariat and operating arm of the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council in Central Luzon. It has the primary task of coordinating the activities and functions of various government agencies and organizations, private institutions, and civic organizations at the regional level, for the protection and preservation of life and property during emergencies.

The ADRC's Visiting Researcher (VR) Program is a great opportunity for conducting research on disaster reduction. The sharing of information and experiences with fellow ADRC member will give me an opportunity to help develop a strategic approach to the promotion of safer communities. For these reasons and more, I am impressed with the program and I am delighted and honored to have been chosen to serve as a visiting researcher. The experiences I have had during my stay have been tremendously helpful. Japan has achieved an amazing level of development, and is implementing an impressive portfolio of mitigation and preparedness measures. Looking around, one can readily see the care and commitment of Japan's local communities and government agencies to protecting its environment, forests, water supply, air quality, and surroundings. Japanese governance is impressive indeed. Japan's disaster risk reduction plans, programs, development projects, and efforts to build a resilient community are exemplary of good government leadership.

In this regard, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the government of Japan and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), both its management and staff, for all the support that has been extended to me and to the Philippines, and for allowing me to have such a fruitful experience in Japan.

More information on Disaster Management of the Philippines:

<http://www.adrc.asia/nationinformation.php?NationCode=608&Lang=en&NationNum=>