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Ⅰ. PAST MAJOR DISASTERS IN THE PHILIPPINES:

1. Situational Analysis

The Pacific Rim is not only a community of the fastest growing and most dynamic nations in the world. It is also the area exposed to a wide range of natural disaster. The Philippines archipelago, located near the western edge of the Pacific Ocean, is in the direct path of seasonal typhoons and monsoon rains which bring floods, storm surges, and their attendant landslides and other forms of devastation. The Philippines also sits on the “ring of fire” where the continental plates collide and thus experience periodic earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The Philippine exposure to natural disasters may be characterized as frequent, varied, and severe; a combination which has made the country particularly attentive to disaster reduction.

Data shows -an upturned of disasters as the decade of the 90's loomed. Impact of which exact tremendous toll on lives and properties, notwithstanding rollback gains in the economy out of proportion. Coinciding with the inception year of the IDNDR, the Philippines was hit by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on July 15, 1990 killing 1,283 people and leaving three (3) cities in Luzon:
Cabanatuan City, Dagupan City and Baguio City davastated at about P12.2. Billion estimated damages. In the same year, eight (8) strong typhoons hit the country, claiming 670 lives but registered at P 12.8 Billion high in damages.

Not to be outdone, 1991 was the year when Mount Pinatubo erupted after 400 years of slumber where 850 people died. Dubbed as a disaster of global magnitude, it altered climatic conditions worldwide, and continues to reconfigure the terrain and landscape of the central plain of Luzon through the flows of lahar (Lahar I, U and V) brought about by the eruption. The geological changes caused by this volcanic eruption continues to bring disasters I Central Luzon with every rainy season. Cities of Olongapo and Angeles, where Clark Air Base and Subic Bay economic zones situated were greatly affected. On the other hand, though the smaller in damages amounting to P 1 Billion, the tragic Ormoc City flashfloods left 5,101 people dead. So short a time, and with thin forest cover to serve as breakers, rain water brought about by tropical storm "Uring" gushed downstream, washed out and drown city folks into the sea.

Destructive typhoons, crossed the country, thirteen (13) in 1993 with 794 people dead and estimated P20 Billion damages. Again, in 1995, nine (9) of them killed 1,204 and destroyed P15 Billion worth of damages. Floods and landslides have also hit the country. In 1995, floods and landslides affected the islands of Mindanao and Negros.

The recent destructive natural phenomena that afflicted the Philippines in 1998, is the impact of the El Niflo Phenomenon. Around 985,000 families have suffered from starvation due to the severe lack of water affecting mostly farmers which subsequently reduced their income unable to purchase food at the household level in critical areas.

For the year 1999, the effects of the La Nina Phenomenon has been mere pronounced with the occurrence of eight (8) typhoons and intense rainfalls and floodings in various parts of the country. The most tragic effect was a landslide at the Cherry Hills Subdivision in Barangay San Luis, Antipolo City, near Metro Manila on August 3, 1999, at around 7:30 P.M.

A cliff at the eastern side of the subdivision collapsed after three days of continuous rain. Loosened earth and mud descended on the subdivision, burying in its wake nearly half of the 440 houses that made up the housing site. Observers said that the surge of muddy water was so strong, it pushed the entire houses a few meters way from its original location.

The landslide incident left behind 58 dead, 31 rescued/injured and one (1) still missing (Mr. Dante Tecson). A total of 125 families were affected while 379 houses recorded collapsed/damaged.

Other disasters include locust/rat infestations, major volcano pyretic explosion, landslide, tornado and other man-made disasters. Effects of disasters were as follows: Dead - 435; Injured -311-; Missing -24, Affected Population - 1,016,379 families or 4,722,460 persons and cost of damage P1.7 Billion or US $ 41 Million.

Under existing policies on emergency relief from abroad, the Philippine government may request or solicit for international assistance when requirements arising from human and physical damages are beyond its coping capacity. However, offers of international assistance may be accepted but depending on the needs and requirements in the disaster-stricken areas.

On this regard, there were only two major disaster events when the Philippine government issued an appeal for international assistance namely, the July 16, 1990 Earthquake (7.8 magnitude), and the Mt. Pinatubo Volcanic Eruption in June, 1991 dubbed as the worst volcanic eruption of the century. Assistance came in the form of search and rescue teams/equipment during the first ten days after the 1990 earthquake and relief supplies from various countries and organizations.

For the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo Volcano Eruption, cost of emergency relief assistance from abroad amounted to around US $ 92,145,756.00 coming from 10 UN bodies, 24 countries, 16 international NGOs and Red Cross Societies in 11 countries.

Ⅱ. DISASTER COUNTERMEASURES

Disasters have always been a part of life of the Filipinos and learned to live with them. Their resiliency to overcome these difficulties is a symbol of the steadfastness of the Filipinos who have always remained undaunted despite these adversities that their way.

Deeply concerned with the serious effects of disasters, upon the lives and properties of the people, and realizing the fact that disasters occurrence has to be a way of life of the Filipinos due to its geographical location, the Government of the Philippines has instituted to counteract the ill-effects of disasters in terms of laws and regulations, organizations and Disaster Management planning among others.

1. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

1) BASIC LAW IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN THE PHILIPPINES

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1566

This Decree, which was promulgated on June 11, 1978, calls for the "Strengthening of the Philippine Disaster Control Capability and Establishing the National Program on Community Disaster Preparedness".

Salient Provisions:

1. State policy on self-reliance among local officials and their constituents in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters.
2. Organization of the National, Regional and Local Disaster Coordinating Councils (DCCs).
3. Preparation of the National Calamities and Disaster Preparedness Plan (NCDPP) by the Office of Civil Defense and implementing plans by the NDCC member-agencies and local DCCs.
4. Conduct of periodic drills and exercises by concerned agencies and local DCCs.
5. Authority for the local government units to program funds for disaster preparedness activities such as the organization of DCCs, establishment of Disaster Operations Center (DOC) and training and equipping of DCC response teams. This is in addition to the 5% under Sec. 324 (d) of the Local Government Code of 1991, as amended.

RULES AND REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING P.D. 1566

Under the IRR of PD 1566, the disaster management activities of DCC member-agencies as well as procedures and guidelines for inter-agency coordination and dissemination of information during the three (3) phases are defined.

A. Pre -Disaster Phase

1. Planning for Disaster

• Development/formulation of Disaster Management Plan (DMP) to be submitted to the RDCC through the OCD for review and evaluation. The plan should conform to the guidelines in the NCDPP and shall be revised/updated as necessary.

2. Organizing

• Organization of DCCs in accordance with the DCC structure set forth in the NCDPP, supported with a Sanggunian Resolution.

• Establishment of DCC guidelines for inter-agency coordination/ networking.

3. Training

• Conduct of training on disaster management for DCC members; skills training for DCC operating teams, volunteers and community members in coordination with the following agencies: OCD provides guidance and assistance in the development/preparation of programs of instruction and the conduct of training; DSWD provides guidance in the conduct of disaster preparedness of the barangay tri-sectoral group focused on relief; PNRC conducts disaster leadership training courses; DECS assists in the public education campaign through integration in school curricula of subjects relative to disaster; DTI trains disaster control groups/reaction teams in large buildings used for commercial purposes.

4. Drills

• Conduct of organizational and community drills/exercises periodically in order to assess effectiveness in responding to disasters. OCD shall assist/observe and provide critique in the conduct of drills and exercises.

5. Stockpiling

• Pre-determination of food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, transportation and other emergency requirement.
• Takes appropriate measures to stockpile the same.

6. Resource Data Canvassing

- Identification of existing resources.
- Evaluation capability of resource organizations to carry out disaster-related tasks.
- Allocation of suitable roles to resource organization.

7. Public Information/Awareness Drive

- Conduct of public information/awareness campaign in coping with disaster situations in coordination with the Office of Civil Defense, Philippine Information Agency as well as other government/or private entities with facilities for dissemination of information.

8. Communications and Warning Activities

- Organization of warning units in the province.
- Establishment of a warning system that must be clearly defined and written down in plans, standard operating procedures and other relevant documents.
- Inform concerned officials and agencies in the province as well as the general public of the warning system.

B. Emergency Phase

- Mobilizes all emergency services of the DOC, namely, rescue and engineering, evacuation, first aid and medical services, emergency relief, police and fire auxiliary, transportation and survey and damage assessment with the national government supporting the efforts of the Council..
- Evaluation of survey results and submission of damage report and recommendation to NDCC through the RDCC.

C. Post-Emergency Phase

1. Cross-checking of data of damage report with pre-emergency data obtained to facilitate the location or whereabouts of persons and to assess available community resources for rehabilitation purposes.

2. Rehabilitation Requirements
Determines the nature and extent of rehabilitation efforts to be undertaken and requests for assistance from appropriate government agencies, private offices/agencies or individuals, if the situation goes beyond the capability of the PDCC.

2) OTHER LAWS WITH DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS

1. PD 1096 - Otherwise known as the National Building Code of the Philippines. It specifies minimum requirements and standards on building design for buildings to protect against fires and natural disasters.

2. Rule 1040 of the Occupational Safety and Health Standards (as amended) provides for the organization of disaster control groups/health safety committee in every place of employment and the conduct of periodic drills and exercises in work places.

The administration and enforcement of this Rule is reposed upon the Department of Labor and Employment, in co-ordination with the local government unit where the work placed is located.

3. PD 1185 Otherwise known as the “Fire Code of the Philippines”.
This Decree requires, among others, the administrators or occupants of buildings, structures and other premises or facilities and other responsible persons to comply with the following:

a. Inspection requirement by the Bureau of Fire Protection as a prerequisite to the grant of permits and/or licenses by LGUs or other government agencies concerned.
b. Provisions for safety measures for hazardous materials as well as for hazardous operations/processes.
c. Provisions for fire safety construction, protection and warning system such as firesprinklers, alarm devices, firewalls, fire exit plan, etc.
d. Conduct of periodic fire and exit drills.

4. R.A. 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, as amended.

The LGC of 1991 contains provisions supportive of the goals and objectives of the disaster preparedness, prevention/mitigation programs. These provisions of the LGC reinforce the pursuit of Disaster Management Program at the local government level.

Every local government units shall exercise the powers granted, those necessarily implied therefrom, as well as powers necessary, appropriate or incidental for its efficient and effective governance, and which are essential to the promotion of general welfare. Within their respective territorial jurisdiction, local government units shall ensure and support, among other things, the preservation and enrichment of culture, promote health and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology, encourage and support the development of appropriate and self-reliant scientific and technological capabilities, improve public morals, enhance economic prosperity and social justice, promote full employment among their residents, maintain peace and order and preserve the comfort and convenience of their inhabitants.

Sec. 17 Basic Services and Facilities Devolved to LGUs

This provision speaks of the basic services and facilities devolved to the local government units.

Specifically, among the devolved functions and facilities are (1) health services which include hospitals and other tertiary health services; (2) social welfare services which include program and projects on rebel returnees and evacuees; relief operations, and population development services, and (3) infrastructure facilities intended to service the needs of the residents of the province and which are funded out of provincial funds, including but not limited to provincial roads and bridges; inter-municipal waterworks; drainage and sewerage; flood control and irrigation systems; reclamation projects, and similar facilities.

- Sec. 389 and 391. Powers, Duties and Functions of the Punong Barangay and Sangguniang Barangay

- Secs. 444 and 447. Powers, Duties and Functions of the Municipal Mayor and Sangguniang Pambayan

- Sec. 455 and 458. Powers, Duties and Functions of the City Mayor and Sangguniang Panlunsod

- Sec. 465 and 468. Powers, Duties and Functions of the Provincial Governor and Sangguniang Panlalawigan

Generally, under the above provisions of RA 7160, the local chief executives and Sanggunian are expected to carry out the following DM functions and responsibilities:

Local Chief Executives:
1. Implement the emergency measures during and in the aftermath of a disaster or emergency.
2. Submit supplemental reports to higher authority/OP re extent of damages incurred due to disasters or calamities affecting the inhabitants.
3. Call upon law enforcement agencies to suppress civil defense disturbance/uprising.
4. Promote the general welfare/ensure delivery of basic services.

Sanggnnian:

1. Adopt measures to protect the inhabitants from the harmful effects of natural or man-made disasters.
2. Provide relief and rehabilitation services/assistance to victims.
3. Adopt comprehensive land use plan.
4. Enact/Review zoning ordinances.

Sec. 324 (d) as amended by RA 8185, s-1997 which states that "Five percent (5%) of the estimated revenue from regular sources shall be set aside as annual lump sum appropriations for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and other works or services in connection with calamities occurring during the budget year: Provided, however, that such fund shall be used only in the area or a portion thereof, of the local government unit, or other areas affected by a disaster or calamity, as determined and declared by the local sanggunian concerned.

3) PRESIDENTIAL ISSUANCES

- EO 948, s-1984 on the grant of compensatory benefits to disaster volunteer workers (Note: This has yet to be enforced).
- Proclamation No. 296 s, 1988 as amended by EO 137, s-1999 declaring the 1st Week of July of every year as Natural Disaster Consciousness Week (now Whole Month of July as National Disaster Consciousness Month)

- PMO No. 36, s-1992 as amended by PMO No. 42, s-1997 on the establishment of a special facility for the importation and donation of relief goods and equipment in calamity-stricken areas.

- PMO dated February 10, 1999 on the guidelines on the programming and use of calamity fund

- EO 137 dated August 10, 1999, declaring the month of July of every year as National Disaster Consciousness Month and Institutionalizing the Civil Defense Deputization Program.

D. NDCC Issuances:

- Memo Order No. 02, s-1999 - Revised policies and procedures on calamity fund management.
- Memo Order No. 04, s-1998 - Amended policies, procedures and criteria for calamity area declaration.
- Memo Order No. 13, s-1998 - Amended policies and procedures on the provision of financial assistance to victims of disasters.
- Others such as policies and procedures on foreign disaster assistance, criteria and procedures on the search for outstanding DCCs and disaster heroes, community-based rescue, evacuation and relief operations and volunteerism.

2. ORGANIZATIONS:

The basic Philippine law on disaster management, Presidential Decree (PD) 1566, promulgated in 1978, provides for the organization of multi-sectoral disaster coordinating councils at every level of government, from the national level to the barangay (or village) level. Through these disaster coordinating councils, which are able to link with all relevant government agencies and civic organizations, Philippine communities mobilize resources and capabilities needed to manage disasters.

The disaster coordinating council approach enables the country to utilize all available means for disaster response, means that are ordinarily used for military and police missions, public service or commercial purposes, but may be rapidly converted into disaster reduction capabilities. It also allows for routine cooperation, sharing of resources, and dissemination of information during periods of extreme stress and emergencies. At the same time, the disaster management coordination approach provides for dedicated technical capabilities for specialized disaster management services as well as confuting attention to disaster preparedness.
At whatever scale of disaster, whether national, regional, provincial, municipal, village, or any levels in between, an appropriate disaster coordinating council is established, organized and trained to respond. The National Disaster Coordinating Council or NDCC, is the policy-making and coordinating body for disaster management at the national level. It directs all disaster preparedness planning, as well as disaster response operations and rehabilitation, both in the public as well as private sectors. It advises the President on mattes related to natural calamities and disasters, including recommendations for the declaration of a state of calamity in disaster-affected areas. It is composed of the heads of fourteen national ministries, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Secretary-General of the Philippine National Red Cross, and the Administrator of the Office of Civil Defense. The Defense Minister, or Secretary of National Defense, serves as the Chairman, of the NDCC, with the Civil Defense Administrator as Executive Officer.

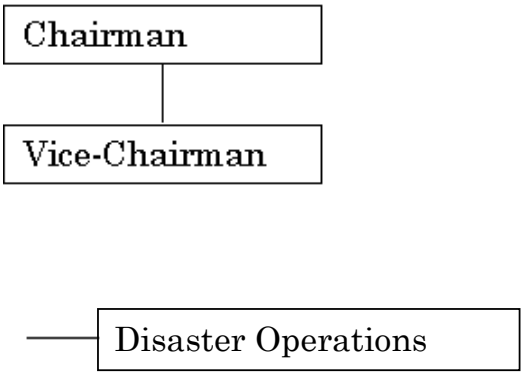
In each local government of the province, city or municipality, the local disaster coordinating council is headed by the elected chief executive, such as the governor or mayor. In these local disaster coordinating councils, local as well as central government agencies operating at the local level cooperate with civic and non-government organizations under the leadership of the highest elected local official. Thus, disaster management is imbedded deeply into the democratic of governance of the Philippines.

Typical DCC organizational chart (see attached)

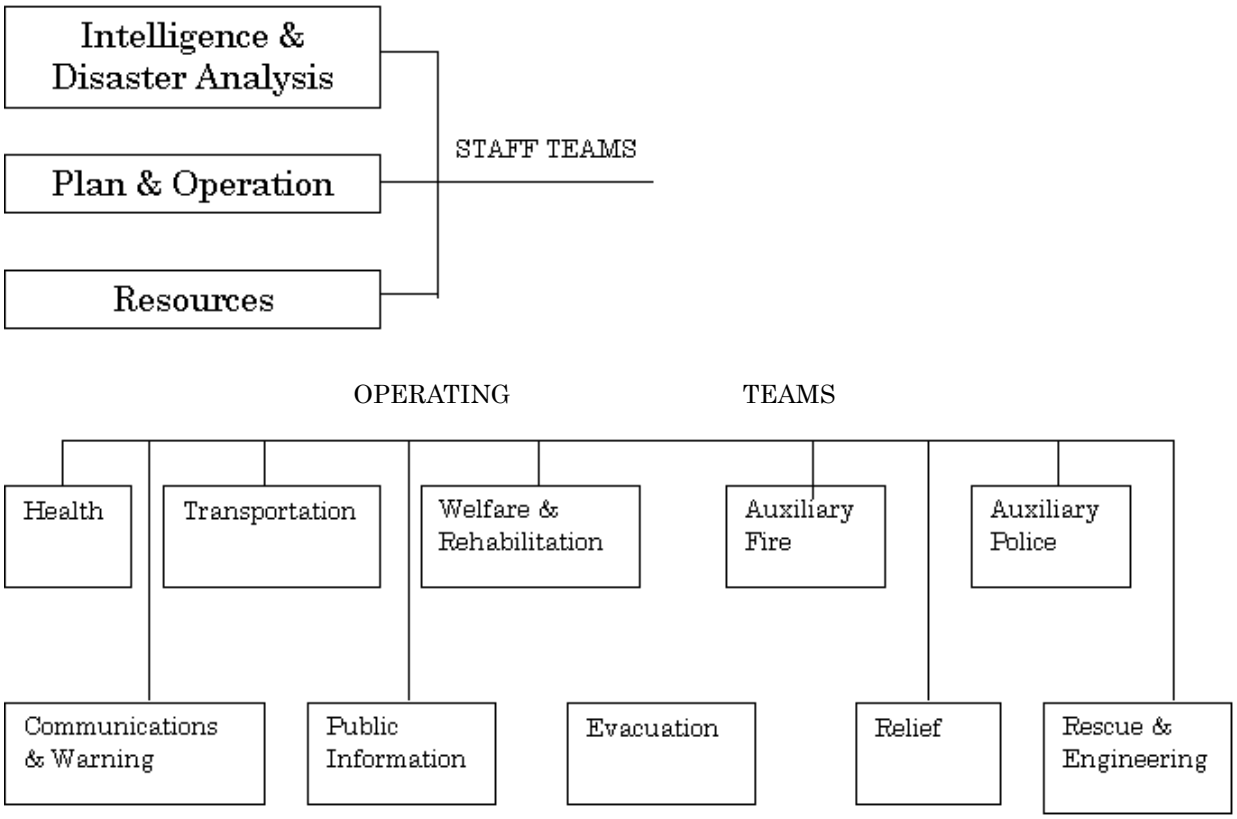
1) DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANNING:

Planning for disasters or emergencies was institutionalized under Presidential Decree No. 1566, s-1978, which called for the formulation of a National Calamities and Disaster Preparedness Plan by the Office of Civil Defense, and implementing plans by NDCC with member-agencies which should conform with the national plan. Other DCC networks are likewise expected to formulate their respective plans for disaster management.

TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF A DISASTER COORDINATING COUNCIL



Center



In 1991, the government realizing the significance of disaster mitigation in achieving sustainable development started integrating this component of disaster management into the Medium Term Philippine Development under the Development Sector Administration.

At the local government level, provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays (villages) are required to integrate their disaster management plans into their respective local development plans.

Part of the disaster management training for members of the Disaster Coordinating Councils is Disaster Management Planning components of which include the preparation of a hazard and resource map of the community, DM plan, implementing plans of the DCC Operating Teams and annual action plan.

Contingency plans are also formulated to address specific emergencies that may likely affect the country and communities.

These plans are regularly updated and revised and are activated upon the occurrence of a disaster or emergency.

2) OTHER DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:

1. Disaster Preparedness and response

- Enhancement of Early Warning and alert system including Emergency Broadcast System
- Effective Networking for Disaster Response, particularly with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Private Sector.

- Conduct of Rapid Needs and Damage Assessment of calamity-stricken areas to facilitate timely and adequate response.
- Conduct of simulation exercises, particularly for earthquakes and search and rescue operations.
- Development of an Emergency Information System (EMIS) to facilitate info sharing as basis of decision-making.

2. Vulnerability and Risk Reduction as vital component of Disaster Management Planning

- Review of public safety and risk management policies.
- Community-based hazard identification and risk assessment.
- Development of GIS capability

3. Human Resource Development

• Establishment of an Emergency Management Institute of the Philippines. This is housed at the National Defense College of the Philippines at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
• Development of Standard Training modules for Disaster Management training of DCC members.
We call these modules as "RERT" modules which means "Responsive, Effective and Relevant Training Modules".
• Conduct of special training for AFP, Media and other critical groups.

4. Advocacy for Civil Protection

• Continuous conduct of public information and education through the mass media, symposia, orientation, briefing
• Advocacy for public safety, protection of cultural resources and protection of the environment through radio/TV plugs, radio/TV guestings, conduct/observance of relevant events.

Ⅲ. DISASTER REDUCTION COOPERATION AMONG ASIAN COUNTRIES

While the Philippines has largely relied on its own resources to manage the disasters it had encountered, it has also benefited from tremendous international, and particularly Asian, cooperation in this field. The similarity in the types and severity of disaster exposure shared by Asian countries make Cupertino among them particularly useful and important. For the Philippines, this cooperation has contributed to the rapid development of national and local disaster management capabilities.

The following are some examples of excellent international cooperation which the Philippines has experienced.

a. In terms of strengthening the disaster-reduction organization and capabilities, the Philippines had benefited from international cooperation in the development of the flood forecasting and warning systems for three Luzon River Basins, namely the Agno, Bicol and Cagayn river basins; and installation of the lahar warning and monitoring systems at the Mt. Pinatubo and Mt. Mayon areas.

b. In terms of transfer of technology and training in disaster reduction, the Philippines has benefited from international cooperation in such examples as training of Filipino experts on Japan on disaster prevention technology and administration, improving cyclone warning response, and a seismic engineering; in Thailand on disaster management at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, and in Australia or radiological emergencies.

c. In terms of increasing awareness in disaster reduction, the Philippines has participated in such international conferences as the 1994 world conference on IDNDR; ASEAN experts meeting on disaster management; sessions of the Typhoon Committee.

d. In terms of sharing relevant information, the Philippines has developed its own disaster information system; participated in. networks for sharing weather satellite images and data communications to access UN-DRA and other international disaster organizations.

e. In terms of receipt of disaster relief assistance, the Philippines has benefited from generosity and kindness of many governments and nations. The extent of this foreign assistance is such that the Philippine has developed and implemented guidelines for the smooth and expeditious handling and receipt of food, clothing, medicines and equipment donated by foreign governments and civic organizations for disaster relief and rehabilitation. The Office of the President serves as the primary conduit for all these donations to be channelled to the affected communities.

The illustrative examples cited point to the catalyzing role of international cooperations. It brings new and added capabilities which may not have been fully developed yet in the country. And it also increase the benefits of sharing so that the benefactor as well as the recipient gain something from their cooperations. While international cooperations in disaster reduction has been extensive and gratifying thus far, there could be other areas of possible improvements in this field of international cooperation.

1. Prospects for Further International Cooperation

From the perspective of the Philippine disaster management experience, there are a number of areas which offer good prospects for international cooperation in disaster reduction.

a. Strengthening collapsed building rescue capabilities. This specific area of disaster management is a priority area of the Philippines because of its high exposure to earthquake risks. While a Philippine task force trained and equipped for collapsed building rescue currently exists, its capabilities need to be strengthened and broadened in terms of advanced specialized training, equipage and more exposure to varied real-life rescue operations.

b. Developing a national center for disaster research and training: In the light of the frequency, variety and severity of disasters in the Philippines, the government has seen the need for a specialized technical center for training and research in various aspects of disaster management. This center can specialize in those areas of concern to the Philippines and may be linked with other similar centers abroad.

c. Mobilizing information technologies for disaster management: A broad class of information technologies such as geographic information systems, database management systems and other rapid analysis and presentation systems are currently available and useful for disaster management. The hardware, software and model uses of such technologies that can be made available to Philippine disaster management. organizations will provide a tremendous boost its disaster preparedness and disaster reduction endeavors.

d. Systematic disaster capabilities planning: Current knowledge about the nature of disaster risks in various communities and areas of the Philippine could be matched by a set of appropriate disaster management capabilities that may need to be developed in those areas or communities. This could serve as the basis for upgrading current disaster preparedness plans. Such a systematic effort could be undertaken with international cooperations and a special support program so that a better matching of risks and capabilities is achieved.

These are few of the current priorities of Philippine disaster management authorities for possible international cooperations. Filipinos have learned that disasters do happen, but their destructive force can be mitigated with good planning, prompt action, and constant preparation. International cooperation and support has helped improve Philippine response in all these fronts. It is hoped that such cooperation will continue to be satisfying to all its participants, and that all nations gain by helping each other.