

Philippines

Funding Disaster Management in the Philippines

Background

The Philippine archipelago is located on the western rim of the Pacific Ocean, a very active part of the Earth characterized by an ocean-encircling belt of active volcanoes and earthquake generators or fault lines. Because of this, the country regularly experiences disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, landslides, and other complex emergencies including forms of man-made emergency such as fires.

Legal Basis and Organization

In order to strengthen capacity for disaster control in the Philippines and to establish a national program on community disaster preparedness, NDCC was constituted on June 11, 1978. NDCC serves as the highest policy making, coordinating and supervising body at the national level for disaster management in the country and assists the president on the implementation of national disaster preparedness and management plans.

The NDCC is composed of eighteen line departments/agencies including national defense, public works and highways, transportation and communication, social welfare and development, agriculture, education, labor and employment, justice, trade and industry, interior and local government, health, environment and natural resources, and budget and management at the national level. At the regional level, the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC) has the task of coordinating the activities of national government agencies with local government units. This is also to ensure that the government will be able to effectively address the needs of even the farthest areas of the country in the fastest possible time during calamities and disasters.

Funding for Disasters

One basic source of funding that can be utilized in the occurrence of disasters is the National Calamity Fund. This is a lump-sum amount included in the annual budget of the national government. Releases from the fund are made directly to the appropriate implementing departments or agencies and/or local government units in accordance with the recommendation of the NDCC and upon approval of the president of the Philippines.

To respond immediately to an emergency or disaster, 25% of the National Calamity Fund is released to lead departments such as the social welfare and development, public works and highways and national defense departments as a Quick Response Fund. The amount is a stand-by fund which shall be utilized in times of calamities and is intended primarily to provide relief and rehabilitation to calamity-affected communities and areas and to normalize as quickly as possible the situation and living conditions of the people in such communities and areas.

Another source of funding is the local government calamity fund set aside by local government units (LGUs) from their annual local budgets. This amount is a mandatory budgetary item equivalent to 5% of the estimated income of LGUs from regular sources.

Disaster Management

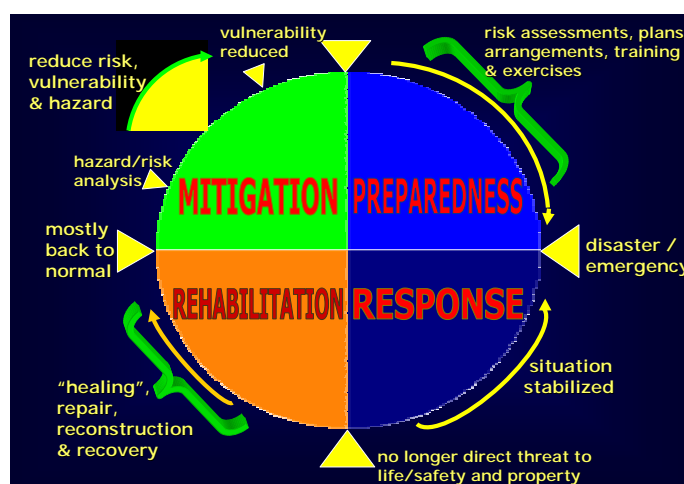
There are four stages of the cycle of disaster management: mitigation, preparedness, rehabilitation and response.

Mitigation refers to measures aimed at minimizing the impact of a natural or man-made disaster on a nation or community in terms of casualties and damages, such as the conduct of surveys and inspection of public and private infrastructures for their safe occupancy. In the locality, officials encourage the structural soundness of all forms of construction through strict compliance with the National Building Code and the Fire Safety Code.

Preparedness includes pre-disaster actions and measures undertaken to avert or minimize loss of life and property, such as, but not limited to, community organizing, training, planning, equipping, stockpiling, hazard mapping and public information and education initiatives.

Rehabilitation, on the other hand, refers to activities where the affected communities or areas receive financial or immediate basic provisions, in terms of food, shelter, clothing, medicines, etc and temporary restoration of structures in place of those damaged and devastated. In the Philippines, this is spearheaded by the DSWD, DPWH and the DND Engineering Brigade, among others.

Disaster responses are inter-agency concerted efforts, whether public or private, to provide emergency assistance or relief to persons who are victims of disasters or calamities, and in the restoration of essential public activities and facilities. Consequence Management is the core activity under this phase.



Cycle of the Disaster Management

Application of Disaster Management: The 1991 Eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales

This eruption is considered to have been the biggest in the world during the past eighty years. Nine billion cubic meters of volcanic materials were expelled, of which three billion cubic meters dispersed as ash fall and six billion cubic meters were deposited on the mountainside to flow down as lahar from 1992 onward. To respond immediately to the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, the Task Force Mt. Pinatubo, an inter-agency body, was constituted under Republic Act No.7637. A long-term rehabilitation plan was also established. The national government appropriated the total amount of P10.0 billion, which was released over a period of three years from 1993 to 1995. After the commission was terminated on December 31, 2000, it reported the utilization of P10.0 billion for the following programs: Infrastructure, P5.0 billion; Resettlement, P2.912 billion; Livelihood, P1.170 billion; Social Services, P715.558 million; and P201.397 million for other programs.

Conclusion

In a disaster-prone country like the Philippines, it is imperative to promote efforts and responses from all sectors both at the national and local levels for an effective and efficient disaster management system.

There is little or nothing that can be done to prevent the incidence of extreme climate conditions and natural calamities. There is also no sure way of preventing the occurrence of man-made disasters. However, we can build and enhance our capability to address these unfortunate catastrophes and emergencies through effective disaster management systems.

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