

## **Businesses and government to enhance partnerships in disaster management**



**28 MARCH 2019, MAKATI CITY**—In a recent forum jointly organized by the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) and the Office of Civil Defense, with the support of the Asian Preparedness Partnership, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, key leaders from the private sector, government agencies, and international humanitarian organizations agreed to enhance collaboration in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), especially in the area of disaster response.

“We are gathered here today to operationalize this process where the government will take the lead and private companies can assist by using their core expertise. If there is one thing we have learned over the last few years, it is that we are all in this together. Each of us and our families, our communities and businesses face common threats, and it is only by working with one another that we can truly protect our people. It is this ‘whole of society’ approach that brings us here today,” said PDRF President Butch Meily.

On the same day, PDRF launched its Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Champions in the Business Community Award, which recognizes private sector entities, programs, and individuals that create lasting change through innovative and impactful disaster resilience initiatives. A panel discussion on policy recommendations—led by Philex Mining Corporation Senior Vice President for Public and Regulatory Affairs Atty. Michael Toledo and joined by Undersecretary Adoracion Navarro (NEDA), Director Patrick Aquino (DOE), Ambassador Marciano Paynor, Jr. (Ayala Corporation), Mark Bidder (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), and Jose Maria Lorenzo Tan (PDRF)—also took place.

“Through our whole-of-nation approach and with the help of PDRF and our development partners, we are bringing together leaders of private sector organizations and engaging them so that with their expertise we can further strengthen our system. Now more than

ever do we need to collaborate with the private sector and share our specializations so that we can make our goal of national resilience a tangible reality that our people can grasp and rely on,” stated Undersecretary and NDRRMC Executive Director Ricardo Jalad.

Through a symbolic signing, key representatives expressed their commitment to strengthen public-private collaboration in five key areas: capacity building for DRR at national and community levels; enhancing risk assessment and improving early warning systems; development and use of innovation to build resilience; mainstreaming resilience into policies, plans, and implementation; and enhancing emergency response and recovery capabilities.

In his keynote speech, President of Meralco GenPower Corporation and Former Secretary of Public Works and Highways Rogelio Singson strongly advocated for “the creation of the Department of Water for more coherent long term plans and programs to manage [the] country’s biggest renewable resource next to air and the sun.” Creating a Department of Water, he added, “will be a game changer to address disasters caused by flooding, landslides, siltation, and potable water shortage with proper government funding. Or at the very least, to create a strong unified government institution or Commission to focus on water resource management.”

Together, the commitments signify the development of a Private Sector Roadmap in DRRM that complements the disaster management outcomes set by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-2028, which covers four thematic areas: disaster prevention & mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, and disaster rehabilitation & recovery. The roadmap also aligns private sector initiatives with the internationally recognized Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

As the country’s major private sector coordinator for disaster resilience, PDRF has been partnering with government agencies and local and international humanitarian groups since 2009. The forum is among a series of discussions aiming to consolidate inputs on how partnerships in disaster management can be further enhanced.