

## MSMEs to combat disaster through business continuity planning



Disaster response doesn't only mean helping the victims after a disaster, but it is a cycle, from mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, rehabilitation and recovery, according to Nile Dame Daño, Asia-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD) Philippines regional coordinator for the Visayas.

A-PAD Philippines, through the Citizens' Disaster Response Center and Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation, in partnership with Cebu-Bohol Relief and Rehabilitation Center and Rotary District 3860 Disaster Management Committee, organized the first Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) orientation and business continuity planning (BCP) workshop at the Ormoc Villa Hotel in Ormoc City, Leyte on November 14-16.

This will help boost the city's level of economic competitiveness and will attract foreign investors especially the business processing outsourcing (BPO) companies, said Ormoc Chamber's chairman Maricel Ngo.

The objectives of the three-day workshop is to strengthen the DRRM functions of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the community, promote a pre-agreement on cooperation in the community, and to apply multi-sectoral and regional partnership to sustain and improve collaborative mechanism in the area.

Let's first protect our own assets and liabilities from future disasters, so that we can serve those in need in times of emergency. Let us act now, Daño said.

Ormoc City Vice Mayor Leo Locsin said the objectives of the workshop are very commendable and helpful especially in their city which was greatly affected by Typhoon Yolanda. He said it took about a day before communication lines were operational, more than a month before electricity was restored, and more than a year for business owners to fully recover from the damage.

Locsin said that they are very grateful to the A-PAD and its partners for organizing the workshop.

He added that disaster unfortunately has become a way of life. The best thing people can do is prepare and only through mutual aid and proper coordination can people be properly prepared.

The LGU (of Ormoc) is one with you in this position and advocacy and is prepared to exert all measures that will be of assistance to each and every one of you, Locsin said.

Locsin conveyed the gratitude of Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez to the organizers and participants of the workshop. Various stakeholders participated in the activity, including the academe, business associations and civil society organizations, which is in cooperation with the Ormoc City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Office of the Civil Defense Region VIII, Department of Trade and Industry Region VIII, Ormoc City Government, and Leyte Center for Development.

BCP road maps were formulated by the participants wherein they identified their business' critical service and product and business continuity strategies of different worst disaster scenarios that they can possibly experience.

These road maps will be further studied and concretized when they will go back to their respective companies and organization.

A-PAD rolled-out the first batch of BCP in Bantayan Island, Cebu last September. Another batch of MSMEs from Bohol will be the next recipients of this workshop next month.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between A-PAD and Ormoc City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the local government of Ormoc to foster collaboration in advocating disaster resiliency in Ormoc.

A-PAD is a trans-national disaster aid alliance that works to facilitate cooperation and understanding among governments, private sectors and socio-civic groups in the Asia-Pacific region.

The A-PAD national platform was organized and formally launched in the Philippines in March this year to promote and enhance cooperation among local government units, private sectors, and civil society organizations with the aim of building disaster resilient communities.