

Major lifeline companies ramp up Taal response and recovery efforts



24 JANUARY 2020, MAKATI CITY—Following the displacement of almost 40,000 families due to the heightened activity of the Taal Volcano in Batangas, the Philippine private sector—led by the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)—called for stronger multi-sectoral participation in bringing aid to those affected by the eruption during a briefing focusing on government response efforts and potential public-private partnerships.

The briefing was attended by over a hundred stakeholders from key government agencies, lifeline companies, humanitarian organizations and international NGOs, and other private sector groups. Among these were Ayala Corporation, Globe Telecom, PLDT, Smart Communications, Aboitiz Power Corporation, Manila Water Company, Maynilad, Meralco, Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines, First Gen Corporation, San Miguel Corporation, Jollibee Foods Corporation, Metro Pacific Tollways, Nestle Philippines, and International Container Terminal Services.

“Taal is a crisis that affects us all. It could affect hundreds of thousands of people and is dangerously close to the heart of the Philippine economy. Let us all join hands in protecting our people from harm,” said PDRF President Butch Meily.

During the event, DOST Undersecretary and PHIVOLCS Officer-in-Charge Renato Solidum, Jr. provided updates on the current activity of Taal Volcano, Office of Civil Defense Deputy Administrator for Operations Asec. Casiano Monilla discussed national government response efforts, and DOH Health Emergency Management Bureau Director IV Gloria Balboa tackled the health impacts of the Taal eruption. Former House of Representatives member Regina Reyes Mandanas also talked about the response efforts of the Batangas Province on behalf of Governor Hermilando Mandanas.

PDRF presented its relief and recovery plan, which includes relief kit recommendations, community profiling, and interventions such as solid waste management, cash for work,

setup of handwashing stations, and medical missions. Once finalized, the plan will serve as a guide for PDRF member companies' and private sector partners' consolidated efforts under the eight PDRF clusters: Logistics, Information and Communications Technology, Water and Sanitation, Power, Fuel, and Energy, Food and Non-food, Finance and Insurance, Search and Rescue / Medical, and Infrastructure.

Established in 2010, PDRF is the major private sector coordinator for disaster risk reduction and management in the country. Composed of over 85 member companies, PDRF is co-chaired by PLDT-Smart Communications Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan, Ayala Corporation Chairman and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, and Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle.