

PH private sector to enhance engagement in man-made disasters



16 AUGUST 2019, MAKATI CITY—In partnership with the Connecting Business initiative (CBI), a thirteen-country consortium launched by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) recently held a pioneering workshop on the role of the private sector in recovery efforts following man-made disasters.

The event provided an opportunity for representatives from the private and public sectors to share insights on past recovery efforts and existing mechanisms and talk about current challenges and opportunities in enhancing public-private collaboration in responding to and recovering from complex emergencies.

During the workshop, CBI gave an overview of the “Engaging companies in manmade disasters – a guidance toolkit for private sector networks,” co-developed with European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The toolkit provides a framework for analyzing, developing, and executing an engagement strategy that leverages private sector capabilities and supports governments and the humanitarian community. According to CBI Secretariat Tiina Mylly, the toolkit was also simultaneously launched in Kenya and Colombia as part of its worldwide release.

“Complex emergencies now make up 90 percent of humanitarian needs in the world. That’s why it is critical for us to play a role in these types of crisis just as much as we do in natural calamities,” said PDRF President Butch Meily.

Among the key speakers of the event were UN OCHA Philippines Head of Office Mark Bidder; PLDT/Smart Communications Public Affairs Group Head Ramon Isberto; and Lanao Del Sur Governor Mamintal Bombit Adiong; and Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco-Salazar. Task Force Bangon Marawi, Pepsi Cola Products Philippines Inc., International Committee of the Red Cross, and Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management were also in attendance to discuss challenges and opportunities in contributing to response and recovery in the Philippines.

“The whole-of-society approach adopted by the Philippines allows the private sector to transcend the perception of being just the contractor, service-provider or vendor and as a community to be viewed as a valued partner and stakeholder in building a more resilient society, one that can overcome and recover from disasters to the benefit of all. With the aim of building a brighter future for communities that have suffered decades of conflict, business and humanitarian principles can find a common cause,” said Bidder.

PDRF is one of the thirteen private sector network members the Connecting Business Initiative. Serving as the critical link among businesses, government agencies, civil society groups, international institutions, and local government units, PDRF acts as the Philippines’ major private sector vehicle and coordinator for disaster resilience.