

PRESS RELEASE

PDRF receives PHP 55 million grant from Australian Government for emergency communications; updates private sector on Typhoon Egay effects and response

JULY 28, 2023, PAMPANGA— The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) today received a PHP 55 million grant from the Australian Government to implement the Resilient Emergency Communications for Enhanced Disaster Response (REACHED) Project for climate-vulnerable local government units (LGUs) of Butuan, Agusan del Norte, Virac, Catanduanes and Borongan, Samar. At the same time as the project launch, PDRF hosted an operational briefing for the private sector on the effects of Typhoon Egay (international name: Doksuri).

Typhoon Egay private sector response

In its briefing, PDRF reported widespread flooding in MIMAROPA, Central Luzon, and Ilocos. Landslides have also been reported in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

PDRF member companies Manila Water and Maynilad are monitoring dams and rivers; McDonald's Kindness Kitchen and Jollibee Foods Corporation are monitoring stores in affected areas and are on standby to distribute hot meals to evacuation centers; PLDT and Smart are also sending packs of rice and hygiene kits; Alagang Kapatid Foundation, Inc. dispatched a team to Northern Luzon to distribute relief goods from Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc., One Meralco Foundation, Maynilad, Metro Pacific Investments Foundation, and Makati Medical Center Foundation; Lifeline utilities are mobilizing to restore services in Egay-affected areas in Northern Luzon.

Enhancing emergency communications



Project REACHED partners

(L-R) Martin Kristensson (World Food Programme); Paul Donato (Globe Telecom); Ronald Miranda (PLDT-Smart); Vincent Rosario (City Government of Butuan); Rupert Ambil (City Government of Borongan); Thanh Le (Australian Embassy); Butch Meily (PDRF); Mayor Sam Laynes (Municipality of Virac); Kelvin Ofrecio (Office of Civil Defense); and Rafael Olivar (Department of Information and Communications Technology)

Launched at the PDRF Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Pampanga, Project REACHED is a two-year program that offers a solution to the recurring problem of establishing communications after a major disaster. Project REACHED aims to provide select LGUs with the necessary equipment and training to ensure access to communications during and after calamities and help coordinate response and recovery operations in affected areas.

The LGUs of Butuan, Virac, and Borongan were selected based on their vulnerability to typhoons, economic revenue, population, resources, and competitive index resilience score.

This project will harness public-private partnerships and will be implemented in collaboration with the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Office of Civil Defense, World Food Programme, Globe Telecom, and PLDT-Smart.

In his remarks, Thanh Le PSM, Counsellor Development of the Australian Embassy in the Philippines, noted that “Building long-term disaster and climate resilience has been a key priority for Australia in the Philippines. We recognize that natural disasters and climate change are ‘threat multipliers’ that disproportionately affect the weakest and most vulnerable sectors of society. By investing in resilient emergency communications, we can save countless lives and prevent vulnerable communities from experiencing even more difficulties and hardships.”

“Typhoon Egay’s destructive swath through the northern Philippines is a reminder of how critical telecommunications are during a crisis. Our thanks to the Australian government for their support. May Project REACHED help make life safer for the people of Butuan, Virac, and Borongan—three cities that are frequently hit by storms,” said Rene “Butch” Meily, PDRF President.

The investment in Project REACHED is a critical component of Australia’s development assistance in the Philippines that aims to enhance local resilience to natural disasters.

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About PHILIPPINE DISASTER RESILIENCE FOUNDATION

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) is the country’s major private sector vehicle and coordinator for disaster resilience. As an alliance of businesses dedicated to building the disaster risk management capabilities of the private sector in the country, PDRF aims to contribute to the sustainable development and the general welfare of the Filipino people. For more information, visit www.pdrf.org.

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PDRF-IMU-PR-01-00