



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

NATIONAL DISASTER COORDINATING COUNCIL

National Disaster Management Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines

JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR No. 17 Series of 2008

Subject: Guidelines in the Coordination of the Delivery of Humanitarian Services to Disaster Victims and Internally Displaced Persons

I. Rationale:

The Philippines has been identified by the Center of Research and Epidemiology of Disaster (CRED) in Brussels, Belgium as one of the world's most disaster prone countries. The Department of Social Welfare and Development has recorded for the last five years an average of 170,000 families displaced yearly. Displacement causes mental and physical stress among the affected persons hence they must be helped to adjust and cope with their displacement and assist them to recover from their traumatic ordeal.

Recognizing that it is the primary responsibility of the State to ensure the well-being and safety of its citizens, immediate humanitarian assistance should be efficiently and effectively delivered.

Article II, Sections 20 and 23 of the Philippine Constitution enshrines public-private partnerships as an important tool in promoting peoples welfare as it offers opportunities to combine resources and expertise to act jointly to reduce the impact of disasters as well as improve the resilience of affected communities.

On one hand, the people of the Philippines, represented by its government, appreciates the generosity of local and international aid organizations, corporate and individual donors that augment government resources in providing humanitarian assistance during major disasters. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the State to ensure that the affected families and individuals have equal access to

humanitarian assistance, basic goods, social services and relief intervention from all sources. Thus, it is imperative for government to develop a national coordination mechanism that all stakeholders and players in the humanitarian efforts related to disaster management shall follow.

The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) issued Circular No. 5, series of 2007 as amended by Memorandum No. 12, series of 2008 dated October 6, 2008, institutionalizing the cluster approach in the Philippine Disaster Management System, designating cluster leads and their terms of reference at the national, regional and provincial levels. Pursuant thereto, the Secretary of National Defense in his capacity as the Chair of the NDCC, designated the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, who is also the Vice Chair of the NDCC, as the Chair of the Humanitarian Task Force relative to the conflict situation in Mindanao. It is in this context that these guidelines on coordinating the provision of humanitarian assistance is being formulated and issued. It is the intent of the NDCC that these guidelines be operative not just for the conflict situation in Mindanao but in all other future situations requiring large scale humanitarian efforts.

II. Definition of Terms:

(Adapted from the NDCC Comprehensive Emergency Framework)

1. Displaced Persons - Are persons who have involuntarily moved from their places of origin as a result of war, armed conflict, generalized situation of violence, violation of human rights and natural disasters to a safer ground, hence the change in environment and a need to adjust thereto.
2. Disaster- A natural or man-made event that results in the serious disruption of the functioning of a community/society causing widespread human, material, financial, and environmental losses which exceed the ability of the community/society to cope using its own resources.
3. Basic Services - Activities undertaken in the course of disaster relief and recovery, rehabilitation or reconstruction such as, but not limited to; health and social welfare services, shelter, agricultural services, environmental protection and financial assistance to calamity victims and such other activities essential to disaster control and management.
4. Response- Refers to the efforts by agencies, groups or individuals, public and private, to provide emergency assistance or relief to persons who are victims of disasters or calamities and in the restoration of essential public services and facilities.

5. Damage and Needs Assessment - Is an estimation and description of the nature and extent of damage resulting from a disaster to determine the needs and requirements for purposes of providing assistance.
6. Humanitarian Assistance - Are forms of assistance intended to support and improve the well-being and welfare of calamity victims. It comes in the form of food and other emergency assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation, democracy building, human rights promotion and long term economic development.
7. Humanitarian Crisis - (or Humanitarian Disaster) - Is an event or series of events which represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a community or a large number of people, usually over a wide area. Armed conflicts, epidemics, famine, natural disasters and other major emergencies may all involve or lead to a humanitarian crisis.
8. Relief - The immediate activities following a disaster that seeks to provide the immediate and basic needs of victims such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and emotional security.
9. Rehabilitation - Refers to the process by which the affected communities/areas or damaged public infrastructure are restored to their condition prior to the occurrence of the disaster/calamity. It is also a process of providing affected populations with critical incidence stress debriefing, psychological and spiritual support necessary to enable them to return to their condition and functioning prior to the calamity.
10. Recovery - The restoration of all vital support systems such as electricity, potable water system, transport system, communication system, educational, cultural and medical facilities.
11. Trauma - A significant mental, emotional or physical stress or injury.

III. Objectives

To established the national coordination mechanism in the assessment, planning, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and the victims of natural and man-made calamities.

Specific Objectives:

1. Provide the guidelines for aid donors, government relief workers and other stakeholders in effecting public-private partnership in humanitarian service delivery within the framework of the Philippine Disaster Management System.
2. Establish an equitable, transparent and accountable system of delivery of humanitarian assistance during disasters.

IV. Basic Principles:

1. The primary responsibility for promoting the security, welfare and liberty of people rest with the State. Sovereignty implies a functional system of law and order that is responsive to the needs of the population. During calamity situations, the right of all to equal access to humanitarian assistance shall be ensured.
2. The Philippine Disaster Management System is the framework for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the cluster coordination mechanism to disaster management shall be observed as the vehicle for collaboration and public-private partnership.
3. Public-private partnership provides opportunities for optimizing/maximizing material resources and expertise to effectively respond to the needs of disaster victims and displaced persons and improve the resilience of communities.
4. Government as well as non-government aid organizations whether international or local must adhere to the values of equity, transparency and accountability for the resources entrusted them by taxpayers and donors. Equity is achieved through the use of common data on needs assessment and ensuring that the most in need are given priority attention. Transparency on the other hand is achieved through dialogue, consultations and sharing of information including financial information; while accountability is achieved when all parties in the humanitarian efforts safeguard the assistance from unwarranted leakages that deprive legitimate beneficiaries from said assistance.

V. Basic Guidelines for International and Local NGOs, Individuals and Other Partners:

5.1. Registration:

All agencies, organizations and individuals intending to participate! contribute to the delivery of humanitarian services to displaced persons/disaster victims shall register with the NDCC Disaster Response Coordination Desk* which shall be operated by the DSWD and shall be based in the NDCC Operations Center/NDCC Emergency Operations Center (NDCC OPCEN!NDCC EOC) or counterpart desks in the regions that shall then immediately convey all relevant information relative to the assistance/services to be provided. Registration shall bestow upon said organization the government's recognition of their presence, operations and contributions to the overall humanitarian effort. Registration shall also enable the government to provide basic security and protection as well as logistical support to their field operations when requested.

5.2. Participation in Coordination Meetings:

Registered organizations shall be allowed representation, participation in the coordination meetings to be convened by the DSWD for the purpose of planning and coordinating the overall humanitarian effort.

5.3. Privileges:

Registered organizations participating in the humanitarian efforts, shall be allowed unimpeded access to the affected population. They shall also benefit from the synergy achieved through coordination and shall accordingly be acknowledged for their contributions through the official communications of the NDCC.

5.4. Responsibilities:

As a key partner in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the organization and individuals shall abide by the principles stipulated in these guidelines. It shall give assistance regardless of race, religion, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adheres distinction of any kind. Aid priorities shall be calculated on the basis of needs of victims and local capacities in place. Further, in no instance shall the humanitarian assistance be taken as a partisan or political act neither shall the organizations act as instruments of ideology, religion or donor government policies. All partners are expected to respect the culture, customs and structures of the victim communities.

5.5. Monitoring and Reporting:

In the delivery of assistance to displaced families/victims of disaster, the Disaster Assistance Family Access Card (DAFAC) issued by the local Social Welfare and Development Office as validated/verified by the corresponding DSWD Field Office, shall be used as the common identification reference and in the back thereof, shall be written the record of assistance extended by the government and other relief donors. The DAFAC shall serve as the basic data source document about the families and persons being served.

In the spirit of transparency, accountability and coordination, all partners shall provide the NDCC Disaster Response Coordination Desk their respective periodic Assistance Distribution Plan (ADP) and weekly thereafter, submit their Humanitarian Assistance Distribution (HAD) reports using the template as annexed, copy furnished concerned Municipal/Provincial/Regional Disaster Coordinating Councils. Food and non-food commodities shall be acknowledged by beneficiaries by affixing their signatures on the Relief Distribution Sheet (RDS) as prescribed.

5.6. Sanctions:

Organizations who shall not abide with herein protocols shall be denied official participation in the mainstream humanitarian operations and the LGUs and other local authorities shall be informed of such non-cooperation as basis for their decision to deny support to said organization.


5.7. Grievance and Redress:

Issues, complaints, reports of injustice or wrongdoing, accusations, criticisms or gripes about the on-going humanitarian efforts shall be addressed efficiently and effectively. All grievances should be addressed to the concerned regional DCC Disaster Response Coordination Desk. Grievance shall be acted within three (3) days receipt of the complaint. In any event that redress is not delivered satisfactorily, the complaint may be elevated to the Chair of the Humanitarian Task Force for resolution. Grievances may be sent in writing or given orally, or by e-mail to dromic_co@yahoo.com or by text message to cell phone No. 09184219780.

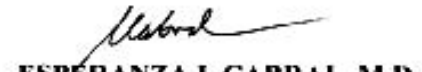
5.8. Continuing Partnership:

As conditions normalize, partners shall be given the opportunity to participate in the early recovery and rehabilitation planning and play vital roles in the subsequent implementation of the early recovery and rehabilitation projects.

These guidelines are hereby considered immediately in force and for compliance by all concerned


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Encl: Template Re: Assistance Distribution Plan
and Humanitarian Assistance Distribution Report