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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Transportation	<p>Briefing by concerned government agencies on their respective efforts before, during, and after the onslaught of Typhoon Odette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Civil Defense (OCD) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), listened to the briefing of concerned government agencies on their respective actions before, during, and after the onslaught of Typhoon Odette in the southern parts of Visayas and northern parts of Mindanao last December 16.</p> <p>At the start of the meeting, Rep. Sarmiento thanked the Members of the Committee, as well as the representatives from various agencies, for taking the time to attend today's meeting even if Congress is on recess. He said that the aim of the meeting is to update the Committee and the public of the situation in affected areas as well as the government's efforts in response to the devastation wrought by Typhoon Odette. Rep. Sarmiento likewise informed the body that Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco (Marinduque) and Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte) support the conduct of this meeting, recognizing the importance and urgency of looking after the needs of the people in the aftermath of the typhoon.</p> <p>The OCD gave a report on the areas severely affected by the typhoon and the extent of damage it caused.</p> <p>OCD Capacity-Building and Training Service Director Tecson John Lim said that six regions were severely affected by the onslaught of Typhoon Odette: Regions IV-B, VI, VII, VIII, X, and XIII. OCD Operations Service Director Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV added that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has declared these provinces under state of calamity by virtue of Proclamation No. 1267.</p> <p>Alejandro further reported that a total of 585,029 families, residing in 4,566 barangays, were affected by the typhoon, also resulting in 258 deaths. The typhoon also caused damage to 136,369 houses and to infrastructure and agriculture with an estimated cost of P2.54 billion and P1.15 billion, respectively.</p> <p>Before the typhoon, knowing its intensity, Alejandro said that the OCD, as the implementing arm of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), directed concerned regional offices of the NDRRMC to activate "Charlie" protocol, the highest emergency preparedness and response level. The OCD also issued 55 emergency alert and warning messages and 584 NDRRMC advisories.</p> <p>Likewise, the member-agencies of the NDRRMC have undertaken various preparatory activities in anticipation of the super typhoon, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepositioning of health logistics – Department of Health (DOH); Issuance of appropriate directives to local government units (LGUs) – Department of the Interior and Local Government; Identification of schools as evacuation centers – Department of Education (DepEd); Preparation of food stockpiles for distribution – Department

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- Department of Transportation (DOTr)

- of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); and
- Preparation for clearing operations – Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Reps. Sarmiento and Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) underscored the importance of providing early storm warnings and relevant information to the LGUs and residents along the storm's path. Rep. Gaité asked if text blast messaging was conducted to warn the residents in provinces that will be hit by the typhoon.

Lim answered in the affirmative. He added that the OCD wrote and informed the different LGU heads to prepare for the coming typhoon.

Deputy Speaker Isidro Ungab (3rd District, Davao City) asked if OCD still has available funds for disaster response.

Alejandro replied that according to the Department of Budget and Management, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund for 2021 has a remaining balance of P2 billion. Alejandro added that upon the instruction of President Duterte, P1 billion can be accessed by the agencies that administer quick response funds like the OCD, DOH, DepEd, DPWH, DSWD, and Department of Agriculture. The other P1 billion will be allotted to the LGUs under state of calamity due to Typhoon Odette.

DOTr Assistant Secretary Narciso Vingson Jr. informed the Committee that maritime agencies are present in the meeting to give a report on the following: condition of seaports and airports; current shipping operations, including the transport of relief goods; and augmentation of government's relief and recovery response.

Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) Port Operations and Services Department Manager Hiyasmin delos Santos reported that 47 seaports were affected by Typhoon Odette. All the ports under the PPA, she said, are open and operational except for the following ports which were damaged by the typhoon, namely: Port of Del Carmen in Surigao; ports of Talibon and Tapal in Bohol; ports of San Ricardo and Sogod in Leyte; and port of San Juan in Samar. Delos Santos added that the PPA is conducting clearing operations in the affected ports and is already assessing the total cost of the damages caused by the typhoon.

Delos Santos mentioned that the PPA issued Memorandum Circular 023-2021 on December 21 to support the government's efforts and call to provide response, relief, and reconstruction to people and communities affected by the typhoon. The same circular provides that Passenger Terminal Building and RO-RO fees shall be waived.

Noting that the country is prone to natural disasters like typhoons and earthquakes, Rep. Sarmiento suggested that the structural design of the seaports should be assessed to make them more resilient to disasters.

Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) Planning and Policy Service head Luisito delos Santos reported that 11 vessels and 300 to 400 motorbancas were heavily damaged by the typhoon. He added that out of the 28 ship routes, three are not yet being served either because no ships are available or the ports are not yet capable of receiving ships. Nevertheless, he said that there are 75 ships that are already plying the other 25 ship routes.

MARINA Administrator Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad said that MARINA gave special permit to ship owners that will provide vessels along the routes devastated by the typhoon.

On the status of airports, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) Aerodrome Development and Management Service

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Assistant Director General Valentino Dionela reported that there are a total of 13 airports affected by Typhoon Odette. Severely damaged were the airports in Siargao, Surigao, and San Vicente, while those which sustained minor damages were the airports in Antique, Bacolod, Dumaguete, Iloilo, and Maasin. To date, the airports of Bohol-Panglao, Busuanga, Cuyo, Mactan-Cebu, and Puerto Princesa have no power supply yet and are only operated by back-up generators.

Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) Executive Director Carmelo Arcilla mentioned that sweeper flights are now available in Siargao to transport stranded passengers. Likewise, airline companies have resumed their operations in some areas affected by the typhoon, Carmelo added.

Resource persons from Cebu Pacific and PAL Express expressed their commitment to provide air transportation to passengers as well as to carry relief goods to the devastated areas.

On government's relief and recovery response, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commander of the Maritime Security and Law Enforcement Command Ronnie Gil Gavan assured the body that the PCG is working closely with agencies under the DOTr, as well as with other departments to conduct rescue operations and ensure immediate delivery of relief goods to affected areas.

PCG Deputy Chief of Coast Staff for Operations Romeo Pulido reported on the various ships or vessels that were used to ferry the relief goods to the affected regions. He also highlighted that 1,309 individuals were rescued and 12,496 stranded individuals were evacuated by the PCG. He also said that there were 185 maritime incidents/accidents due to the typhoon that were reported thus far.

For his part, Philippine Inter-island Shipping Association (PISA) Executive Director Pedro Aguilar informed the body that six of PISA's biggest members are offering free pier to pier transport of relief goods for the affected families. To help the shipping companies undertake this commitment, Aguilar recommended the following: streamline the process for the release of relief goods in ports; waive the cargo handling fees of relief goods and needed equipment; waive PPA port charges for at least one week particularly on the dockage of relief goods cargos; exempt the trucks utilized by the six PISA members from the truck ban being implemented in Manila for the continuous delivery and pick-up of relief goods and equipment; and allow vehicles that will deliver fuel to the vessels/ships of the six PISA members to enter the ports without being required to show a permit to operate (PTO) from the PPA.

PPA's Hiyasmin delos Santos replied that port dues or charges can only be reduced or waived upon the approval of the President. On waiving the cargo handling fees, Delos Santos said she will bring this to the attention of the management and the PPA Board. She also said that PPA can consider and act on the request allowing vehicles delivering fuel to the vessels of the six PISA members to no longer show a PTO upon entry to ports, subject to the approval of the PPA general manager. With regard to the exemption from the truck ban, she said this is within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

- Department of public Works and Highways (DPWH)

DPWH Bureau of Maintenance Director Ernesto Gregorio Jr. apprised the Committee of the current state of roads and highways in the six regions hit by Typhoon Odette. Gregorio reported that the DPWH deployed a total of 269 equipment and 1,500 personnel to conduct clearing operations of roads and highways in the affected regions. He said out of the 46 road sections, 39 have already been cleared as of December 23. For the seven remaining road sections,

<p>Continuation... Transportation</p>		<p>devices from private partners which are being deployed to Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Bohol, Cebu, Palawan, and Negros Occidental.</p> <p>After hearing the updates from various government agencies, Rep. Sarmiento presented the following recommendations of the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the NDRRMC, through the OCD, 1) to align its disaster mitigation measures with the Tropical Cyclone Bulletin (advisory on the location, intensity and present movement of a typhoon that has entered the Philippine area of responsibility) of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA); 2) to dispatch to disaster areas its disaster response and rescue teams from other areas unaffected by such events; and 3) to ensure that there are enough generator sets in establishments in charge of the water and fuel supply in the area to ensure continuous services in case of power outage; • For the DPWH to revise its building standards to make sure that wall of buildings will be able to withstand strong winds that are more than 300 kilometers per hour (kph) such as Typhoon Yolanda and that major infrastructures such as airports and seaports have roofing designs that are more aerodynamic and wind-resistant; and • For the DOE or the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines to ensure uninterrupted supply of power during calamities and to consider the installation of underground cables instead of power lines above the ground, especially for areas that are frequented by typhoons. <p>Further, Rep. Sarmiento said that upon the resumption of session in Congress by January next year, the Committee will file a House Resolution that will have the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MARINA, Cebu Port Authority, and PPA shall provide special missions to ferry injured and stranded individuals from isolated islands and suspend the collection of seaport fees from all entities conducting Typhoon Odette rescue and relief operations; • The CAAP shall suspend the collection of airport fees and charges from all entities conducting Typhoon Odette rescue and relief operations, including the transport of stranded individuals and essential goods; • The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board shall issue special permits for routes and allow the diversion of available public utility vehicles (PUVs) and trucks to deliver relief and essential goods and transport stranded individuals to and from severely affected areas; and • The Land Transportation Office shall extend the validity of the vehicle registrations and driver's licenses of individuals in severely affected areas that are set to expire within 90 days.
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