

Our turn to help, say past disaster survivors

PROVINCES all too familiar with calamities are reaching out to hundreds of thousands of people in Metro Manila and Central Luzon now struggling to survive the destruction left behind by tropical storm "Ondoy."

In the Visayas, business groups and government offices started collecting goods to be sent to the flood victims.

Two of the biggest business groups in the region—Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and Mandaue Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)—asked members to donate food, clothes or cash.

Samuel Chioson, CCCI president, asked the group's 800 members to help.

Eric Ng Mendoza, MCCI president, said relief operations were on top of the group's agenda during a meeting last Sept. 29.

Robert Go, former regional governor of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), said he expected many Cebuano businessmen to help.

Go said he himself was a victim since his office and home in Manila were destroyed by floods.

SM City Cebu started collecting clothes, blankets, kitchen utensils, medicines.

Sebastian Lacson, vice president for administration of the Visayan Electric Company, said the Aboitiz Group of Companies would also accept donations in its 2GO outlets in Cebu, Bacolod, Davao and other cities.

Ahmed Cuizon, Mactan Cebu International Airport public affairs department head, said authorities also allowed the use of the airport as a drop-off point for donations.

Ship owners have also offered free shipment of relief goods.

In Iloilo, radio and TV stations aired calls for help.

'Least we could do'

Governors Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez of Antique, Carlito Marquez of Aklan, Niel Tupas Jr. of Iloilo and Damian Mercado of Southern Leyte also started relief efforts.

"It's the least we could do," said Perez. "Various local governments and residents also helped us last year when we were in the same situation," she said.

Aklan and Iloilo suffered massive flooding when Typhoon "Frank" struck.

Governor Tupas requested P1 million from the provincial board to contribute to relief efforts in Metro Manila and Central Luzon.

"We cannot just watch on the sidelines and pray," said Tupas in a statement.

Mercado, Southern Leyte governor, urged his people to send donations to the Philippine National Red Cross.

A landslide buried the town of Guinsaugon in Southern Leyte in 2003, killing hundreds of people.

39 Albay volunteers

In Albay, struck in the past by some of the worst floods and landslides in the country, officials keeping watch on Mayon Volcano also offered to help by sharing knowledge on disasters and volunteers.

Cedric Daep, head of the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (Apsemo), said Governor Joey Salceda called a meeting to discuss the possible deployment of rescuers from Albay to areas where they may still be needed in Metro Manila or Central Luzon.

Abundio Nuñez Jr., Apsemo technical director, said three teams were now ready and initially composed of 39 men.

He said the province may need C-130 planes to send out donated goods, including purified water and a water purification machine.

Salceda said the province was ready to help even as it faces threats of lahar from two new tropical depressions approaching the country and threatening to make landfall on Mayon.

Good example

In Davao City, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte cancelled a planned celebration of the anniversary of his TV program to donate money for it instead to Ondoy victims.

"I don't want to party. We'll give the money to Luzon," Duterte said during his TV program.

Gabriela Representative Luz Ilagan, a native of Davao, said Duterte was "setting a good example to other local government units."

The people of Davao supported Duterte's gesture.

"Maybe we can give them something ... a couple of packs of noodles will make a difference, I am sure," a 20-year old peanut vendor said.

"We can't afford to party while others are suffering," said lawyer Gen Tiu.

Duterte said Metro Manila and Central Luzon's suffering offers lessons on climate change and preparedness.

"It is not a matter of drainage, this is real flood because we have destroyed the environment. Davao City has to prepare. There is an aberration in our planet," Duterte said.

Church leaders in Iloilo appealed for prayers and donations, too.

"Just as we had been helped when Typhoon Frank hit Iloilo in June 2008, it is our turn to help the victims of Typhoon Ondoy," said Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo.

Lagdameo issued an Oratio Imperata (Obligatory Prayer) asking God to spare people from further calamities. (*Inquirer.net*)

Pinoy in Middle East start relief drive for typhoon victims

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cials so that they could gather as many canned goods, clothes and other basic needs as possible.

Monterona said the Filipinos and organizations for overseas workers in Saudi Arabia may contact officials of Migrante's chapter there, the Kapatiran sa Gitnang Silangan (KGS, Brotherhood in the Middle East).

They are KGS-Migrant chair Eric Jocson (mobile phone no. 0531822766) and secretary general Mike Garlan (050562989930) in the Saudi capital Riyadh; Migrante-Al Khobar chair Choie De Leon (0569117563) and secretary general Gerry de Guzman (0507373906) and Migrante-Jeddah chair Bob Fajarit

(050502745340).

"Wala namang ibang magtutulongan kundi tayong mga magkababayan kahit milya-milya man ang layo natin sa ating bayang sinilangan (No other people could help Filipinos but Filipinos themselves even if we are separated by thousands of miles)," Monterona said.



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