

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORTS

SYMPOSIUM 1

Impact of Disasters on the Human Community

MODERATOR: Acd. Benjamin D. Cabrera

RAPPORTEUR: Acd. Quintin L. Kintanar

SPEAKER: Dr. Lourdes L. Ignacio

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussion

1. Disaster is not the physical/natural catastrophe per se but the impact of this catastrophe on individuals and communities which exceeds the coping capabilities of individuals and communities.
2. The distress arousal is determined by personal variables, such as physical and interpersonal variables, and social support available.
3. The objective is to transform disaster victims to survivors through timely and adequate support systems, changing their attitudes from hopelessness to one of empowerment.

II. Recommendations/Constraints

Psychosocial support and interventions should be integrated into the total *Disaster Management Plan* in order to minimize suffering and psychosocial disorders and hasten conversion of *Victims to Survivors*.

SYMPOSIUM II

Monitoring and Warning Systems and the Role of Media

MODERATOR: Acd. Ruben L. Villareal

RAPPORTEUR: Acd. Apolinario D. Nazarea

SPEAKER: Dr. Leoncio A. Amadore

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussion

The Philippines mainly depends for its weather monitoring needs on the GMS, a weather satellite in geosynchronous orbit 36,000 kilometers above the hemisphere in which the Philippine Area of Responsibility is roughly at center.

The prediction of levels of hazard is a probabilistic endeavor but then again both monitoring and warning are functions of available technology. To take care of those elements of uncertainty PAGASA would rather *overwarn* in practice – to build in a margin of safety.

The perceived factors affecting human and community response to warning signals are complex and depend on at least four factors: timeliness, comprehensibility, accuracy of forecast and the level of “disaster culture” of community. And finally, when all is said and given, the level of community preparedness finally determines on whether warnings are acted on in the proper and effective context in so far as disaster prevention is concerned.

SPEAKER: Ms. Jessica Soho

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussion

Ms. Soho’s videoclip report brought out in visual relief the role of (mainly electronic) media in preparing the community for the clear appreciation of the dimensions and impact of impending disasters as well as in keeping it posted on disasters in progress.

She pointed out that the present community preparedness information network, as exemplified in Central Luzon, has the RDCC (Regional Disaster Coordinating Center) in San Fernando, Pampanga, as its principal node, from which any early warning of impending disaster is broadcast to Central Luzon principally through three Metro Manila radio stations connected by telephone hotline to RDCC San Fernando.

II. Recommendation/Constraints

A more synergistic closely-knit information network is necessary to take care of the shortcomings of the present monitoring and warning systems in the Philippines.

Acquisition of high-tech “radar raingauge” for a more accurate quantification of expected precipitation will vastly improve the system of prediction. Other factors are:

- a. Better formulation and dissemination of warnings
- b. Improved systems for community preparedness

SYMPOSIUM III

Organizing for Relief

MODERATOR: Acd. Benito S. Vergara

RAPPORTEUR: Acd. Jose R. Velasco

SPEAKER: Asst. Sec. Milagros I. Llanes

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussion

These policies were implemented in coordination with the Disaster Coordinating Council. At the local level, coordination and leadership is the responsibility of the elected local government executive. Despite the logical organizational chart of the DCC in the regional, provincial, city and municipal levels, the actual provision of relief is oftentimes attended with confusion.

It may be necessary to put some emphasis on pre-disaster preparation of the likely victims in disaster-prone areas, in the same manner that fire-drills are made. What should the people do when disaster threatens or strikes? Who among them should lead?

II. Recommendation/Concerns

1. Relief operation functions should be developed to the local government units in order to promote more smooth utilization of national relief-donation.
2. Emergence of trend towards mega-disaster is a concern that needs to be provided for.
3. There is a need for an executive/legislative initiative to strengthen the National Disaster Coordinating Council, particularly the creation of a body to serve as secretariat to the Council.

SYMPOSIUM IV

Some Approaches to Agricultural Rehabilitation in Times of Disasters

MODERATOR: Acd. Lourdes J. Cruz

RAPPORTEUR: Acd. Pedro B. Escuro

SPEAKER: Dr. Oscar B. Zamora

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussion

A few months after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, a group of UPLB volunteers conducted seminar/training programs on sustainable agriculture technology options which the affected farmers can try in their farms. In addition, seeds and planting materials (all solicited) were distributed to the trainees. These activities were conducted in collaboration with NGOs and local government units at the field level.

II. Recommendations

1. A comprehensive rehabilitation program should include:
 - a. Clear organizational structure
 - b. Clearly identified priorities
 - c. Strong technical back-up in agricultural rehabilitation programs
 - d. Enough flexibility in rehabilitation programs.
2. There is a need to strengthen institutional linkages and coordination, however, bureaucracy should be minimized.
3. Traditional leadership structure in the community should be studied carefully before any development/rehabilitation activity is initiated.
4. Shift from relief to rehabilitation should be studied carefully and done as soon as possible.
5. Follow up activities are necessary to ensure sustainability of initiated projects.

SYMPOSIUM V

Economic and Policy Implications of Disasters

MODERATOR: Acd. José Encarnación, Jr.

RAPPORTEUR: Acd. Tito A. Mijares

SPEAKER: Dr. Jerome F. Sison

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussion

The immediate impact of disasters caused by natural calamities is the effect of extensive damage which should run to several billions of pesos to the physical infrastructure, both public and private property, to agriculture, to the social life of people affected, to the economic and productive capability and capacity of the economy and the psychological aspects of the affected community.

To minimize the negative effects of disasters some mitigating measures should be put in place such as the development of self-reliance capability and clear complementation of responsibility among local government units and NGO's in disaster management.

II. Recommendations

1. The Government must provide adequate needs of disaster victims, sufficient resources, power and authority at the disposal of NDCC, such as the creation of a body to serve as secretariat to the Council.
2. There is urgent need to strengthen the capability of the NDCC in delivering the above required services to victims not only during the occurrence of the disasters but also during post-disaster period.
3. Relocation efforts for a large group of displaced persons (e.g. the Aetas in th Pinatubo area) should factor-in the social and cultural aspects of victims in community resettlement.
4. Assistance should be extended to victims of disasters on alternative income generating activities. An economic restoration program using their indigenuous capabilities wherever possible should be designed and implemented in the shortest time that is possible to restore and rehabilitate affected areas.

5. Resettlement should not mainly focus on relocation or provision for housing but also on understanding the needs of an over all community life such as access to transportation, sourcing of production inputs, market outlets and other aspects of production activities. A strategy for establishing a symbiotic socio-economic relationship among newly established communities and the existing old ones should be included in the resettlement plan.

SYMPOSIUM VI

Research Agenda for Disaster Mitigation

MODERATOR: Acd. Carmen C. Velasquez
RAPPORTEUR: Acd. Filomena F. Campos
SPEAKER: Dr. Raymundo S. Punongbayan

I. Summary/Highlights of Discussions

Disaster mitigation encompasses the whole gamut of activities aimed at reducing the damaging effects of disaster-causing events including hazards assessment and zoning, protection and risk reduction, monitoring and prediction, preparedness planning, rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement.

II. Recommendations/Constraints

1. Generate data for hazards assessment, zonation, forecasting and policy formulation regarding land use.
2. Develop technologies for disaster protection and risk reduction.
3. Identify and test reliable monitoring parameters and generation of monitoring and forecasting techniques.
4. For impact studies: evaluative and policy studies towards strengthening preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation systems.
5. For socio-economic/ psychological studies on the effect of disasters on the human communities.
6. Establish a National Center for Disaster Research which should be interdisciplinary in approach in order to develop a coherent and focused disaster mitigation program.
7. Train people who will serve as the cadre during time of disaster.

Points/Issues

1. Let us not advertise our country as disaster-prone as this is counter development especially for investors. Research activities on disaster prone areas will not be advertised but inputted to local government for specific planning.
2. Scientists should work together in order to coordinate their activities using the disasters as their laboratories. The research team should be interdisciplinary in approach.

Funding: This is not the problem but availability of good programs.

3. Establishment of National Center for Disaster Research.
4. Immediate studies of areas affected by disaster should be conducted in order to formulate mitigating measures in case of future recurrence.