

PRESS RELEASE (For Immediate Release)

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COMMUNITY ACTION FOR DISASTER RESPONSE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Community-level disaster responders on hand at the scene of a local disaster or emergency – that’s the vision of the new Community Action for Disaster Response course (CADRE), being piloted in the Philippines during May 2010 (1-22 May 2010).

This is the very first CADRE course, which will equip 48 trainees from the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) to help victims of earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, tsunamis and other disastrous events - as well as day-to-day emergencies. They are shown how to share these skills, train others and build safer communities.

The training is being held at the Amity Public Safety Academy, Bacolod, Negros Occidental, coordinated by the Asian Disaster Preparedness center (ADPC), as part of the Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER)* which is funded by USAID and American Red Cross and is running in nine Asian countries. Training modules include assessing hazards, preparing for response, managing mass casualties, fire and water safety and basic search and rescue. Everyone takes part in practical sessions and simulations to encourage active learning. The course instructors – drawn from the Bureau of Fire Protection, Philippine Red Cross and volunteers – are experienced and qualified in Medical First Response, Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue, and Disaster Management.

Ms. Mercy Hucalinas (pictured), PRC Bacolod Chapter, said “CADRE is just three days, with hands-on exercises for many aspects of disasters, so it’s easy for everyone to learn. We will use CADRE to teach more people in local areas.”

The CADRE course in the Philippines received strong support from senior officials at the opening ceremony on 30 April 2010. **Mr. Nestor Bayona**, Provincial Consultant (representing the Governor), Negros Occidental said; “On behalf of the Governor of Negros Occidental it is my pleasure to offer my endorsement to this important training. It is a great benefit to have the Amity Public Safety Academy here in Bacolod, and to be piloting the CADRE course right here”

Attorney Priscilla Duque, Assistant Civil Defense Executive Officer and Chief, Training Division, Office of Civil Defense (OCD), National Disaster Coordinating Council said: “The CADRE course contribution will be significant. For the crucial first day after a disaster strikes, communities are on their own – we are all too familiar with the phrase ‘YOYO – you’re on your own!’ – CADRE will help address these needs before outside help can arrive. It’s up to communities to deal with the significant ‘golden hour’ where survivors can be found and helped. After the first day, it is much harder to offer effective response. We are committed to assisting this first line of response.”

Ms. Rose Cabrera, Regional Director, Office of Civil Defense Region Office 6 (OCD-6), Iloilo City said: “It’s crucial to consider multi-hazard risks – we have flooding, earthquake and volcano risk. We are proud that the PEER program and the CADRE course can be held here – we are sure it will enhance our response capability. We are all here on a humanitarian mission to help our fellow people – this is a great duty and a valuable mission.”

Chief Inspector Fred Trajeras, Provincial Fire Marshal, Negros Occidental said: “This is a rigorous training with excellent instructors – it’s very worthwhile. Already the participants are winners being chosen as part of this program”.

Mr. Yul Garganera, Administrator, Philippine Red Cross, Bacolod Chapter said: “Our community volunteers are at the heart of what we do at the Red Cross. We have confidence they will take their learning widely into communities.”

Please check the PEER Website for regularly updated activities, photographs and reports on CADRE in the Philippines.
www.adpc.net/peer For more information and photographs, please contact: **Esther Lake, ADPC Communication and Information Coordinator e-mail: esther@adpc.net tel: +66 (0) 2298 0681 ext 407 website: www.adpc.net/peer**
To visit and experience CADRE during disaster simulation exercises, contact Esther Lake.

Notes to Editors ADPC: Established in 1986 at the initiatives of three UN agencies – WMO, UNDP and UNOCHA, ADPC supports the advancement of safer communities and sustainable development, through implementing programs and projects that reduce the impact of disasters upon countries and communities in Asia and the Pacific. With more than 100 staffs from 20 different countries, ADPC’s activities cover four thematic areas: Climate Risk Management (CRM), Disaster Management System (DMS), Public Health in Emergencies (PHE), and Urban Disaster Risk Management (UDRM). ADPC also provides 20 regional training courses.
***Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER):** A regional training program initiated in 1998 by the U.S. Agency for International Development’s, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) strengthening disaster response capacities in nine countries in Asia.