

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P.S.R. No. 49

RECEIVED BY: *ju*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT
TO INVEST ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING AND
INTERGOVERNMENT COORDINATION

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article Section 16 states: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature";

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* in its 12 October 2010 issue reported that despite the country's preparation measures against disasters, the Philippines has still topped the list of countries most affected by natural disasters;

WHEREAS, according to the report, Dr. Arturo Pesigan, a technical officer of the WHO Emergency and Humanitarian Action Unit for the Western Pacific reported that in 2009, a total of 26 typhoons and earthquakes struck the country, affecting 13.6 million lives, 1,362 of them killed;

WHEREAS, Dr. Pesigan, who is also a former professor of public health and vice chancellor of the University of the Philippines, enumerated four main issues in disaster response, namely, inadequate preparation for recurring natural and technological hazards, weak institutional capacity for emergency management in the health sector, inadequate collaboration among partner agencies, and shortages of systematic and reliable public health information on emergencies;

WHEREAS, Pesigan reportedly suggested that the government should look at how the various pillars of the health systems such as governance, health services, health financing, technology, human resource, and information could be coordinated in disaster response;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that one of Pesigan's recommendations was for the media to provide timely and accurate information, and not knee-jerk reactions and misconceptions;

WHEREAS, Pesigan believes that at the Philippines would not be able to withstand an Intensity 7 earthquake originating from the West Valley Fault since the country is not yet prepared to respond to such a situation;


WHEREAS, a strong disaster preparedness program could mitigate the country's lack of facilities and machinery for disaster response;

WHEREAS, the government should therefore intensify its disaster preparedness program, especially in disaster prone areas, and invest in training its personnel on disaster response;

WHEREAS, since rapid population growth, change in land-use patterns, migration to urban areas, environmental degradation and unplanned urbanization have also contributed to the frequency of disasters, then related government agencies should create stronger ties, come up with quicker ways to exchange information, and develop mechanisms to address these issues in order to lessen the frequency of disasters in the country;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate to direct the proper Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported need for the government to invest on disaster preparedness training and intergovernmental coordination.

Adopted,

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MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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