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INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is one of the rather unfortunate countries in this part of the world that's often ravaged and devastated by strong typhoons. Disaster coordination plans are reviewed every so often to mitigate damage to life and property. Notwithstanding all these disaster preparations and coordination plans, however, there were still significant losses of life, injuries to persons, and damages to property when Typhoon Frank (International Code Name: Fengshen) hit Philippine territory. Damage to business, property and agriculture were in such numbers that economic activities were placed on standstill. More than 4 million people were affected, and half of them stayed in evacuation centers put up in the affected areas in Region 6 and 8.

The force of Typhoon Frank created a path of destruction particularly on the Western Visayas region. Reports from the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) pegged the damage at P14 Billion. This estimate is already close to the average P15 million that typhoons inflict on the country's economy each year. In particular, the flood brought about by the typhoon was the worst to hit Panay Island in recorded history. The NDCC statistics, the news accounts of the flood, and the TV footages of the disaster, however, cannot approximate the horrible experiences that the people of Panay and the surrounding provinces went through. The whole island was practically under water and the patches of visible ground were either mud or thatches of what were once homes. Strewn vehicles, goods and personal belongings were everywhere. Roads were impossible and key bridges were completely destroyed. People groped in darkness as electric and telephone lines went dead. Farm lands were washed away, cattle and poultry drowned.

About P5.21 Billion account for damaged agricultural products in the provinces of Aklan and Iloilo alone. The NDCC said that damage to roads and bridges account for P2.3 Billion with most of them also in Aklan, Iloilo and Capiz. Damage to school buildings was estimated at P455 Million, mostly in the Panay Region. In the province of Iloilo, the fishing industry lost some P400 Million, for which industry players will take five to six months to recover. Reports from the Provincial Agriculturist would show that the flooding brought "very significant" losses to fish producers, especially fish pond operators who lost dikes and fishponds to floods. Tons of ready-to-harvest fish stocks were lost after the fishponds overflowed. This includes at least P304.2 Million of losses in aquaculture and P112.8 Million to municipal fishing.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered local government units to prepare rehabilitation plans for the damaged properties, infrastructure, and agricultural lands in their areas so the national government could disburse the needed funds for the rehabilitation of the cities, towns and provinces. However, a review of the 2008 General Appropriations Act would show that the budget is not going to be enough to cope with the reconstruction and rehabilitation needs. It becomes imperative, therefore, that a supplemental budget be passed by Congress for the relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Island of Panay and the neighboring provinces.

*In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is urgently sought.*

  
MAR ROXAS  
Senator



1 as drainage works, resettlement centers and home sites in the construction,  
2 repair and/or reconstruction of government infrastructure and facilities;

3 (b) Aid, relief, rehabilitation and livelihood shall be extended equitably to all  
4 victims, irrespective of political or party affiliations, gender, creed, religious  
5 relief, or ethnic origin, giving emphasis to livelihood and employment  
6 opportunities; and

7 (c) No money shall be released without any identified program or project nor shall  
8 any sum from the Paglaum Fund be used to pay obligations incurred before the  
9 approval of this Act.

10 SECTION 3. *Use of the Paglaum Fund.* - The Paglaum Fund shall be used to cover  
11 repair, rehabilitation, and construction of roads, bridges, irrigation systems, school buildings,  
12 government buildings, sea ports and airports, hospitals, and other public infrastructures;  
13 purchase of hospital equipment, supplies and medicines, purchase of relocation sites;  
14 construction of housing units; and funding for the implementation of the Comprehensive  
15 Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) under the Department of Social Welfare and  
16 Development, livelihood programs, agricultural assistance and other support programs for  
17 farmers and fisherfolks.

18 The Paglaum Fund shall be used for the purposes indicated and shall be released for  
19 the relevant departments, bureaus, offices, agencies and local government units (LGUs) in  
20 accordance with budgeting and related relevant laws, rules and regulations.

21 SEC. 4. *Creation of the Western Visayas (Region VI) Rehabilitation and Development*  
22 *Commission.* - For purposes of this Act, the Western Visayas (region VI) Rehabilitation and  
23 Development Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, is hereby created. The  
24 Commission shall be organized within thirty (30) days after the approval of this Act and shall  
25 exist for the term of two (2) years after its organization. Such amounts as may be necessary

1 solely and exclusively for the organizational and operational expenses of the commission  
2 shall be set aside from the amount herein appropriated.

3         **SECTION 5. *Composition of the Commission.*** - The Commission shall be composed  
4 of the Cabinet Officer for Regional Development (CORD) as Chairman, with the following as  
5 members: the Chairman of the Regional Development Council of Region 6, the Regional  
6 Directors of the Departments of Public Works and Highways, Agriculture, Education,  
7 Health, and Social Welfare and Development, the Area Manager of the National Housing  
8 Authority, the Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas, two (2) members representing the  
9 Local Government Units to be appointed by the President, and two (2) members of the  
10 House of Representatives both from Region VI to be appointed by the Speaker of the House  
11 of Representatives.

12         **SEC. 6 *Powers and Functions of the Commission.*** The Commission shall have the  
13 following powers:

14         a. Formulate policies and plans for relief operations; reconstruction, rehabilitation  
15 and construction, rehabilitation and construction of public infrastructure, livelihood and  
16 other social support services in harmony with plans and policies of the National  
17 Government;

18         (a) Prioritize and coordinate the implementation of the various programs and projects of  
19 the Commission.

20         (b) Coordinate and consult with concerned national and local officials as well as  
21 accredited non-government organizations (NGOs) in the determination of priorities  
22 and the implementation o the programs and projects of the Commission;

23         (c) Call upon any deparment, office, instrumentality, agency, or political subdivision of  
24 the Government for assistance as may be needed; and

1 (d) Perform such powers and functions as may be necessary and proper to carry out the  
2 purpose of this Act.

3 SEC. 7. *Secretariat of the Commission.* - The Regional Development Council of  
4 Region 6 shall serve as the Secretariat of the Commission and shall assist the Commission in  
5 carrying out its functions.

6 SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within fifteen (15) days from the  
7 effectivity of this Act, the President, with the assistance of the National Disaster  
8 Coordinating Council (NDCC), shall issue the implementing rules and regulations to  
9 effectively carry out the provisions of this Act.

10 SEC. 9. *Submission of Reports to Congress.* The Commission shall submit to the  
11 President and to Congress, through the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the  
12 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, a detailed quarterly report on  
13 the funds allocated indicating the amount released, obligated and disbursed for:

14 (a) Aid, relief, reconstruction, rehabilitation, social support and livelihood services,  
15 including the list of names of approved individual beneficiaries, contractors and other  
16 service providers, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the delivery systems of  
17 such services; and

18 (b) Construction, repair and/or reconstruction of infrastructure, projects including the list  
19 of contractors, and projects being financed, and the accomplishment thereof.

20 SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential, decrees and issuances, executives  
21 orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are  
22 hereby repealed or modified accordingly

23 SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect immediately after its  
24 publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

25 Approved,