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NEPA's Tulong Bayan Relief Mission Extends Assistance to 10,000 Families *Upper Montalban Relief Operations also initiated*

The National Economic Protectionism Association's relentless effort to provide relief and assistance to our countrymen who were victimized by the torrential monsoon rains and flood has proven to be a rewarding and fruitful endeavor.



According to NEPA President Bayan dela Cruz, the leaders and members of the Association strove to launch the rescue and relief operations in light of the massive destruction to lives and livelihoods brought about by the heavy rains.

"This is the Association's way to rekindle the spirit of Bayanihan and Tangkilikan among our fellowmen. In times of natural disaster and calamities, the resiliency of the Filipino shines best," dela Cruz said.

Spirit of Bayanihan and Tangkilikan alive and well

In the course of the rescue and relief operations, the Association reached out to partner organizations, government agencies and other concerned groups in order to raise sufficient resources for the vast number of flood victims in dire need of immediate rescue and relief.

"Without the generosity of our partner organizations and individuals, the Association would not have been able to

manage a rescue and relief mission with such a wide scope," dela Cruz stressed.

For instance, together with NEPA, the Tau Gamma Fraternity in Montalban mobilized approximately a hundred of its members in order to assist in rescuing trapped residents and flood victims in the area. As a result, several scores of residents from Brgy. Burgos, San Jose, Litex, Tibag, Madrigal, Santander, Marigold, Doña Maria and Kasiglahan were promptly rescued from rising floodwaters. The UP Student Catholic Action provided approximately 300 food packs for flood victims in Montalban.

On the other hand, the Ateneo de Manila High School provided nearly 7,500 food packs and 150 cases of bottled water for affected residents in Quezon City and Pasig, while the offices of Congressman Erin Tañada and Rodriguez Councilor Glenn Evangelista also donated food packages and sacks of rice that were sent to flood victims in Montalban, South Triangle, Quezon City. The National Federation of Peasant Women in the Philippines (AMIHAN) also facilitated NEPA's relief efforts for peasant communities in Calasiao and Binmaley, Pangasinan whose crops were destroyed by the floods. The GMA Kapuso Foundation also provided bottles of mineral water for the farmer-victims of Pangasinan. The Alpha Kappa Rho Fraternity and the Malay Democrats of the Philippines, in the meantime, provided a constant supply of reliable volunteers who relentlessly repacked and distributed the donated goods.

Government offices also contributed greatly towards the success of the relief efforts. In particular, the Department of Social Welfare and Development has been instrumental in the allocation of relief goods for baranggays in Cainta, Pasig

and Marikina City. The aforementioned agency has allocated 350 food rations for Cainta and two jeeps full of bottled water for Binmaley and Calasiao, Pangasinan. Up to now, the Association continues to be in close coordination with DSWD in providing relief goods for areas that are still in need of immediate assistance.

Extending assistance to those who need it most



In conducting the rescue and relief operations, NEPA complied with the internationally-recognized Sphere Standards in Humanitarian Response. Volunteer organizations and individuals were promptly oriented on the core principle guiding humanitarian workers in disaster risk response—that all people affected by disaster or conflict have a right to receive protection and assistance to ensure the basic conditions for life with dignity. Before volunteers were dispatched into specific areas, no effort was spared in making sure that they were equipped with adequate information regarding the barangay or town where they are to distribute goods. In cooperation with OXFAM, NEPA also conducted a field investigation regarding the situation and needs of flood victims in Rodriguez, Rizal.

Many of the Association’s relief efforts were directed for the benefit of flood victims located in far-flung who had no access to evacuation centers, those who left the evacuation areas in the hopes of rebuilding their homes, or those who refused to abandon their homes altogether—all of whom had no access to basic necessities such as food, potable water, medicines or toiletries. Many beneficiaries were residents of barangays that were often overlooked in usual relief operations done by other groups and thus continue to be in dire need of relief.

“Even though we commend the government’s efforts in providing relief and assistance to our affected countrymen, NEPA is cognizant of the inherent limitations of the government, especially in assisting those who are in

informal evacuation centers or those who resisted evacuation altogether. That’s why NEPA remains committed to the relief operations until now,” dela Cruz added.

NEPA’s Upper Montalban Relief Operations

Working within the framework of providing assistance to victims who are often overlooked in usual relief efforts, the Association also initiated the Upper Montalban Relief Operations that aims to provide relief to flooded communities in five (5) upland barangays in Rodriguez, Rizal, namely Barangays San Rafael, San Isidro, Mascap, Macabud and Puray.

In cooperation with partner organizations like the Samdhana Institute, the Christian Aid Rapid Response Assessment Team (CARRAT) and the Tau Gamma Phi Fraternity, NEPA has already mobilized an emergency assessment team to concretely identify the needs of affected residents, especially those from indigenous groups. Members of the Sigma Kappa Phi Fraternity also donated relief packs for the abovementioned barangays and have expressed interest in joining NEPA’s Upper Montalban Relief Operations. Several mountaineering groups and media outfits are also keen on joining the relief operations and are interested in documenting the procedure—thus giving voice to indigenous Dumagats and Remontados who have long been bypassed in typical relief efforts. The UP Student Catholic Action has also donated 168 food packs and several boxes of clothes for the benefit of the affected residents.

NEPA is also actively establishing a network of partner organizations or government agencies that can lend a hand in the abovementioned project. The Department of Social Welfare and Development, CARITAS Manila, the Philippine Red Cross and the local government of Rodriguez, Rizal are just some of the organizations that NEPA hopes to unite with in this endeavor □