

'Build Me A Home' program for Cotabato quake survivors launched

NEA and the ECs, through the One EC Network Foundation, are stepping up efforts to help earthquake survivors rise from the rubble and rebuild their lives.



In his message, the NEA administrator lauded the 'Build-a-Home' initiative and expressed hope that this kind of program will be replicated in other communities in North Cotabato and Davao del Sur as well, which were also severely affected by the calamity.

to manage and administer the P750-million allocation to be taken from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (NDRRM) Fund. This will be disbursed to the qualified EC beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, Alfonso Jack Sandique of Succour Foundation, who also serves as COTELCO board director representing Makilala town, said the "Build Me A Home" program will prioritize those who have no capacity to pay for labor and construction materials to rebuild their homes.

Administrator Masongsong graced on November 15 the official launch of the "Build Me A Home: Adopt a Family, Adopt a Future" program initiated by the Succour Foundation, Inc. for the residents of Barangay Buena Vida.

"We are helping the member-consumer-owners of COTELCO rebuild their homes and at the same time we are also helping the electric cooperative (recover from its losses)," Masongsong said.

Initially, the organization relocated some 75 to 100 affected families in temporary shelters inside a privately owned rubber plantation. They were soon transferred to a permanent home that can withstand stronger tremors in a nearby location.

The program aims to benefit the marginalized sector, especially the farmers who had lost their homes in the wake of the three strong earthquakes that hit North Cotabato in a span of two weeks last October.

The NEA chief also disclosed that the NEA was looking for funds to help cover the cost of house wiring materials for the permanent shelters that will be built through the program.

Housing units to be constructed under the 'Build-a-Home' program were estimated to cost around P80,000 each. Each unit was designed to have its own kitchen, bedroom and sanitation facility.

Buena Vida is one of the communities left in ruins by those tremors. The small village is under the franchise area of the Cotabato Electric Cooperative, Inc. (COTELCO), which consequently incurred a 30-percent drop in its electricity demand.

Masongsong lamented the lack of funding for the implementation of Republic Act No. 11039, also known as Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund (ECERF) Act, which could have hastened this process.

The general managers and board directors of the different ECs in Mindanao as well as their allied organizations nationwide likewise pledged to help rebuild the lives of the people of Brgy. Buena Vida through this initiative. ###

Under the ECERF law, the NEA is tasked

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Signing the agreement for DANECO, Inc. were NEA Project Supervisor Engr. Emmanuel Galarse and Acting General Manager Mario Angelo Sotto. The signatories for DANECO-CDA, meanwhile, were General Manager Jerold Osorio and Board Director Eliseo Tan.

"This has been our intention when we assumed the office as members of the Task Force Duterte Northern Davao Power—that a day will come that there will be a reconciliation, that there will be a unification, which God gave to us today," Sotto said.

Under the MOA, the CDA group committed to "cease and desist from undertaking any acts relating to the

performance of any matters that has to do with the official functions of DANECO, Inc., in recognition of the latter's legal and juridical personality."

The document further stipulated that the group shall submit "all the records at hand including but not limited to the list of its recognized member-consumers, the payments made by the member-consumers, any contracts entered into with supplier of materials, if there is any, including the receipts of payments made to power suppliers."

It was also agreed upon that DANECO, Inc. "may extend financial assistance" to the employees and officers of the DANECO-CDA who will be affected by the dissolution of its legal personality.

Displaced workers were also assisted and referred by both parties to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and other government agencies for appropriate assistance.

To facilitate a "smooth, organized and effective working relationship" between the two parties, a transition team was formed composed of 10 members, five coming from each party.

DANECO covers the provinces of Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley including Tagum City and the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS). ###