

Headline: Disaster mitigation to get 2015 budget boost

Byline: Paolo G. Montecillo

Published Date: 12:06 AM June 24, 2014

Section: business

Word Count: 2440

Content:

Natural disaster mitigation will get special attention next year via an “unprecedented” increase in funding in next year’s budget for measures to help the country cope with the effects of a warming earth.

Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Florencio Abad said support for priority areas such as infrastructure, healthcare and education would also be ramped up in line with the administration’s goal of creating more jobs and making the Philippines more competitive.

The proposal for next year’s national government budget, which is expected to reach P2.6 trillion, will be discussed by Cabinet officials and submitted to President Aquino on July 10. This will be fine-tuned and submitted to Congress on July 29, the day after the State of the Nation Address (Sona).

“As usual, [we want it passed] within the year of submission to Congress,” Abad told reporters Monday.

Next year’s budget will be higher by 15.1 percent over this year’s P2.26 trillion.

Education will, as is the norm, gets the biggest outlay for 2015, Abad said. Apart from the increasing number of students ever year, the ongoing shift to the K-12 basic education structure means more money would have to be spent on books, school supplies and additional classrooms, Abad said.

This year, the Department of Education has a budget of P249.2 billion, the biggest of any other department in government. The only other larger outlays are for local government allocations worth P319.8 billion, which is spread out over 81 provinces, and debt service funds of P333.9 billion.

Infrastructure will also get a significant boost in 2015, Abad said, noting that the government would stick to its commitment to increase spending to 4 percent of gross domestic product or the equivalent of P578 billion.

The biggest beneficiary of the increase in infra spending would be the Department of Public Works and Highways, which has a budget of P165.5 billion this year. Other infrastructure agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, which has a budget of P21.4 billion, will also receive a higher outlay.

Special emphasis on the country’s disaster preparedness would also be given in 2015. Abad said the spending in this area would receive an “unprecedented” increase. The budget department chief declined to give details.

Subscribe to our daily newsletter

By providing an email address. I agree to the Terms of Use and acknowledge that I have read the Privacy Policy.