

Headline: CDO, Iligan get P69-M fund for climate change adaptation

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MANILA, Philippines—Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities, the two coastal urban centers in northern Mindanao devastated by Tropical Storm “Sendong” four months ago, have been given a P69-million fund to help them prepare for extreme weather events brought by climate change.

The United Nations Development Programme and the Australian government are extending financial assistance to both cities under Project Climate Twin Phoenix, according to UNDP country director Renaud Meyer.

“As the country faces a future of increasing disaster risks from a rapidly changing climate, UNDP Philippines’ programmatic / integrated scientific approach to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management becomes even more critical in mainstreaming these concerns into relevant planning and decision-making processes from the national to the city/municipality level,” Meyer said.

The amount will be used to assess the disaster vulnerabilities of the two cities and the municipalities surrounding the Cagayan de Oro and Mandulog river basins to geological, meteorological and met-induced hazards due to climate change.

Sendong, which hit northern Mindanao and parts of Visayas last December, brought heavy rainfall that led to record floods and storm surges in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, two urban hubs in the region.

The storm left in its wake more than 1,200 people dead and P1.3-billion in damage to agriculture and property in Mindanao.

The government will provide P4 million as counterpart funding for the Twin Phoenix initiative. The two-year project will be spearheaded by the Climate Change Commission led by Vice Chair Mary Ann Lucille L. Sering.

Sering said the disastrous events the country experienced in recent years, such as those of storms “Ondoy” and “Pepeng” in 2009 and “Pedring” and Sendong in 2011, showed how vulnerable the urban centers are to extreme weather events caused by climate change.

“These areas should be given priority and a more focused intervention in terms of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk management (DRR) because of the heavy concentration of human population and economic activities,” Sering said.

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