

## **GFDRR SPOTLIGHT: The Philippines**

Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and heavy rains triggering massive landslides all affect this country in Asia's "Ring of Fire" making it one of the most hazard prone countries in the world. An average of 20 typhoons and over 800 seismic tremors strike the country ever year, with social and economic cost of natural disasters increasing in recent years due to population growth, change in land use patterns, migration and unplanned urbanization, environmental degradation and global climate change.

Responding to the many challenges faced by the Philippines. The GFDRR recently launched a USD \$1 million program aimed at increasing the capacity of the local and central government agencies to better prepare, to cope and to respond response more effectively when natural disaster occur.

### **WORKING TOGETHER IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

After three major typhoons hit the **Philippines** in a ten-week span in 2006, officials recognized the importance of disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Disaster management had been predominantly ex post and was weakened by fragmentation, limited coordination, and a lack of overall strategic planning. GFDRR is supporting Government efforts to build more resilient institutional and operational capacity and develop a long term strategy for integrating disaster management in investment operations. GFDRR is supporting an assessment of institutional capacity and the effectiveness of existing seawalls and other infrastructure, a review of financing sources and fund flows, and an analysis of gaps in knowledge, skills, tools, and systems. At the provincial level, officials in the most vulnerable areas are shifting towards adopting a more holistic approach to disaster risk management, with a strong emphasis on mobilizing public, private, and civil society organizations and local communities in disaster risk reduction efforts.

The new program will consist of work with local experts in order to reduce the country's vulnerabilities to natural disasters, as well as improve the country's access to innovative finance for projects aiming to tackle natural disaster mitigation and recovery.

Building on previous disaster related projects, the consortium of local organizations managing the GFDRR program will compile relevant geo-hazard mapping and socio-economic data in order to identify five to ten vulnerable provinces which will most benefit from such program. The consortium will then develop an analysis of financial implications of disasters, and thus provide insight into the actual costs of each disaster on the provinces' population and economy. This work aims also at compiling best

practices from around the world in order support local communities how to effectively prepare for natural disaster.

The final part of the project will include a risk analysis study, looking at a variety of mechanisms by which the local and central authorities can transfer the risk posed by natural disasters, options such as insurance, crop insurance and contingent lines of credit will all be explored. The local consortium composed of Ateneo School of Government, Manila Observatory, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, and the Earthquakes in Megacities Initiatives is currently reviewing existing disaster management data as well as working with and number of LGUs to gain buy-in and foster a sense of ownership over the project.

### **MOVING FORWARD**

Looking to the future, help to harness the capacity that already exists at the national level, and transfer some of these skills down to the local government level. It will contribute to the Philippines overall strategic plan and moreover, integrate disaster mitigation into general development planning to ensure that's natural disasters and not only reacted to, but actively planned for.