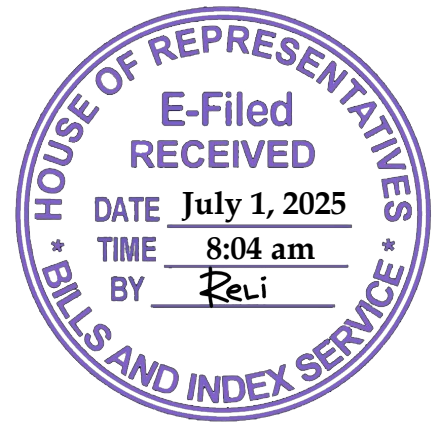


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 692



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines faces recurring and intensifying natural disasters due to its geographical and geophysical location. It is a well-known fact that the country is highly vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, floods, and tsunamis, as it is situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire and within the typhoon belt. According to research, on average, 20 tropical cyclones enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility each year, causing widespread displacement, damage to infrastructure, and disruption of livelihoods.¹

While Republic Act No. 10121 introduced significant reforms in disaster risk reduction and management, emergency relief operations remain impeded by institutional coordination failures, undefined command structures, and systemic logistical constraints.² These limitations are especially pronounced during large-scale disasters, as evidenced by past experiences with Typhoon Yolanda and other major calamities.³ Furthermore, mechanisms for the integration and regulation of international humanitarian assistance remain inadequate, resulting in inefficiencies and gaps in service delivery.⁴

Recent research highlights the need for a unified, responsive, and accountable framework to govern emergency relief and recovery operations at all levels of government. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving interagency coordination, and formalizing procedures for receiving and managing foreign

¹ Doroteo, H.J.E. (2021). Disaster Risk Profile and DRR Framework of the Philippines. ResearchGate.

² Gaillard, J.C., & Navarro, J. (2018). Disaster Risk Governance in the Philippines. In: Handbook of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Edward Elgar Publishing.

³ Bollettino, V., Alcayna, T., Dy, P., & Vinck, P. (2016). Resilience and Disaster Trends in the Philippines. PLOS Currents Disasters.

⁴ Asian Development Bank (2017). Support for the Yolanda Response: Lessons for Future Operations. ADB Independent Evaluation.

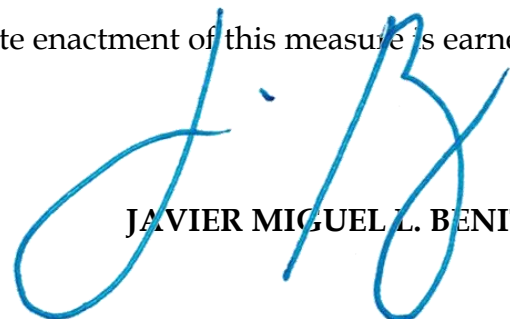
and domestic aid are essential to reducing delays and ensuring an equitable response.⁵

Given the challenges encountered in previous disaster response efforts, it is essential to institutionalize a streamlined process for emergency relief operations, governed by clear protocols, robust systems, and a collaborative framework involving national agencies, local government units, and international stakeholders. The establishment of a comprehensive disaster response framework will ensure the efficiency and inclusivity of relief and recovery operations and effectively address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society.

Moreover, the implementation of this framework will strengthen disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, thereby mitigating the adverse effects of future calamities. It will also promote long-term resilience through the formulation of sustainable recovery strategies that integrate disaster risk reduction measures, ensuring that the Philippines is adequately prepared to face future challenges and recover promptly.

Towards this end, the State shall institutionalize a disaster response framework that guarantees swift, efficient, and inclusive relief and recovery operations. This will enable the Philippines not only to respond more effectively to disasters but also to reduce vulnerability, promote resilience, and build back better in the aftermath of calamities.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

⁵ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) (2019). Disaster Risk Governance Assessment: Philippines.

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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY RELIEF AND
DISASTER RESPONSE FRAMEWORK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the
"Comprehensive Emergency Relief and Disaster Response Framework Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the
State to establish a coordinated, effective, and inclusive system for emergency
relief and disaster response. The State recognizes the urgency of protecting life,
property, and the environment during disasters and shall institutionalize
mechanisms to ensure prompt, transparent, and equitable delivery of
assistance. Disaster response shall be integrated with preparedness, mitigation,
and recovery efforts to strengthen national resilience.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* - This Act shall apply to all natural and human-
induced disasters affecting any part of the Republic of the Philippines. It shall
govern the actions of all government agencies, local government units
("LGUs"), and accredited private and civil society organizations engaged in
disaster response and relief operations.

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purposes of this Act, the following
terms shall be defined as follows:

- (a) **Disaster** - A serious disruption of the functioning of a community
or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or
environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of
the affected community or society to cope using its own
resources. Disasters are often described as a result of the

combination of: the exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences, Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other negative effects on human, physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, Social and economic disruption and environmental degradation;

- (b) **Disaster Response** - The provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected. Disaster response is predominantly focused on immediate and short-term needs and is sometimes called "disaster relief".
- (c) **Emergency Relief** - The immediate assistance provided to individuals and communities affected by disasters or crises, focusing on saving lives and meeting basic needs like food, water, shelter, and healthcare;
- (d) **National Disaster Response Framework** - A strategic and operational guide developed and maintained by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council that outlines the roles, responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, and response standards of national and local stakeholders in times of disaster;
- (e) **National Disaster Response Coordination Center** - The principal operations hub tasked with coordinating, directing, and monitoring all disaster response efforts at the national level as provided in this Act;
- (f) **Affected Area** - A geographic locality or local government unit declared under a state of calamity or emergency due to a disaster or hazard impact, necessitating the activation of emergency response mechanisms;
- (g) **Prepositioned Goods** - Supplies and equipment strategically stored in advance in or near disaster-prone areas to ensure quick and efficient emergency response and relief operations;
- (h) **Resilience** - The ability of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems to anticipate, withstand, adapt to, and recover quickly from the impacts of disasters or emergencies;

- (i) **Humanitarian Assistance** - A form of aid designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity during and after crises like natural disasters, armed conflicts, and famines; *and*
- (j) **Vulnerable and Marginalized Sectors** - Groups or individuals who are at greater risk of harm, loss, or difficulty during and after disasters due to their social, economic, physical, or political disadvantages. These are people who have limited capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, or recover from the impact of disasters such as children and infants, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, people with chronic illnesses, and the poor and homeless.

SEC. 5. *Establishment of the National Disaster Response Framework.* - The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (“NDRRMC”) shall establish and operationalize the National Disaster Response Framework (“NDRF”). The NDRF shall provide a strategic and systematic approach to disaster response, defining roles and responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, standards of service delivery, and procedures for mobilization of resources. The NDRF shall be reviewed and updated every three years.

SEC. 6. *National Disaster Response Coordination Center.* - There is hereby established a National Disaster Response Coordination Center (“NDRCC”), which shall function as the principal operations hub for coordinating all disaster response activities across national government agencies, LGUs, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders during disaster events.

(a) Mandate and Functions

The NDRCC shall be responsible for:

1. Real-time coordination and command of national disaster response operations in accordance with the NDRF;
2. Serving as the national command post for multi-agency deployment and mobilization of emergency response resources;
3. Maintaining 24/7 operations during states of national emergency or declared disasters;
4. Ensuring interoperability and synchronized communication between national agencies, regional DRRM councils, and LGUs;
5. Monitoring and reporting real-time data on affected populations, evacuation centers, logistics, and relief efforts;

6. Hosting and managing a national emergency dashboard for situational awareness and operational planning;
7. Coordinating with international humanitarian actors, donor institutions, and foreign governments in case of large-scale emergencies; *and*
8. Overseeing the pre-positioning of resources and activating quick-response mechanisms during the onset of a disaster.

(b) Organizational Structure

The NDRCC shall be headed by the Executive Director of the Office of Civil Defense (“OCD”) or a designated high-ranking official with operational command authority during disasters. It shall include permanent representatives from:

- Department of Social Welfare and Development (“DSWD”)
- Department of the Interior and Local Government (“DILG”)
- Department of Health (“DOH”)
- Department of Public Works and Highways (“DPWH”)
- Department of National Defense (“DND”)
- Department of Transportation (“DOTr”)
- Armed Forces of the Philippines (“AFP”)
- Philippine National Police (“PNP”)
- Philippine Coast Guard (“PCG”)
- Philippine Red Cross
- Other relevant government and non-government organizations

(c) Facilities and Capabilities:

To fulfill its mandate as the principal operational arm of the NDRRMC during disaster response, the NDRCC shall maintain a central command facility operating on a 24/7 basis, equipped with a national operations room, multi-agency coordination desks, and a situation briefing center. It shall be supported by the following:

1. An integrated dashboard aggregating data from Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (“PAGASA”), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (“PHIVOLCS”), National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (“NAMRIA”), LGUs, and field responders, equipped with

Geographic Information System (“GIS”), remote sensing, and automated damage assessment tools.

2. A secured emergency communications network with satellite backup, video conferencing with regional and local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (“DRRM”) councils, and interoperability with AFP, PNP, PCG, and humanitarian partners.
3. Mobile command centers and regional coordination satellites capable of field deployment and data relay to the NDRCC.
4. A national inventory and resource tracking system for relief goods, rescue equipment, and transport assets, in coordination with DSWD, DOH, AFP, and other agencies.
5. Disaster-resilient infrastructure with backup power, secure servers, and annual continuity audits to ensure uninterrupted operations during large-scale emergencies.

SEC. 7. Disaster Response Fund. – There is hereby established a Disaster Response Fund (“DRF”) to be administered by the NDRRMC, distinct from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund.

The DRF shall be allocated exclusively for the following purposes:

- (a) **Provision of Immediate Relief Supplies** – Including but not limited to food, potable water, clothing, and hygiene kits, to be distributed to affected populations during emergencies;
- (b) **Emergency Shelter and Temporary Housing** – Establishment and maintenance of evacuation centers, provision of temporary housing units, and materials for shelter repair;
- (c) **Emergency Medical Services** – Deployment of medical teams, procurement of medicines and emergency equipment, and support for health-related interventions;
- (d) **Logistical Operations** – Transportation, warehousing, and distribution of relief goods and services, including fuel, vehicles, and support equipment;
- (e) **Personnel Deployment and Operational Support** – Mobilization of government response teams, hazard pay and allowances for field personnel, and related operational needs;
- (f) **Rehabilitation of Critical Services** – Immediate restoration of water supply, electricity, communication lines, and road access in affected areas; *and*
- (g) **Contingency and Buffer Stocks** – Procurement and maintenance of prepositioned goods, materials, and standby funds to ensure rapid deployment;

All expenditures shall be subject to existing government accounting, auditing, and procurement laws and shall be included in the annual report submitted to Congress pursuant to Section 8 of this Act.

In urgent situations, LGUs may use local funds for immediate relief response, which shall be reimbursable by the national government upon submission of reports and compliance with NDRRMC guidelines.

SEC. 8. *Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction.* - The NDRRMC, in coordination with LGUs, shall implement disaster preparedness programs that include hazard mapping, early warning systems, simulation exercises, and public education. These initiatives shall be integrated into local development plans to strengthen pre-disaster readiness and reduce community vulnerability.

SEC. 9. *Public Participation.* - All disaster response efforts shall promote active public participation. The government shall institutionalize mechanisms for volunteer engagement, civil society partnerships, and inclusive consultation in planning and implementing relief operations.

SEC. 10. *Report to Congress.* - The NDRRMC shall submit an annual report to Congress detailing the implementation of the NDRF, utilization of the DRF, outcomes of relief operations, and recommendations for improvement.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NDRRMC, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act or a portion thereof is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.