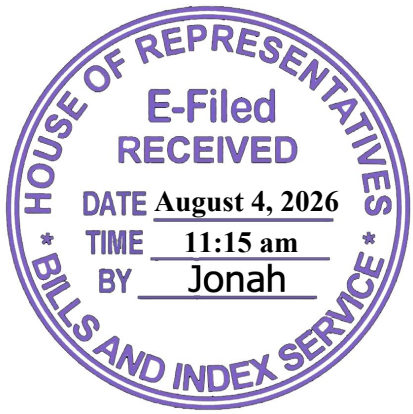
Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10553



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE MARCELINO 'MARCY' R. TEODORO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines consistently ranks among the most disaster-prone nations globally, exposed to frequent and severe natural hazards including tropical cyclones, widespread flooding, earthquakes, and volcanic activity. In 2023 alone, over 2.2 million individuals nationwide were reported by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) as affected by extreme weather events and natural calamities; and at the forefront of disaster preparedness, emergency response, and post-disaster recovery operations are the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Officers and Personne at the national and sub-national levels. These first responders and frontliners fulfill critical, life-saving functions under high-risk, hazardous, and physically demanding conditions.

Despite their indispensable contribution to national resilience and public safety, systemic gaps undermine the DRRM workforce. A substantial proportion of DRRM personnel remain in contractual, temporary, or non-permanent positions with minimal job security, limited access to medical and welfare benefits, inadequate specialized training, and no clear path for professional advancement. Furthermore, reports from the Commission on Audit (COA) reveal that several Local Government Units (LGUs) have yet to fully establish or adequately staff operational Local DRRM Offices (LDRRMOs) as mandated by law.

While Republic Act No. 10121, or the *Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010*, laid the statutory groundwork for national DRRM frameworks and administrative structures, it lacks comprehensive protection and welfare guarantees for the human resources driving these systems. This legislative shortfall was highlighted in a 2021 Senate study, which underscored the critical lack of institutional support, competitive compensation, and career pathing for DRRM workers, particularly at the local government level.

To address these institutional deficiencies, this bill enacts a **Magna Carta for DRRM Workers** across all levels of government. Specifically, this measure seeks to:

1. **Guarantee Security of Tenure:** Institutionalize plantilla positions to end precarious employment practices for essential DRRM personnel;
2. **Standardize Compensation and Risk Pay:** Grant standardized civil service compensation, mandatory hazard pay, and appropriate allowances commensurate with operational risks;
3. **Promote Health and Wellness:** Provide comprehensive insurance, medical benefits, and dedicated mental health and psychosocial support programs tailored to high-stress emergency response duties; and
4. **Foster Professionalization:** Establish continuous professional development programs and structured career progression tracks to build a highly skilled and sustainable DRRM workforce.

It is the declared policy of the State to recognize DRRM personnel as indispensable agents of public safety and national development. Safeguarding their rights, security, and welfare is vital to building a resilient, responsive, and proactive disaster governance framework.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" TEODORO
1st District, Marikina City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **10553**

Introduced by REP. MARCELIO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA FOR PUBLIC DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT WORKERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. *Title*. - This Act shall be known as the "*Magna Carta for Public Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Workers*".

Section 2. *Statement of Policy*. – It shall be the policy of the State to:

a) Uphold the people's constitutional rights to life and property by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country's institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction and management, and building the resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change impacts;

b) Recognize and strengthen the capacities of Local Government Units (LGUs) and communities in mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the impact of hazards and disasters; and

c) Enhance the implementation of RA 10121, otherwise known as the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010" by enacting measures with special reference to the welfare of all Public DRRM Workers in the country.

Towards this end, this Act aims to:

a. Promote and improve socio-economic and psychological well-being of Public DRRM Workers, through the improvement of working conditions, environment and terms of employment;
b. Promote the development of skills and capabilities of Public DRRM Workers for them to be more responsive and be-better equipped for the delivery of DRRM services and programs; and
c. Encourage those with proper qualifications and excellent abilities to join and remain in the government service and DRRM profession.

Section 3. ***Definition***. - For purposes of this Act, "Public DRRM Workers" refers to all persons who are engaged in the performance of duties covering any or all Thematic Pillars of DRRM- Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Rehabilitation and Recovery- employed by the government or any of its political subdivisions, instrumentalities, or agencies. The Public DRRM Worker may either be civilian personnel engaged in permanent, temporary, contractual, or casual employment or a Public DRRM Worker engaged through a Contract of Service (CoS) and Job Order (JO) and such other appointments, so long as the position or designation or actual work performed involves government service work and those functions provided under Section 5 of this Act.

Furthermore, the term "Public DRRM Workers" shall also include emergency physicians and nurses, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, trained first aiders, criminologists, and personnel trained in basic and advanced life support as certified by the NDRRMC or local disaster risk reduction and management offices.

Section 4. *Certification.* – The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall be the certifying body to oversee the following: (i) that the DRRM functions or activities of an agency or LGU are authorized by law or proper authority; (ii) the positions are part of the authorized staffing of the organizational units performing the DRRM functions; and (iii) to monitor that the incumbents thereof are actually engaged in DRRM work.

Section 5. *Classification of DRRM Activities.* – The following DRRM activities shall be classified according to the risks involved based on the nature of work or location that they are working in:

a) Low Risk DRRM Activities- DRRM activities that subject a Public DRRM Worker to minimal exposure or lesser degree of occupational risks or perils to life, such as but not limited to, regular office or clerical work and those personnel that are not deployed for DRRM activities in high-risk areas.

b) High Risk DRRM Activities- DRRM activities that expose the Public DRRM Worker to occupational risks or perils to life, such as but not limited to, search, rescue, and retrieval operations, management of the dead and missing, rapid damage needs assessment, post-disaster needs assessment, emergency response activities, post-disaster activities, health and epidemic/pandemic response operations, and Low Risk DRRM Activities in high-risk areas such as those Public DRRM workers deployed in identified activities under the different

Thematic Pillars and in critical areas that are about to be affected, is affected, and during the early recovery from natural or human-induced hazards. Such activities shall also cover those that are to be performed in high-risk areas.

Low Risk DRRM activities shall be considered as high-risk DRRM activities when the same is being performed in an affected area or in areas deemed high risk. *Provided*, that, the determination of such classification shall be under the discretion of the respective heads of agencies concerned.

Section 6. *Recruitment and Qualification.* - Recruitment policy and minimum requirements with respect to the selection and appointment and assignment of Public DRRM Workers shall be developed by the NDRRMC in accordance with the policies and standards of the Civil Service Commission and implemented by the respective agencies concerned: *Provided*, that, in the absence of qualified "eligibles" and it becomes necessary in the public interest to fill a vacancy, a temporary appointment shall be issued to the person, including persons with disability (PWD), who meets all the requirements for the position to which the appointee is being appointed except the appropriate Civil Service eligibility: provided, further, that such temporary appointment shall not exceed twelve (12) months nor be less than three (3) months, renewable only once thereafter but that the appointee may be replaced sooner if (a) a qualified civil service eligible becomes available, or (b) the appointee is found wanting in capacity or delivering poor performance or conduct unbefitting a government employee.

Section 7. *DRRM Volunteers.* – This Act shall not cover DRRM Volunteers, but shall otherwise be covered by the Guidelines on Accredited Community Disaster Volunteers (ACDV) and pursuant to Section 9(o) of RA 10121 and its implementing rules and regulations issued by the NDRRMC. For those who are not covered by the ACDV

Guidelines, their respective organizations shall provide ample protection to their personnel-volunteers in consonance with the provisions of this Act.

Section 8. ***Non-permanent Public DRRM Workers.*** – Non-permanent Public DRRM Workers engaged by the Government, such as Job Order, Contract of Service personnel, and consultants, may be provided with such welfare benefits under Sections 25, 26, and 32 of this Act in relation to the performance of their duties as premiums thereof should their contracts require or allow them to provide services that are deemed high risk in nature. *Provided*, That the Non-permanent Public DRRM Workers shall secure a certification from the head of agency or its duly designated representative that the employees have performed either of the DRRM functions or activities as provided for under Section 5 of this Act as a requirement to avail such benefits.

Section 9. ***Performance Evaluation and Merit Promotion.*** – All concerned agencies, in consultation under Section 39 of this Act, shall prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan applicable to all Public DRRM Workers. Such career and personnel development plan shall include provisions on merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training grants, job rotation, and incentive and award system.

The performance evaluation plan shall consider foremost the improvement of the individual employee's efficiency and organizational effectiveness: *Provided*, That each employee shall be informed regularly by one's supervisor of one's performance evaluation.

The merit promotion plan shall align with the rules of the Civil Service Commission.

Section 10. *Transfer or Geographical Reassignment of Public DRRM Workers.* –

a) Transfer is the movement of an employee from one organizational unit to another in the same department or agency, or from one department or agency to another, which is of equivalent rank, level, or salary, without a gap in service. On the other hand, Re-assignment is a movement of an employee across the organizational structure within the same department or agency which does not involve a reduction in rank, level, or salary. A transfer requires an issuance of appointment while geographical re-assignment does not.

b) A Public DRRM Worker shall not be transferred or reassigned, except when made in the interest of public service, in which case, the employee concerned shall be informed of the reasons therefor in writing. If the Public DRRM Worker believes that there is no justification for the transfer or reassignment, the employee may appeal the case to the Civil Service Commission. In case of an appeal, the transfer or reassignment shall be held in abeyance and shall only take effect if the appeal is denied: *Provided*, that, no transfer or reassignment shall be made for reasons merely of political affiliation; *Provided*, further, that no transfer or reassignment whatsoever shall be made three (3) months before and three (3) months after any local or national elections*: Provided*, furthermore, that the transfer or reassignment of Public DRRM Worker's nature of work shall remain to be DRRM in nature; *Provided*, finally, that the necessary expenses of the transfer or reassignment of the Public DRRM Worker and the employee's immediate family shall be paid for by the Government.

Section 11. *Married Public DRRM Workers.* - Whenever possible, the proper authorities shall take steps to enable married couples, both of whom are Public DRRM Workers, to be employed or assigned in the same LGU or government agency, but not necessarily in the same office, department, or division.

Section 12. *Security of Tenure* - In case of permanent employment of Public DRRM Workers, their services shall not be terminated except for cause provided by law and after due process: *Provided*, that, if a Public DRRM Worker is found by the Civil Service Commission to be unjustly dismissed from work, the employee shall be entitled to reinstatement without loss of seniority rights and to the worker's back wages with applicable commensurate interest, subject to prevailing laws and policies computed from the time the employee's compensation was withheld up to the time of reinstatement.

Section 13. *Protection from Discrimination.* – Public DRRM Workers shall be protected from discrimination regardless of their sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, pregnancy, physical disability or characteristics, civil status, creed, religious and political beliefs, or any other status in the exercise of their profession: *Provided*, That the disability of the Public DRRM Worker shall not limit the employee's effective performance of the DRRM profession.

Section 14. *Duties and Obligations.* - The Public DRRM Worker shall:

a) Perform the DRRM duty with utmost respect for life, race, sex, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, party policies, and social status;

b) Discharge the DRRM duty humanely with conscience and dignity;

c) Be duty-ready at all times and prepared to be deployed in any kind of emergencies and disasters, adhering to all emergency protocols: *Provided*, That in the event where the family of the Public DRRM Worker is directly affected by the disaster, the worker shall first ensure their safety and well-being;

d) Be properly trained and proficient in the assigned position and tasks;

e) Always endeavor to maintain a level of health and fitness consistent with the demands of the DRRM profession;

f) Actively participate in all in-service training, drills, and simulation exercises that will enhance the worker's capacity in performing the functions of a Public DRRM Worker;

g) Be familiar with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, Contingency Plans, and Public Service Continuity Plan of the agency or LGU to which the worker is employed or engaged and contribute to the Occupational Safety and Health efforts;

h) Conduct needs assessment as part of risk reduction and planning;

i) Not consume alcoholic beverages or any substance that could impair the worker's vigilance or judgment prior to or while in the performance of duties;

j) Maintain an in-depth understanding of the emergency and DRRM procedures;

k) Practice utmost safety and diligence in the performance of duty; and

l) Always adhere to the principle that Disaster Prevention and Mitigation is first and foremost the most essential and that the same saves lives.

Section 15. *Code of Conduct.* - Within six (6) months from the approval of this Act, the NDRRMC, upon consultation with the appropriate agencies and instrumentalities of the government, and appropriate DRRM worker's organizations, shall formulate and prepare a Code of Conduct for Public DRRM Workers, in consonance with Republic

Act No. 6714 or the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees", which shall be disseminated as widely as possible.

Section 16. *Administrative Charges*. - Administrative charges against a DRRM Worker shall be heard by a committee created by the agency or office where the Public DRRM Worker belongs pursuant to the existing "Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service (RRACCS)". The committee shall submit its findings and recommendations to the head of the agency or office within thirty (30) days from the termination of the hearings. The Committee shall render a decision or resolution within thirty (30) days from the termination of the hearing. The aggrieved party may file a motion for reconsideration only once within fifteen (15) days from notice of the decision. The aggrieved party may appeal before the Office of the President within a non-extendible period of thirty (30) days from receipt of the resolution denying his motion for reconsideration.

The Committee shall be appointed by the Head of Agency or LGU and shall be composed of seven (7) members, including the Chairperson. It shall be composed of the following:

a) Second highest ranking official, for NGAs, or Vice-Mayor for LGUs, or Vice-Governor for Provincial Level, as its Chairperson;
b) The Head of Human Resources as its Vice-Chairperson;
c) One (1) Division Chief with a salary grade of not lower than 22;
d) Two (2) Section Chiefs or employees with a salary grade of not lower than 18;
e) One (1) representative from a recognized Public DRRM Workers' association or its equivalent: *Provided*, That the said representative also belongs to the

agency; in the absence thereof, an employee with a salary grade of not lower than 18; and

f) One (1) representative from the legal section or division, or its equivalent.

The Head of Office may reorganize the composition of the Committee in such cases where one or more members of the Committee are the interested party or in cases necessary to discharge the functions of the Committee, such as when the prescribed composition of the Committee cannot be met due to insufficiency, unavailability, or absence of the position, rank, or office in the agency. In such case, the Head of Office shall exercise diligence in choosing the members in accordance with their ranks or functions consistent with the prescribed composition.

Section 17. ***Legal Support.*** – Public DRRM Workers shall be exempted from any liability as to damage to any property or injury to a person caused in the direct performance of their duty relative to disaster or emergency response and other related activities where the same is necessary to save lives or properties, in accordance with Art. 11, par. 5 of the Revised Penal Code or other applicable laws and issuances. In any case, however, the Public DRRM Workers shall be afforded appropriate assistance by their respective agency or LGU concerned in view that any conflict that may arise shall be resolved amicably or extra-judicially through commensurate and peaceful means.

In cases where injury or death is involved and a case has been filed against the Public DRRM Workers, the agency or LGU concerned shall provide the workers all possible legal assistance: *Provided*, That it is established by the Public DRRM Workers, through a Sworn Affidavit, that the injury or death caused was in direct connection with their duty, without any criminal or malicious intent.

Section 18. *Safeguards in Disciplinary Procedures.* - In every disciplinary proceeding, the Public DRRM Worker shall have:

a) the right to be informed, in writing, of the charges;

b) the right to full access to the evidence in the case;

c) the right to defend oneself and to be defended by a representative of one's choice or by one's organization, with adequate time given to the worker for the preparation of one's defense;

d) the right to confront witnesses presented against oneself and summon witnesses in one's behalf;

e) the right to appeal to designated authorities;

f) the right to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in one's defense in case of exoneration or dismissal of the charges; and

g) such other rights as will ensure fairness and impartiality during proceedings.

Section 19. *Normal Hours of Work*. - The normal hours of work of any Public DRRM Worker shall not exceed eight (8) hours a day or forty (40) hours a week.

Hours worked shall include: a) all the time during which a Public DRRM Worker is required to be on active duty or to be at a prescribed workplace; and b) all the time during which a Public DRRM Worker is placed on On-Call status; *Provided*, that, a Public DRRM Worker particularly placed on "On Call" status shall be entitled to an "On Call" pay equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the worker's regular wage. *Provided*, further, that no Public DRRM Worker shall be placed on "On-Call" status beyond seven (7) days per month.

"On Call" status refers to a status where a Public DRRM Worker not on active duty is called upon to respond to urgent or immediate need for response-related activities relative to emergencies such that the employee cannot devote the time for one's own use.

Section 20. *Overtime Work*. - Where the exigencies of the service so require, any Public DRRM Worker may be required to render service beyond the normal eight (8) hours a day. In such a case, the worker shall be paid an additional compensation in accordance with existing laws and prevailing practices; *Provided*, That such compensation shall be subject to the same rates, conditions, and limitations applicable to qualified government personnel provided under relevant issuances of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) – Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Section 21. *Work During Rest Day*. -

a) Where a Public DRRM Worker is made to work on the worker's scheduled rest day, the worker shall be paid an additional compensation in accordance with existing laws.

b) Where a Public DRRM Worker is made to work on any special holiday, the worker shall be paid an additional compensation in accordance with existing laws. Where such holiday work falls on the worker's scheduled rest day, the worker shall be entitled to an additional compensation as may be provided by existing laws.

Section 22. *Night-Shift Differential*. –

a) Every Public DRRM Worker shall be paid a night-shift differential of ten percent (10%) of the worker's regular wage for each hour of work performed during the night shifts.

b) Every Public DRRM Worker required to work during the period covered after the worker's regular schedule shall be entitled to the regular wage plus the regular overtime rate and an additional amount of ten percent (10%) of such overtime rate for each hour of work performed between ten (10) o'clock in the evening and six (6) o'clock in the morning.

Section 23. *Salaries*. - In the determination of the salary scale of Public DRRM Workers, the existing applicable law on the salary scheme of government employees shall govern.

a) Salary Scale for Local Public DRRM Worker. - The salary scales of Public DRRM Workers whose salaries are appropriated by a municipality, city, or provincial government shall be based on the salary schedule being implemented by the LGU concerned;

b) Salaries to be Paid in Legal Tender - Salaries of Public DRRM Workers shall be paid in legal tender of the Philippines or the equivalent in checks or treasury warrants: provided, however, that such checks or treasury warrants shall be convertible to cash in any national, provincial, city or municipal treasurer's office or any banking institution operating under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

c) Deductions Prohibited - No person shall make any deduction whatsoever from the salaries of Public DRRM Workers except under specific provision of law

authorizing such deductions: *Provided*, however, that upon written authority executed by the Public DRRM Worker concerned, a) lawful dues or fees owing to any organization or association where such Public DRRM Worker is an officer or member; and b) premiums properly due all insurance policies, retirement, and medicare shall be considered deductible.

Section 24. *Additional Compensation*. - Notwithstanding Section 12 of Republic Act No. 6758, also known as the "Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989", Public DRRM Workers shall receive the following allowances: hazard, transportation and subsistence, rice subsidy, reimbursement of allowable communication expense, longevity pay, laundry, and quarters.

Section 25. *Hazard Allowance*. - As provided under Section 5 of this Act, Public DRRM Workers, who are exposed to high risks or perils to life in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, shall be compensated with hazard allowance equivalent to not exceeding twenty-five (25%) of their daily basic salary, and at least five percent (5%) for Public DRRM Workers exposed in low-risk activities when deployed to or are working in affected areas; *Provided*, that, Public DRRM Workers under low risk DRRM activities shall be eligible to avail an increase hazard allowance equivalent to that of high risk Public DRRM Workers if they are called to perform or are deployed for a limited period to high-risk DRRM activities, subject to appropriate computation of days rendered. The determination of the compensation of Hazard Allowance shall be based on the actual working days of exposure of the Public DRRM Workers to any given risks or perils to life.

The grant of hazard pay under this Act shall not be subject to any form of tax consistent with the very purpose of this grant of incentive to local disaster relief workers.

Section 26. *Transportation, Communication, and Subsistence Allowance*. - Public DRRM Workers who are required to render service in the field during emergencies and disasters to make their services available at any and all times, shall be entitled to full subsistence allowance of three (3) meals which may be computed in accordance with prevailing circumstances; *Provided*, that, no subsistence allowance shall be given in the event where the concerned agency has already prescribed meals for the Public DRRM Workers.

Public DRRM workers required to report outside of their regular workstations other than responding to disasters or emergencies shall be entitled to such transportation and travel expenses pursuant to E.O. No. 77. S, 2019 or other existing budgeting, accounting and auditing guidelines as well as reimbursement of allowable communication expenses.

Section 27. *Rice Subsidy Allowance*. – All Public DRRM Workers as defined in this Act shall be entitled to a rice subsidy allowance in the form of cash amounting to One Thousand Five Hundred pesos (Php1,500.00) monthly.

Section 28. *Longevity Pay*. - A monthly longevity pay equivalent to five percent (5%) of the monthly basic pay shall be paid to a Public DRRM Worker for every five (5) years of continuous, efficient, and meritorious services rendered as certified by the chief of office concerned, commencing with the Public DRRM Worker's service upon the effectivity of this Act.

Those entitled to Longevity Pay can no longer avail of the Step Increment benefit due to length of service.

Section 29. *Laundry Allowance*. – All Public DRRM Workers who are required to wear uniforms regularly shall be entitled to laundry allowance equivalent to One Hundred Fifty Pesos (Php 150) per month: *Provided*, that, this rate shall be reviewed periodically and increased accordingly by the NDRRMC in consultation with the appropriate government agencies concerned considering existing laws and prevailing practices.

Section 30. *Housing*. - All Public DRRM Workers who are on tour of duty and those who, because of unavoidable circumstances, are forced to stay in their offices, shall be entitled to free living quarters within the office, or if such quarters are not available, shall receive quarters allowance as may be determined by their respective agencies.

A qualified Public DRRM Worker who has no residence within a fifty (50) kilometer radius from such government facility or deployment area shall be granted quarters allowance at the local room rental rate in the area until free living quarters are available.

Section 31. *Medical, Mental, and Psychosocial Examination*. - Compulsory medical, mental, and psychosocial examination shall be provided free of charge to all Public DRRM Workers before entering the service in the Government or its subdivisions and shall be repeated once a year during the tenure of employment of all Public DRRM Workers and after every deployment of Public DRRM Workers for more than three (3) days to seven (7) days in high-risk areas, as may be determined by the agency where the Public DRRM Workers belong: *Provided*, that, where medical examination shows that medical treatment, mental, or psychosocial intervention, or hospitalization is necessary for those already in government service, the treatment or hospitalization including medicines shall be provided free either in a government or a

private hospital by the government entity paying the salary of the Public DRRM Workers: *Provided*, further, that the cost of such medical examination and treatment shall be determined by the respective agency with whom the Public DRRM Workers are engaged and such amount be subject to process of the agency.

In cases of extreme exposure to a traumatic experience while rendering DRRM Work, the agency shall, aside from those that are provided for above, provide necessary support for the rehabilitation of the Public DRRM Workers. A post-medical examination shall be provided for the Public DRRM Workers prior to leaving the service.

Section 32. *Personal Protective Equipment, Vaccination, and other Prophylaxis.* – Public DRRM Workers, as frontliners in disaster response, shall be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment, free vaccinations and other prophylactic medicines against common and present diseases in the locality where the Public DRRM Workers are assigned. The immediate family of Public DRRM Workers deployed in high-risk areas who are exposed to any highly contagious disease or illness shall also be entitled to vaccinations or any available immediate medical intervention.

Section 33. *Compensation for Work-Related Injuries and Sicknesses*. - Public DRRM Workers shall be protected against the consequences of employment injuries or sickness in accordance with existing laws. Injuries or sickness incurred in the line of duty shall be presumed work-connected.

Section 34. *Leave Benefits for Public DRRM Workers*. - Public DRRM Workers are entitled to such vacation and sick leaves as provided by existing laws and prevailing practices: *Provided*, that, in addition to the leave privilege now enjoyed by Public

DRRM Workers, men and women Public DRRM Workers are entitled to such paternity and maternity leaves, respectively, provided by existing laws and prevailing practices: *Provided*, further, that upon separation of the Public DRRM Workers from service, they shall be entitled to all accumulated leave credits with pay. Public DRRM Workers are also entitled to rehabilitation leave privilege for physical, mental, or emotional injuries and damages sustained in the performance of their official duties subject to the provisions under relevant issuances of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) – Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Section 35. *Capacity Building, Scholarship, and Grants.* - Public DRRM Workers shall undergo necessary training and other capacity building activities regularly. They shall also be allowed to avail of scholarship benefits and grants for pursuing graduate and post-graduate studies in accordance with the existing rules to be implemented by the concerned agencies or LGUs. Grantees of the program may study within the Philippines or abroad provided that the concerned agency or LGU shall provide strict measures to ensure continuity and render service obligation. The concerned agency shall give utmost preference to post-graduate DRRM-related studies in granting such benefits.

Section 36. *Mandatory Insurance Coverage-* Public DRRM Workers shall be entitled to insurance coverage as provided by the Social Security System (SSS) as mandated under Republic Act No. 8282 otherwise known as the "Social Security Law", by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) as provided by Republic Act No. 8291 also known as "The Government Service Insurance System Act of 1997", by the Universal Health Care Act as mandated by RA No. 11223, and by the Philippine Health

Insurance (PhilHealth) as mandated by Republic Act No. 7875 or the "National Health Insurance Act of 1995", whichever is applicable.

Further, all Public DRRM Workers who are assigned to fieldwork shall also be covered by a group accident insurance policy that must cover the following:

1) accidental death;

2) dismemberment, loss of sight, hearing, speech indemnity;

3) permanent disability; and

4) hospitalization cost or medical expense reimbursement.

The payment of the premium for the group accident insurance policy for the Public DRRM Workers shall be borne either by the national government agencies or by the LGUs which engaged such personnel.

Section 37. ***Highest Basic Salary Upon Retirement***. - Three (3) months prior to the compulsory retirement, the Public DRRM Worker shall automatically be granted one (1) salary range or grade higher than the worker's basic salary, and the retirement benefit thereafter computed based on the worker's highest salary: *Provided*, That the worker has reached the age and fulfilled service requirements under existing laws.

Section 38. ***Prohibition Against Double Recovery of Benefits***. - Whenever other laws provide for the same benefits covered by this Act, the Public DRRM Worker shall have the option to choose which benefits will be paid to the worker. However, if the benefits chosen are less than those provided under this Act, the worker shall be paid only the difference.

Section 39. *Prohibition Against Elimination and/or Diminution*. - Nothing in this law shall be construed to eliminate or in any way diminish benefits being enjoyed by Public DRRM Workers at the time of the effectivity of this Act.

Section 40. *Right to Self-Organization*. - Public DRRM Workers shall have the right to freely form, join, or assist organizations or associations, to the extent allowable by law and existing policies, for purposes not contrary to law to defend and protect their mutual interests and to obtain redress of their grievances through peaceful concerted activities.

Section 41. *Freedom from Interference or Coercion*. - It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any of the following acts of interference or coercion:

a) to require as a condition of employment that a Public DRRM Worker shall not join a DRRM Workers' organization, association, or union or shall relinquish membership therein:

b) to discriminate concerning hiring or tenure of employment or any item or condition of employment in order to encourage or discourage membership in any DRRM Workers' organization, association, or union;

c) to prevent a Public DRRM Worker from carrying out duties laid upon the worker by one's position in the organization, association, or union, or to penalize the worker for the action undertaken in such capacity:

d) to harass or interfere with the discharge of the functions of the Public DRRM Worker when it is calculated to intimidate or to prevent the worker from performing one's duties and responsibilities; and

e) to otherwise interfere in the establishment, functioning, or administration of DRRM Workers' organizations or unions through acts designed to place such organizations or unions under the control of government authority.

Section 42. *Consultation with Public DRRM Workers' Organizations*. - In the formulation of national policies governing the social security of Public DRRM Workers, professional and Public DRRM Workers' organizations as well as other appropriate government agencies concerned shall be consulted by the NDRRMC. For this purpose, Management-DRRM Workers' Consultative Councils for national, regional, and other appropriate levels shall be established and operationalized.

Section 43. *Human Resource Development/ Management Study*. - The Human Resource Department or Division of respective concerned agencies shall conduct a periodic human resource development or management study into, among others, the following areas:

a) adequacy of facilities and supplies to render quality DRRM services to client population;

b) opportunity for Public DRRM Workers to grow and develop their potentials and experience a sense of worth and dignity in their work;

c) mechanisms for democratic consultation in government DRRM institutions;

d) appropriate organizational and staffing patterns;

e) ways and means of enabling the rank-and-file workers to avail of educational opportunities for personal growth and development;

f) upgrading of working conditions, reclassification of positions and salaries of Public DRRM Workers to correct disparity vis-a-vis other professions such that positions requiring longer study be upgraded and given corresponding pay scale; and

g) assessment of the national policy on exportation of skilled human resources to focus on how these resources could instead be utilized productively for the country's needs.

Section 44. *Penal Provision*. - Any person who shall willfully interfere with, restrain, or coerce any Public DRRM Worker in the exercise of the worker's rights or shall in any manner commit any act in violation of any of the provisions of this Act, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine of not less than Ten Thousand pesos (Php10,000.00) but not more than Forty Thousand pesos (Php40,000.00) or imprisonment of not more than one (1) year or both at the discretion of the court.

No violence shall be inflicted on Public DRRM Workers in the discharge of their duty. In the application of Articles 149 (Indirect Assault) and 151 (Resistance and Disobedience to a Person in Authority or the Agents of Such Person) of Act No. 3815, otherwise known as the "Revised Penal Code of the Philippines", Public DRRM Workers in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities shall be deemed agents of a person in authority.

In addition to the penalties provided by Articles 149 (Indirect Assault) and 151 (Resistance and Disobedience to a Person in Authority or the Agents of Such Person), any person who shall threaten, inflict violence, or cause death or serious physical injuries or mutilation on Public DRRM Workers for the purposes of obstructing,

preventing, and interrupting them from freely discharging their function, shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) years to not more than twelve (12) years, or a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand pesos (Php 100,000.00) to One Million pesos (Php 1,000,000.00) or both at the discretion of the court, in the application of Act No. 3815 Articles 246 (Parricide), 248 (Murder), Article 249 (Homicide), 250 (Penalty for Frustrated Parricide, Murder, or Homicide), 251 (Death Caused in a Tumultuous Affray), 252 (Physical Injuries Inflicted in a Tumultuous Affray), 262 (Mutilation), 263 (Serious Physical Injuries), 282 (Grave Threats), and 286 (Grave Coercions).

If the offender is a public official, the court, in addition to the penalties provided in the preceding paragraph, may impose the additional penalty of disqualification from office.

Section 45. *Congressional Oversight Committee.* - There is hereby created a Congressional Oversight Committee to review and assess human resource development, particularly on continuing education and training and the other areas described above. The Committee shall be composed of five (5) members from the House of Representatives and five (5) members from the Senate, with one (1) member from the Minority of each chamber. It shall be co-chaired by the chairpersons of the Committee on Disaster Resilience of both chambers. It shall render a report and recommendation to Congress which shall be the basis for policy legislation in the field of Disaster Resilience or DRRM. Such a congressional review shall be undertaken once every five (5) years.

Section 46. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. - The NDRRMC, after consultation with appropriate agencies of the Government as well as professional and DRRM Workers' organizations or associations, shall formulate and prepare the

necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. Further, the DBM, in coordination with the NDRRMC, shall issue the guidelines on the grant of compensation-related benefits to Public DRRM Workers. Rules and regulations issued pursuant to this Section shall take effect thirty (30) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Section 47. *Appropriations*. – The amount needed for the implementation of this Act shall be determined by the concerned agencies and be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment under the budgetary appropriations of concerned agencies or chargeable against local funds of the Local Government Units subject to Personal Service Limitations pursuant to Sec. 325 of RA 7160 where applicable.

However, such special benefits, including injury and burial benefits as well as hazard pay, may be sourced from the Local DRRM Fund of the agencies or Local Government Units.

Section 48. *Separability Clause*. - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Section 49. *Repealing Clause*. - All laws and issuances and their implementing rules, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 50. *Effectivity*. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,