

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11460



Introduced by HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN

AN ACT
REQUIRING DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION TO BE STATED IN
ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE TO ENSURE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING THEREOF
TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Disasters demand immediate action. When typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other natural disasters strike, people must be able to quickly understand warnings, evacuation orders, safety instructions, and other information that may determine whether lives are saved or lost. Disaster preparedness, therefore, is not only about having plans and resources in place, but also about ensuring that critical information reaches people in a form they can readily understand and act upon.

This is particularly important in the Philippines, one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world,¹ and home to more than 175 living languages.² While Filipino and English are our official languages, many Filipinos continue to use their regional languages and dialects in their homes and communities. Examples are Bicol, Samar, and Leyte, which are also communities that regularly face strong typhoons.

In an emergency, a warning that is difficult to understand can mean the difference between taking immediate action and losing valuable time. As such, there have been some efforts to make disaster-related information more tailored to its intended recipients. For example, in Batanes, residents receive localized disaster information in Ivatan alongside national weather bulletins and government advisories.³ These experiences show that the language used to deliver a warning can be just as

¹ Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft / IFHV (2025): WorldRiskReport 2025. Berlin: Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft.

² Philippines: Ethnologue. Ethnologue (Free All). (n.d.). <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/PH/>

³ Abuso, G. (2024). Living with Typhoons: Lessons from the Ivatans of Batanes, Philippines. <https://th.boell.org/en/2024/11/18/living-ivatans-philippines>

important as the warning itself, recognizing the simple reality that people are more likely to understand and act on warnings when they are delivered in a language familiar to them.

Therefore, this bill mandates national government agencies, as well as local government units (LGUs), to make disaster- and emergency-related announcements, advisories, warnings, issuances, and other relevant information clear and easy to understand. Furthermore, it requires the translation of these information into Filipino and appropriate regional languages and dialects.

In a country as diverse and disaster-prone as the Philippines, disaster preparedness must reflect the different realities of its communities. Ensuring that emergency information is available in languages that people understand is essential so that warnings can be heard, understood, and acted upon.

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



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

Section 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the "*Disaster Information Accessibility and Inclusivity Act*"

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. — The State recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern. Indeed, communication and information occupy a vital role in nation-building. In times of disaster and other emergencies, and to render meaningful and effective the right of the people to information, it shall be state policy to ensure that announcements, advisories and similar public communications are accessible in terms of the language or dialect used.

Sec. 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

- (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 measured 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) **Emergency** — unforeseen or sudden occurrence, especially danger, demanding immediate action; and
- (c) **State of Calamity** — a condition involving mass casualty and/or major damages to property, and roads, disruption of means of livelihoods and normal way of life in the affected areas as a result of the occurrence of natural or human-induced hazard.

Sec. 4. Language Accessibility of Disaster-Related Information. — It shall be mandatory for all government agencies and local government units to convert in an easily understandable format, such as but not limited to virtual and print out posters, infographics, and videos, and translate to Filipino and other appropriate regional language/s or dialect/s, all announcements, advisories, press releases, issuances and any other information relevant to a disaster or emergency, including:

- (a) Tropical Cyclones, signals, flood warning, storm surge, dry spell/drought, and other advisories by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA);
- (b) Volcanic activity and eruption, earthquake, tsunami and landslide advisories and bulletins by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS);
- (c) Disaster preparedness materials, announcements, bulletins and other advisories of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (LDRRMC) and network of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils composed of national, regional, provincial, city, municipal DRRM councils and barangay committees;
- (d) Information on epidemics, disease outbreaks, infestation, and other public health emergencies of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (e) Advisories and warnings released by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) — Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), human-induced hazards, and human security concerns of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP); and
- (f) Information on the Social Amelioration Program, emergency assistance and other social protection measures of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

As much as practicable, such disaster-related information shall be issued and is disseminated using plain language and devoid of scientific jargon or technical terminologies. It shall also contain specific information on the extent and scale of impending impact and damage down to barangay level.

Sec. 5. Translation to Filipino and Other Regional Language or Dialect. — The translation of the information covered by this Act shall be to Filipino and other regional language/s or dialect/s, as deemed necessary by the government agency and local government unit concerned considering the geographical location of the affected communities and the intended recipients of the information. The translated information shall be disseminated as widely as possible through all available media.

Sec. 6. Role of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. — The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) shall render the necessary technical assistance and expertise to the government agencies and local government units including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and monitor their compliance with the duties mandated by this Act.

Sec. 7. Role of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). — SUCs shall render the necessary technical assistance and expertise to local government units including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the implementation of this Act

Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), in consultation with other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 9. Separability Clause. — If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec. 10. Repealing Clause. — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec. 11. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,