

April 11, 2014

Deputy Consul General Jaime Ramon Ascalon &
Consul Reginald Bernabe
Philippine Consulate
San Francisco, CA

Re: "After Haiyan, Where?"
A Status Report as of April 10, 2014

On behalf of UPAASF/FASAE, I would like to express my appreciation for organizing a meeting on Tuesday, April 15th, to discuss how we, as a community, can respond to huge challenge that is before us – addressing the needs of those affected by typhoon Haiyan.

Nov 8, 2013 is a date our Nation must never forget. Haiyan struck and left a trail of widespread death and destruction. In a blink of an eye, thousands of lives were lost and millions changed -- forever.

Haiyan indeed is a game-changer. It is a precursor of typhoons to come.

As the Nation struggles to clearly define a compelling national agenda to rebuild and renew the areas devastated by the Haiyan Super Typhoon across a broad path through the Philippines, the UP Alumni Association, San Francisco (UPAASF), in partnership with the Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers (FASAE) wrote an "Interest Paper" – "After Haiyan, Where?"

Our "Interest Paper" speaks of a sense of urgency. After 5 months, so many of our countrymen continue to suffer through the Haiyan devastation and reports indicate "ground zero" is "unsettled". As the clock is ticking, we see the need to put something in place -- soonest.

Our effort comes from the spirit of UP wherein we declare "Kung hindi tayo, sino pa? Kung hindi ngayon, kailan pa?" With the current devastations being experienced by the Philippines, all Filipinos must immerse themselves in the rebuilding and renewal efforts. But, learning from the past, we must have a new mindset, the will and patience to "Rebuild Better Than Before."

Moreover, the Nation must not wear blinders in our rebuilding and renewal efforts. We must recognize that the entire archipelago is vulnerable to these destructive forces.

Any national agenda must include a plan for long-term upgrading of all our villages and cities throughout the Philippines, over time.

As we attempt to do so on Tuesday's April 15 meeting, I am pleased to submit herewith a status report on what our FASAE/UPAASF team has done so far.

1. Field Status (as of March 10)

I was unable to go to Tacloban. So the field status herein was obtained from reliable sources who went onsite.

- Relief and rehab efforts are gridlock. There's no clear path to go.
- P 35 Billion has been "received" by DPWH? but no single centavo has been released for rehab.
- 35% of Tacloban has electricity.
- Most electric posts are down.
- Except for clearing debris, the "ground view" remains the same and substantially unchanged.
- People are living in tents and those that have resources have left the area. Tacloban is more devastated compared to the rest of the towns in the province – say Ormoc; but, Guiuan and many parts of Eastern Samar has experienced devastation similar to Leyte, but receiving little coverage by the press.*
- Because of the snail pace of rehab people are becoming extremely cynical and losing hope
- People need livelihood interventions and transition homes.

2. Private Sector Initiative

- Raised attention to transition homes. Two private groups pledged \$ 20k
- Operational Issues ·Site Selection – can be Payapay, the hardest hit barangay in Tacloban. One Foundation is already helping the barangay by providing banca's for their livelihood. Basically, we need to identify our "target beneficiaries"
- Organizational vehicle – will it be the sisters? Going through local government units have their "inherent risks"

- Land – we need a donor that will allow us to use it for a specified period.
- Beneficiary selection – most challenging because we probably cannot accommodate all due to limited funds. We cannot have room for all: locals shall have to participate in the prioritization of beneficiaries; but, with the remaining given livelihood in the rebuilding until their “turn” is reached.
- Legal documentation is needed for property upon which the SVDNA is proposed to be built. (approximately 5 hectares per one hundred units of shelter and an emergency operating center to serve the SVDNA and the population of the barangay having an average population of approximately 3000 .)

3. Transition Homes: Container Van Technology

- Siliman University has 12 c-vans on campus. Consistent with our recommendation, they believe c-vans are a practical solution suited for Haiyan areas as transition homes (they converted into Emergency Operations Shelters after permanent homes have been completed). Silliman President Ben Malayang III has indicated his full support on this matter.
- The c-van industry is existent in Manila. I was able to talk with 2 c-van vendors, Ronald Yap of Storage Providers Inc. and Smart Homes. Mr Yap has a 20 year experience doing c-vans and has an extensive portfolio. Smart Homes imports its (knock down) panels from Korea.
- President of Silliman, Dr. Ben Malayang, is currently in the US and is scheduled to address the San Francisco Bay community on April 29, 2014 to give a speech explaining the nature of disasters – predictable (typhoons), unpredictable (earthquake) and man-made (political – Zamboanga siege) ones. We are hoping his speech will help draw more interest in the FASAE/UPAASF initiative to gain participation of the entire community in the long-term sponsorship/support the rebuilding and renewal effort.

4. Meeting with CoFilCo to register the FASAE/UPAASF partnership for work in the Philippines

CoFilCo stands for Confederation of Filipino Consulting Organizations Inc. It is headed by Engr. Eric Cruz, President of Frey-Fil Corporation, a company involved in the use of pre-stressing in traditional reinforced concrete structures. Frey-Fil is a subsidiary of FF Cruz, the second largest construction company. Eric is the son of FF Cruz.

COFILCO President Eric Cruz wanted to explore linking up with FASAE and UPAASF to exchange ideas and experiences that will help our Philippine-based consultants achieve “gold standard” (US & UK versus ASEAN) international stature. What they have in mind is getting a compilation of international best practices and processes in every major aspect of consulting work:

- project scoping
- identification of options/value analysis
- implementing recommendations
- client relationship
- negotiation
- procurement & tendering
- project management
- technical and administrative support
- financial operations
- others

Affiliation of FASAE/UPAASF with CoFilCo shall enable us to participate in infrastructure work funded by DPWH and other Philippine agencies. The e-application has been submitted and is currently being processed by CoFilCo.

5. Presented “Interest Paper” to UP.

In response, UP President Alfredo Pascual gave us a paper they authored entitled “Biodiversity and Resilience An Institutional Framework” which was submitted to Asian Development Bank. The TEAM of FASAE & UPAASF is participating in the implementation of the proposal that includes using an SVDNA for the informal settlers on the property. With respect to Haiyan, Dr. Popoy deVera indicated they are helping towns prepare rehabilitation plans. No additional details were made available.

6. Meeting with DPWH Sec. Rogelio L.Singson.

The salient points discussed were;

- Money is not the issue. It is the lack of well thought out physical plans from the LGUs that prevent DPWH from releasing funds.
- DPWH has done an extensive survey of damage and data is available. They have an idea of what's needed but will still require a well prepared plan before releasing funds.
- The biggest challenge is lack of trained local engineers that can prepare plans for the municipalities. Training new engineers will take considerable time and effort. DPWH is considering asking for grants to hire engineers that can work with the municipalities. This is an area where UP and Silliman can step in.
- To remedy this, DPWH has asked private companies to "adopt" a municipality and help them prepare detailed plans. FASAE/UPAASF is proposing to participate in this effort.
- FASAE & UPAASF can also directly help Local Government Units (LGU) prepare plans. Affiliation with those accredited by government is required -- CoFilCo is one such group.
- Re: The idea of Transition Homes is up for review; we believe it is a strategy we must adopt while we are preparing detailed plans; building permanent structures like Gawad Kalinga is an option for some communities.
- We can proceed with our plan to partner with faith based or private groups.
- Sec. Singson has indicated his desire for updates on how we are progressing.

7. Dolores, Samar

Mayor Emiliana Villacarillo had met with The TEAM in January 2014 and sent a written request addressed to FASAE to help her build "Interim Houses" for displaced fishermen and their families. Mayor Villacarillo was given a copy of the "Interest Paper".

On her own initiative, she has raised funds from Estee Lauder and the Rotary Club of Makati-Dasmariñas for this purpose. Congressman Ben Evadorne gave P 2 million to fund livelihood projects. She has indicated her intent to proceed with Phase 2 of her plans to build a community center.

FASAE/UPAASF has communicated with her that we are prepared to provide help for that phase; as well as, help her professional staff to prepare the contract documents to apply to DPWH for infrastructure work.

The “Interim Houses” do not meet the criteria of “build better than before” that was envisioned in the “Interest Paper”, however, it’s a great start.

8. UP Tacloban

In a letter to FASAE dated Feb. 14, 2014 by UP Tacloban Dean Anita G. Cular wrote;

“ May we therefore request you to consider UP Tacloban as a possible beneficiary of the efforts of FASAE? Our need to rehabilitate, reconstruct and undertake new initiatives so that our institution can withstand the onslaught of future and more deadly Haiyans is beyond quantification.”

“ At the moment, some of our faculty members, staff and personnel are homeless. Many are still in a quandary how to rebuild their homes. Our students who are willing to continue their studies need temporary shelter, food, clothing and other urgent needs.”

9. Letter to Sec. Herminio B. Coloma Jr. is attached.

Through Prof. Cesar Torres, our “Interest Paper” was made available to Sec Coloma. It was endorsed to Usec. Lesley Jeanne Cordero of Sen. Lacson’s Office on April 3 with a request to have a meeting to discuss the proposed SVDNA described in the paper.

We are awaiting a response to our proposal to help in the rebuilding and renewal of the devastated areas.

10. Faith Based Groups.

We have received reports of the active presence of faith-based groups namely

- Latter Day Saints – supposedly building 3500 hundred homes
- Conservative Baptists – helping out in the continuing relief operations

11. To get feedback, we gave copies of the “Interest Paper” to the following groups/persons

- Office of Sen. Teopisto Guingona
- Office of Congresswoman Leni Robredo
- City of Marikina – Rommel Cruz
- Greenhills Christian Fellowship –Marlon Roldan
- Life Bank Foundation – Dr. Manuel Perlas
- Former DENR Usec Rene De Rueda
- Eat Bulaga Executive Producer Malou O. Fagar

We got positive reviews of the paper.

12. Action Items

- We need a ”lead group” to “take ownership” of the operational activities at the local level.
- As a start, focus on Dolores, Eastern Samar : Site concept, design & costing; with the potential of all of the Eastern Samar Province since Mayor Villacarillo is President of the League of Municipalities, Eastern Samar Chapter consisting of the twenty six municipalities in the province.
- Establish strong and continuous Liaison between various stakeholders
- Establishing networks in California and the worldwide diaspora that shall join with the FASAE/UPAASF effort to develop sponsorship/support for the long-term effort in establishing and incubating the SVDNAs. The diaspora is strategically distributed and has had many years of maturity in becoming organized and experienced in building community resilience throughout the world to provide invaluable aid in developing this sponsorship/support.

Salamat.

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