



Making science
work for you

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DOST needs more disaster response leaders – Asec. Liboro

By ANGELICA A. DE LEON
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Assistant Secretary Raymund E. Liboro, concurrent director of DOST's Science and Technology Information Institute, called for more disaster response leaders in the Philippines amidst the increasing frequency of natural calamities.

Asec. Liboro said that although mayors and organizations committed to disaster response stand at the frontline of disaster management, this does not exempt any other member of society from becoming a responsible disaster leader. He explained that mayors need responsible barangay chairmen and other dedicated people working under their stewardship in order to effectively carry out their tasks when disasters occur.

"Our message here is that disaster management or disaster response is everybody's business. We're providing tools that they can use – for them to lead their families, to lead their streets to safety," Liboro remarked to

a crowd composed of national and local media men.

Asec. Liboro made his call during the press conference for the Region 9 leg of Iba Na Ang Panahon: Science for Safer Communities last April 7-8, 2014 at Garden Orchid Hotel in Zamboanga City.

The event was part of DOST's ongoing information and education campaign that promotes community preparedness against disasters in all 17 regions of the country via the use of science-based tools like 3D hazard maps, flood models, the Project NOAH website or www.noah.dost.gov.ph, and mobile applications, among others.

During the two-day event, representatives from DOST's Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards), and DREAM (Disaster Risk and Exposure Assessment for Mitigation), introduced participants to the various science-based tools available for early disaster information and re-acquainted them with already popular technologies such as Google Earth.

Reiterating the importance of these tools, PAGASA Deputy Administrator Flaviana Hilario said that a more science-based disaster risk

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DOST vows to improve delivery of weather information

By JOY M. LAZCANO
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) vows to improve its delivery of weather information as new study shows that public knowledge was insufficient to fully understand concepts on weather, climate, and disaster issues.

The study, which was conducted by the Science and Technology Information Institute (DOST-STII) and Project NOAH Strategic

Communications Interventions Project Team with the help of DOST- National Capital Region titled "Understanding and Appreciation of Weather Information" and was revealed in the form of a poster presentation during the 81st National Research Council of the Philippines (DOST-NRCP) General Membership Assembly and International Scientific Conference dubbed as Future Earth, Future Philippines held at the Manila Hotel March 26-27, is

aimed at measuring and understanding the public perceptions and familiarization on weather information and delivery.

Based on the DOST-STII study, majority of people rely on television as the primary source of weather information followed by radio broadcasts, newspaper, internet, mobile phones, and barangay officials. Participants in the said study which came from various inland and coastal communities in Metro Manila

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DOST-FNRI, McDonald's, Adarna House launch nutrition book for kids

The Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST), Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) and Adarna House, Inc. launched the nutrition big book, "Go!" on March 5, 2014 at McDonald's Greenbelt, Makati City.

"Go!" is the 34th book in the Bright Minds Read (BMR) kit of RMHC. The BMR Program is RMHC's partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) in support of the "Every-Child-a-Reader" Program.

The big book teaches children about the importance of good nutrition with focus on developing good eating habits. This includes eating the right kind and amount of food at the right time. As children develop skills in reading, creative and critical thinking, they will learn from the book the many sources of good quality energy-giving foods such as potatoes. They will also learn the importance of being physically active by engaging in sports.

"Go!" is the first partnership of the FNRI and RMHC. Mr. Bing Bachoco, Chief Finance Officer of McDonald's-Philippines, Mr. George Yang, Chairman Emeritus of McDonald's in the Philippines and Ms. Marie Angeles, Executive Director of RMHC, graced the event.

Bachoco said that educating children is one of McDonald's advocacies through RMHC under their BMR Project. Various public elementary schools have benefited from this project and they are committed to providing additional resources and reaching more children in other areas of the country. He said "Go!" will be included in the BMR kit to be distributed in their partner schools and day care centers.

Dr. Mario Capanzana, DOST-FNRI Director, expressed how much the project means not only in educating children about nutrition per se but in helping address energy deficiency among children, as there is still a serious prevalence of underweight children in the country.

Ms. Lyn Almario, president of Adarna House, said that they are excited and energetic as well with the release of "Go!", the second in the series of nutrition big books they are collaborating with FNRI. She also mentioned that Adarna House and RMHC have a long time partnership in producing quality Filipino children's books that tackle various topics put in simple stories.

"Go!" hopes to encourage young children to practice good nutrition while nurturing the love for reading. The book is available in bookstores nationwide.



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reduction management approach should be a key feature in every community's overall plan to ensure its sustainability and continued growth.

The participants, representing Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, and the cities of Zamboanga and Isabela, later had the chance to actually use some of these tools during table-top exercises which allowed them to formulate short- and long-term action plans for their areas in response to various disasters including worst-case scenarios.

Due to climate change, Mindanao is now more frequently hit by typhoons. Zamboanga itself experienced continuous rain for five days in October 2013.

Prior to the press conference, Asec. Liboro spoke before the participants at the plenary

session and mentioned the campaign's four-point agenda for community preparedness. This consists of: 1) increasing local risk knowledge, 2) knowing how to monitor risk hazards, 3) testing warning protocols in the community, and 4) planning for the response. "Anybody who can head these four steps is a disaster leader," Liboro later stated.

The campaign in Zamboanga was the DOST roadshow's seventh leg after its successful run in Central Luzon, CALABARZON, Northern Mindanao, MIMAROPA, Western Visayas and Central Visayas regions beginning in March 2014.

The campaign is a collaboration among DOST, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the Office of Civil Defense.

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believe that weather information remains to be too scientific and too general which result to low rate of comprehension.

Also, the need to "laymanize" the delivery of weather information does not only mean translating vital information from English to the vernacular but also making the people understand terminologies and concepts so that people can understand the possible impacts to them and make informed decisions.

In response to the huge challenges in accurate and laymanized weather forecasting, DOST is conducting a roadshow in various regions of the country for its "Iba na ang Panahon! Science for Safer Communities"-a two day workshop designed for the local chief executives (LCE) and provincial disaster risk reduction managers (PDRRM).

The project aims to come up with a localized disaster risk reduction communications protocols through various hazard scenario building exercises conducted by various hydro and geohazards experts from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration, and Project NOAA.

These communications protocols will help LCEs and PDRRMs streamline weather and emergency information down to the communities seamlessly. Through these efforts and with the help of new weather early warning tools such as high resolution maps and weather modelling software, the future Philippines can expect sunny outlooks all throughout the year.

The DOST-NRCP General Membership Assembly and Scientific Conference convenes hundreds of homegrown Filipino researchers, scientists, innovators, and economists to discuss the future prospects of the country amid the threats of climate change.

Moreover, the event brought in two Nobel Laureates Richard F. Heck and Yuan T. Lee.

Dr. Richard Heck was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry on October 6, 2010, with the Japanese chemists Ei-ichi Negishi and Akira Suzuki, for their work in palladium-catalyzed coupling reactions in organic synthesis which is used in pharmaceuticals and electronics industries.

Dr. Yuan T. Lee on the other hand was a 1986 Nobel Prize laureate who, together with John C. Polanyi and American and Dudley R. Herschbach, contributed to the dynamics of chemical elementary processes. Dr. Lee presented his paper titled Future Earth, the Initiative for Global Sustainability, which tackles the current and future state of world climate which is believe to hit 4°C at the end of the century.



DOST, UP BREAK GROUND FOR GENOME CENTER. DOST Undersecretary for Scientific and Technological Services Fortunato T. De La Peña (4th from left) and UP President Dr. Alfredo E. Pascual (5th from left) lead the groundbreaking ceremony of the Philippine Genome Center (PGC) building in University of the Philippines Diliman. The PGC is a multidisciplinary institution for basic and applied research for development of health diagnostics, therapeutics, DNA forensics and preventive products, and improved crop varieties. Also in the photo are (L-R) DOST Assistant Secretary Raymund E. Liboro, PGC's Program Director for DNA Sequencing Core Facility Dr. Cynthia Palmes Saloma, DOST-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development Executive Director Dr. Jaime C. Montoya, PGC Executive Director Dr. Carmencita D. Padilla, DOST-Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development Executive Director Dr. Rowena Cristina L. Guevara, UP Diliman Chancellor Dr. Michael L. Tan, PGC's Program Director for Biodiversity Dr. Gisela P. Concepcion, and PGC's Program Director for Agriculture Dr. Rita P. Laude. (Photo by Henry A. de Leon, S&T Media Service, DOST-STII).

Genomics research hub to rise in UP Diliman

By MARIA LUISA S. LUMIOAN
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Philippine Genome Center building last April 10 signaled the advancement of genomics research and development in the country.

Established in 2009, the PGC is an ambitious joint project of the University of the Philippines (UP) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) that aims to tap genomics—the study of an organism's complete set of DNA—to improve crops, conserve biodiversity, improve disease diagnostics, and aid in forensics, among others.

Dr. Carmencita Padilla, PGC's executive director, said that this day is a significant beginning for her and all the people behind the PGC. She recounted that back in 2009 only four people were involved in PGC. "Now we have more than 60 research assistants and 20 project leaders," she said.

The construction of the PGC building is expected to be completed in one year. The PGC is temporarily housed at the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (NIMBB) at the National Science Complex in UP Diliman.

Dr. Padilla acknowledged DOST's support to the PGC in the last five years. "(DOST) believed that genomics can make a difference in the lives of people," she said. She further

revealed that DOST has provided PhP 600M for PGC.

In his message, DOST Undersecretary Fortunato T. De La Peña said that PGC is "part of our (DOST's) goal to be world class and competitive" and said that UP and its research centers can expect more support from the DOST in the coming years.

Likewise, UP President Alfredo E. Pascual remarked that the construction of PGC building is another landmark achievement for the university as it builds itself as a research-intensive university.

"It will add to the skyline of the National Science Complex," he said.

The new home of the PGC will be on A. Ma. Regidor Street across the PAG-ASA Observatory, and behind the newly-constructed NIMBB in the National Science Complex in UP Diliman campus.

It will house three core facilities, namely the DNA Sequencing Core Facility (DSCF), Core Facility for Bioinformatics (CFB), and Biobank Facility (BF) as well as the offices and research laboratories of the PGC's five research programs namely Agriculture/Livestock/Fisheries; Biodiversity for Drug Discovery and Bio-energy; Ethics, Legal and Social Issues; Forensics and Ethnicity; and the Health Program. Currently, the PGC Core Facilities and offices are being housed in NIMBB

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“Library in a Box” now serving Marikina students

By MARIA LUISA S. LUMIOAN
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

Research work will be easier and much more exciting for students of Malanday National High School (MNHS) in Marikina City, with the recent installation of Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) STARBOOKS digital library.

Dubbed as “Library in a Box”, STARBOOKS or Science & Technology Academic and Research-Based Openly Operated Kiosk Station is a one-stop Science and Technology information source that works even without internet connection.

STARBOOKS is developed by experts at the Science and Technology Information Institute (STII) of DOST, it contains thousands of materials in text, video, and audio formats, featuring topics on food and nutrition, health and medicine, emerging technologies, energy, environment, livelihood technologies, investigatory projects and theses in different fields.

Dr. Teresita Fortuna, director of DOST-NCR led the memorandum of understanding signing with MNHS represented by head teacher Mrs. Salvacion M. Fernando together with Marcelino “Marcy” Teodoro, 1st District of Marikina representative, who requested the STARBOOKS for MNHS as his beneficiary.

Dr. Fortuna encouraged the students present during the MOA signing to use STARBOOKS for their research. She reminded everyone that DOST will monitor if the equipment is actually being used by the students.

“We are very fortunate to receive this STARBOOKS. Magagamit po talaga ng mga



DOST-NCR Director Dr. Teresita Fortuna (center), Marikina 1st District Representative Marcy Teodoro (left), and Mrs. Salvacion M. Fernando (right) sign the memorandum of understanding for the installation of STARBOOKS in Malanday National High School in Marikina City last April 7, 2014. (S&T Media Service)

bata (It will surely be used by the kids),” said Mrs. Lagrimas. B. Garcia, school principal. She added that they hope to put in additional computers so that more students can access the STARBOOKS.

Victor P. Rebosada, teacher-librarian of MNHS said, “(STARBOOKS) will really help a lot in imparting of knowledge to our students.

We are hoping that through this, we will be able to really focus on the science subjects.”

DOST offers STARBOOKS to Local Government Units, Non-Government Organizations, educational institutions and private corporations. For more information, please log on to www.stii.dost.gov.ph or email starbooks@stii.dost.gov.ph.

InFocus



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MANUAL FOR REPORTERS. (Top) DOST-PHIVOLCS Director Renato U. Solidum formally hands over a copy of “The Broadcaster’s InfoChart on Emergency Preparedness” to one of the journalists present during the press conference for the Central Visayas leg of DOST’s nationwide info campaign on disaster risk reduction and mitigation dubbed “Iba na ang Panahon: Science for Safer Communities” held from recently at the Crown Regency Residences in Cebu City. With them in photo is DOST Asst. Secretary Raymund E. Liboro, who is also the OIC of the Science and Technology Information Institute, DOST’s information arm. The InfoChart (middle and bottom photos) serves as a reference manual for broadcasters when reporting about matters related to natural disasters. In particular, it contains basic information on typhoons, inter-tropical convergence zones, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, landslides and what actions to take before, during, and after a calamity. All members of the media who were in the campaign received their respective copies of the manual. (Text by Angelica A. de Leon / Photos by Henry A. de Leon, S&T Media Service, DOST-STII)