

## **Ms. Maria Limpahan Go from the Philippines**

I got my first interest in disaster management when I was an elementary girl scout volunteer after a tsunami in Mindanao. The sight of many people without homes, food and houses floating in the sea really struck me that time. I believe in destiny. I have been to several jobs mostly marketing but when I entered government service through the Bureau of Local Government Development under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in 1997, I was tasked to represent DILG in the National Disaster Coordinating Council-Technical Management Group (NDCC-TMG).



DILG is responsible for overseeing the organization and functionality of local disaster coordinating councils at the provincial, city, municipal and community levels. It is also tasked to develop guides for local governments in development planning. At work, I do policy and program development, training management and modules development in close collaboration with other members of NDCC-TMG.

The geographical location of the Philippines on a typhoon belt and on what scientists call as “Pacific Rim of Fire” between the Eurasian and Pacific tectonic plates makes it exposed to practically all kinds of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, tornadoes, earthquake and tsunami. We also have some man-made disasters such as sea mishaps, complex emergencies, garbage slide and epidemics in isolated cases. Disasters cause billions of pesos for relief and rehabilitation activities and wipe out years of development efforts of the government. But natural events are part of the Filipinos way of life. Hence, we have to learn to live with it.

In order to reduce the adverse effects of these hazards, Presidential Decree 1566 was issued in 11 June 1978 creating the NDCC, the highest policy making, coordinating and supervising body at the national level to strengthen the Philippine disaster control capability and establish the national program on disaster preparedness. It is composed of all Heads of national agencies with the participation of the non-government organization and the academe. This law also mandates the creation of the regional and local DCC at the provincial, city, municipal and community levels.

In disaster management, learning from the experiences of others is very important. On July 2005, I joined ADRC as a Visiting Researcher to enhance my knowledge and skills on the varied disaster management approaches in Japan and other ADRC member countries and promote regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction.