THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Wednesday, March 7, 2018
B-11

Senate seeks creation of one agency to address disasters

By **MARIO B CASAYURAN**

The Senate sought yesterday the creation of an over-arching agency that will address all disasters.

Eventual creation of the agency meant that the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) chaired by the Department of Defense (DND) secretary would no longer exist, Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson said.

Lacson was one of the lawmakers who attended a public hearing by the Congressional Oversight Committee on Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 co-chaired by Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan II.

Lacson, who was a presidential assistant of then President Benigno Aquino III to coordinate housing-related activities for typhoon Yolanda victims, said the NDRRMC was into "lateral, horizontal and vertical coordination pero walang nangyayari pagdating sa implementation (but nothing is happening in so far as implementation is concerned."

"Lahat dapat pati implementation (The implementation phase should be in one throw)," he said.

Lacson said there is really a pressing need for an agency that would assume all responsibilities and implementation para mapabilis (so that it could move faster).

On whether creation of a new agency would bloat the bureaucracy, Lacson said the cost factor should not be a concern because the Philippines ranks third among countries that are visited by natural disasters annually.

It should be treated as an investment for future disasters, he stressed.

On storms or typhoons alone, the country uses up the alphabets to name them because there are so many tropical cyclones that hit the country annually, he pointed out. The naming of tropical depressions, storms or typhoons starts at letter A until the letter Z.

Lacson said the creation of such an agency is already in the offing as the House of Representatives is now into the "technical working group" (TWG) phase of lawmaking.

"I hope the Senate, the counterpart of which is the Senate defense committee (chaired by Honasan), can catch up in terms of introducing amendments," he said.

* NATURAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (NDRRMC)