



## **Lorenzana praises groups, individuals for notable contribution in DRRM, humanitarian assistance**

**by Francis Wakefield, December 12, 2017**

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Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana praised outstanding Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (LDRRMCs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), major stakeholders and various groups and individuals that promote and implement significant disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) programs in the country.

Lorenzana made the remark as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) held the 19th Gawad KALASAG National Awarding Ceremony in Quezon City, on Monday afternoon.

Lorenzana, who is the concurrent NDRRMC chairperson, graced the awarding ceremonies and led the conferment of awards together with NDRRMC executive director and Civil Defense administrator Usec Ricardo B Jalad, Department of the Interior and Local Government Usec Austere Panadero. Likewise, members of the National Council and Gawad Kalasag National Selection Committee (NSC) attended the awarding ceremonies.

“I extend to our honorees my sincerest congratulations and the gratitude of their clients and communities as well as the Filipino people at large for their remarkable exploits through this humble token, the Gawad Kalasag. As you return to your respective homes, offices and work with these humble tokens of our thanks, bear in your hearts our thanks and our wish that your distinctive mark of heroism, your Gawad Kalasag, endure as a model to be emulated by our people for all time,” Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana said the country need people like this year’s honorees who lead the way in championing disaster risk reduction as a core element of climate change adaption.

“As inhabitants of a disaster-prone country, we know too well the negative impact of natural catastrophes like super typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. We know too well that we cannot afford to be complacent, and we should be ready all the time,” Lorenzana said.

“As the title of today’s award suggests, we should serve as “Kalasag” or “Shield” of our motherland from any form of catastrophes,” he said.

Lorenzana said that based on a study of the Philippine Institute of Development Studies, at least 60 percent of the total land area of the country is exposed to multiple hazards, and as a result, 74 percent of the population is rendered vulnerable.

The Philippines also ranked eighth among the Southeast Asian Nations that have the highest multiple climate hazard index.

“These studies remind us that we need people who will take action – people who will help the Department of National Defense, through the OCD and NDRRMC, in increasing public awareness on DRRM and other climate mitigation measures,” Lorenzana said.

For this year, 21 Local DRRM Councils, four individuals, thirty-five groups/institutions and six hall of fame awardees were recognized for their outstanding contributions in DRRM and humanitarian assistance.

Forty-nine validators from various NDRRMC member agencies were also recognized for the tireless efforts they have given to assess the finalists through desktop evaluation, field validation and deliberations.

Gawad Kalasag is the country's premier annual awards for outstanding contribution in the fields of DRRM and humanitarian assistance. It is the principal mechanism by which the NDRRMC advances awareness of the best practices of DRRM and humanitarian response and action. Moreover, it aims to appreciate individuals, groups or institutions which have shown extraordinary courage, heroism and sacrifice in times of emergencies, be it natural or human-induced.

Since its inception in 1998, the Gawad Kalasag award has been bestowed to 220 local DRRM councils, 74 national government organizations, 35 individuals and 27 groups/institutions. Furthermore, about 36 winners have been conferred with a Hall of Fame Award.