

Greetings!

Dr. Sandra B. Tempongko, Deputy Coordinator of SEAMEO TROPMED Network, WHO representative, participants from different countries, colleagues from the DOH.

Good morning!

Allow me to express my warmest congratulations and sincerest to the organizers of this very important activity which is the Regional Training Course on Safe Hospitals in Emergencies and Disasters. The holding of this training Course comes at an opportune time as we in the health sector strives to campaign for hospitals to be safe from disasters. Health facilities, health services and hospitals are community's lifeline in normal times but these becomes critical in times of disasters.

Hospitals play a critical role in direct life preservation and they also symbolize social progress and economic development such that priority attention must be given to ensure physical and functional integrity in times of emergency situations. Several efforts to mitigate and lessen the impact of disasters in our country have been pursued but still there is failure in addressing disaster preparedness and response and much more so if health facilities fail to deliver services as a consequence of these disasters.

The climate is changing, the effects are already felt, and human activities are the principal cause. The reality of climate change can no longer be doubted, the magnitude of consequences and their potential impact most especially on health cannot be ignored.

I believe all of you are aware of what's happening in our country today. Flood is natural disaster that we faced annually. The Philippines is visited by typhoons twenty (20) in a year and the recent one caused so much damage to lives and properties. Areas were affected by abnormal flood episodes that were prolonged and occurred severely not only in low-lying areas but also in areas that were flood

fee for several decades and our hospitals were not spared. Equipment and facilities are no longer serviceable because of the damage caused by flood waters reaching as far as the second floor of the building. Health workers could not report for duty because of transportation difficulties.

In reality some of our health facilities are located in unsafe areas because structurally site selection was not considered. Political leaders must understand the long term benefits of improving the design and physical structure of health facilities and they should consider appropriation of enough resources for maintenance and repair of health facilities. Each facility has to look into their own capacity and resources in utilizing and implementing tools in managing disasters and in this context, the underprivileged with weak infrastructures and inadequate skilled personnel really require assistance in capacity building. The strength in mitigating disaster lies in your excellent health infrastructures and comprehensive healthcare delivery network.

Your presence here today on this training will surely provide good inputs on the interventions on how to promote the concept of ensuring safety of hospitals whether structurally or functionally especially in times of emergencies of disasters. I am confident that each and every participant in this forum today has the same commitment and dedication to ensure safety of hospitals. Your efforts will not only help to protect our population today, but also ensure a safer and healthier world for future generations.

I would like to once again thank you for your participation with the hope that this forum will achieve its objectives and the DOH-CHD CV wish you all the best in your endeavors on this matter.

THANK YOU AND GOOD MORNING.