



PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

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DND makes gains in its transformation agenda in 2017

Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City – Under the leadership of National Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana and following the Philippine Defense Transformation Roadmap 2028's core approaches, the Department of National Defense (DND) made significant gains in its reform and transformation agenda in 2017.

Below are among the significant accomplishments of the **One Defense Team**:

Building total defense force capability

This year, the DND ensured the completion of the AFP Modernization Projects to achieve a stronger and more credible national defense. Eleven (11) projects were completed under RA 7898, while three (3) projects were completed under RA 10349 or the Revised AFP Modernization Program.

The projects completed under RA 7898 for the Philippine Army were the Force Protection Equipment, 155-mm Howitzer (with ammunition), 40-mm Grenade Launcher, Rocket Launcher Light (with ammunition) and M-113 Armored Vehicles acquisition projects.

For the Philippine Navy, four (4) projects were completed. These are the 7.62mm Sniper Rifle, LARSU Firepower Upgrade, Strategic Sealift Vessel and 155-mm Howitzer (with ammunition) acquisition projects. Meanwhile, two (2) projects were also completed for the AFP General Headquarters, namely the First Forward MEDICS and the Force Protection Equipment for the AFP Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG).

Under the Revised AFP Modernization Program, the Night Fighting System with an ABC of PhP 1.116 billion was delivered to the Philippine Army and the Multi-Purpose Attack Craft project with an ABC of PhP 270 million was completed for the Philippine Navy. In addition, the remaining FA-50 Fighter Attack Aircraft/ LIFT of the Philippine Air Force were all delivered this year.

The AFP also received the delivery of 90 units of sniper rifles, 3,000 units of M4 and six (6) million rounds of ammunitions from China on 28 June 2017.

All these new equipment are expected to improve the capability of the AFP in terms of internal security, territorial defense, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

In order to instill love of country and good citizenship to the younger generation and to increase the number of the AFP Reserve Force, the DND also initiated a bill on the proposed Mandatory Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Program for Grades 11 and 12. While the bill is still pending in Congress, President Duterte has already certified it as a priority of his administration.

Improving civil defense preparedness

In line with the DND's reform and transformation agenda, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Center (NDRRMC), chaired by Secretary Lorenzana, approved the Revised Guidelines in the Allocation of NDRRM Funds on 14 March 2017 to expedite the processing and release of NDRRM Funds to member agencies and recipient communities.

In this connection, the NDRRMC disbursed PhP 18.96 billion from its 2016 NDRRM Fund for rehabilitation activities as of 31 August 2017. An additional PhP 28.79 million of the 2017 Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program (RRP) Fund and PhP7.25 billion 2017 NDRRM Fund were processed in the same period.

A total of PhP 73.05 million of the Quick Response Fund (QRF) was utilized as of 30 July 2017 and PhP 365.35 million cost of assistance was also provided from July to October 2017.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD), through the NDRRMC, also conducted a multi-agency contingency planning in preparation for a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, and continues to organize quarterly national simultaneous earthquake drills (NSED) in the event of a strong earthquake that is predicted to affect Metro Manila, Central Luzon, and Calabarzon.

The NDRRMC also developed a Community Responders' Course, a program that would capacitate probable first responders with immediate and initial capabilities during emergencies and disasters in their locality. Likewise, a new operations center was established and is now interconnected with the Regional DRRM operations centers thus, leading to faster and efficient decision making and timely information dissemination.

Developing a self-reliant defense posture

To support the requirements of the AFP this year, the Government Arsenal (GA) produced 41.855 million rounds of small arms ammunition, with an additional 13.46 million rounds manufactured for the Philippine Army.

To push for self-reliance in the Defense sector and the development of a local defense industry, the DND also pursued the development of the Government Arsenal Defense Industrial Estate into a strategic resource and center for the production of high quality defense articles to support the requirements of the AFP, PNP and other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The bill for the proposed conversion of the GA into a Special Economic Defense Zone has passed the committee level in Congress.

Welfare of soldiers and veterans

One of the main thrusts of the DND is the promotion of the welfare and wellbeing of our soldiers, veterans, and their families.

In line with this, the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) disbursed PhP 9.06 billion worth of pension benefitting an average of 208,159 pension accounts.

In grateful recognition of the services rendered by our veterans, PVAO subsidized various medical and health care services availed by our veterans and their qualified dependents under the Veterans Hospitalization and Medical Care Program (VHMCP) worth PhP 85.05 million. This accomplishment leads PVAO to realizing its objective that *"no veteran should pay for his own medicine."*

To improve the quality of lives of our veterans and their families, PVAO was able to provide educational benefits to 2,185 “Iskolar ng mga Bayani” as of the end of November for a total amount of Php 38.11 million. These are direct descendants of our valiant defenders who fought in World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War.

PVAO’s Educational Benefits Program has produced close to 7,300 graduates since 2002. The educational assistance for the “Iskolar ng mga Bayani” is given to qualified and deserving students for a maximum of Php36,000 per year per beneficiary.

In addition, PVAO was also able to give burial assistance to 3,945 beneficiaries for a total amount of Php 80.93 million.

Optimizing international defense partnership

On international defense and security engagements, the Department of National Defense successfully hosted various activities in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana chaired the 11th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting and 4th ADMM-Plus on 23-24 October 2017 in Clark, Pampanga where defense ministers of ASEAN member countries exchanged views on regional and international defense and security issues. They also signed the “*Joint Declaration on Partnering for Change, Engaging the World*” as well as documents on ADMM and ADMM Plus initiatives, and issued a Joint Statement on Countering Extremism, Radicalization, and Terrorism.

DND also conducted the ASEAN Defense Senior Officials Meeting (ADSOM) and Working Group and ADSOM Plus WG Meetings in Manila and Cebu during the first quarter of 2017 discussion on initial proposals for cooperation between ADMM and ADMM Plus, followed by the ADSOM and ADSOM-Plus meeting proper.

The Department also participated in the 14th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Security Policy Conference where leaders, including North Korea, exchanged views on regional and international defense and security issues, reserve forces, and the regional security.

The Philippines also signed the terms of reference on the Joint Committee on Military Cooperation and launch of the Trilateral Air Patrol (TAP) in Subang, Malaysia on 12 October 2017. On 19 June 2017, the Trilateral Maritime Patrol was launched in Tarakan, Indonesia. Defense ministers of Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia witnessed the launching Maritime Command Centers which facilitates trilateral cooperation among the three countries towards addressing security challenges in the region.

Sec. Lorenzana had multilateral engagements namely Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS) in Moscow, Russia and the Halifax International Security Forum in Nova Scotia, Canada in April and November 2017, respectively.

He paid an official visit to Singapore to meet with his counterpart and deliver a special address on ASEAN cooperation at the 5th Shangri-La Dialogue Sherpa Meeting, first time that a special dinner address was held in the said forum.

The Defense Chief also led the department in engaging more countries to support the Philippines’ peace and security agenda in the region. Among the defense cooperation agreements entered into by the DND this year were those with Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Czech Republic, New Zealand, Russia, and UK. Logistics and defense industry arrangements were also signed with China.

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