

Your typhoon donations may be asleep in banks

Written by bert pelayo
Friday, 06 January 2012 13:48



IT'S another typhoon, do you know if your donations are in the hands of your intended beneficiaries?

Not sleeping in the bank, we hope, as in the case of more than P193.6 million donated funds to victims of Typhoon Sendong discovered to be lying idle in a government depository bank.

What a calamity upon a calamity.

This was the woeful finding of government auditors from the Commission on Audit (COA) who said that as of Dec. 31, 2010 over P314.7 million in the hands of the Department of Social Welfare and Development remain unused.

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The money came from various donations meant for typhoon victims from 2004 to 2010.

The idle funds “defeat the objective for which the assistance was provided and resulting further to the accumulation of huge balance of unused funds,” according to COA auditors.

Is this done on purpose, one may ask, because the government earns interest from such deposits at the Land Bank of the Philippines?

Or is this a case of ineptitude by government agencies tasked with disbursing these funds, particularly the DSWD?

Malacañang should step in and stop this anomaly, which is what it is.

After all, President Noynoy’s mission is to root out corruption in government.

Relief funds should go directly to disaster victims and not a moment too soon.

Immediate response is vital to the lives of the distressed and dispossessed.

Foreign donors, Fil-Am organizations in particular, should be assured that their humanitarian contributions, in cash or in kind, are used exclusively for the benefits of victims of calamities.

And, more importantly, these donations should be acknowledged by the beneficiaries, by governors, mayors or religious organizations.

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Better still, donors should specify where the funds should go.

Handang Tumulong Foundation, Inc., for instance, turned over its \$6,000 donation to Sendong victims directly to the Philippine Jesuit Foundation, Inc., in the presence of New York Consul General Mario de Leon, Jr.

During Typhoon Reming which devastated the Bicol region, this newspaper conducted a fund-raising that raised \$22,000 in two weeks.

The check was made out to then Bishop Carino of the Nueva Caceres archdiocese and personally delivered by Dr. Lestrino C. Baquiran, an officer of the Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment.

The bishop promptly thanked this newspaper and the co-sponsor PEACE, then headed by Dr. Frank Rabadam, a native of Oas, Albay.

Friends Indeed USA, Inc., headed then by Dr. Linda R. Pelayo, also donated at least \$8,000 to victims of Typhoon Ondoy in Binangonan, Rizal, and the check was handcarried by Nena Kaufman.

In these two cases, the funds went straight to the intended beneficiaries, as it should be.

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