



PRESS RELEASE

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NDCC moves to avert water crisis in the face of El Nino

THE National Disaster Coordinating Council is now undertaking measures to avert a water crisis in Metro Manila and mitigate other effects of a long spell of El Nino in the country, Defense Secretary and NDCC Chair Norberto Gonzales bared yesterday.

Gonzales made the announcement as he inspected in the first hour of Wednesday the ongoing repair of water pipes along EDSA in Pasay City by the Metro-Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System.

Gonzales conducted the midnight inspection to ensure that MWSS was working 24 hours daily repairing all damaged water pipes in Metro Manila as part of government quick response to this year's El Nino which PAG-ASA and the Department of Science and Technology have forecasted as worse than in previous years.

Gonzales convened the NDCC Monday and Tuesday to discuss the new El Nino and the preparations being undertaken by various government agencies in response to the latest calamity to hit the country.

The disaster body noted that the EL Nino had been upon the country already, affecting many provinces, including Capiz, the rest of Panay and Samar where rainfall had been below normal for the last three months. The drought is forecasted to last up to May or even July.

The Department of Agriculture is expecting around 50 provinces to be affected by the dry spell, resulting in about P3 billion total losses in the farming sector.

The National Water Resource Board reported in the meeting a "radical reduction" in the water level of Angat Dam, one of the main sources of water supply for Metro Manila, as well as Bulacan and Pampanga. This

prompted the NDCC chair to stress the need to conserve the water supply of Metro Manila and of the entire country.

Thirty percent of the capital region's water supply goes to waste leaking through damaged pipes, according to the MWSS.

The NDCC is drawing up a set of recommendations for meeting the problem to be presented to President Arroyo soonest.

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