Foreword

The Philippines has not recovered from the devastation brought by Typhoon Sendong in northern Mindanao cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan where about 1,153 died and 105 missing[1], when on January 5, 2012, another disaster happened in Compostela Valley, also in Mindanao. At least 25 people were killed and up to 150 people were missing after a landslide hit a community known for "small-scale miners who tunnel into the side of the mountains like rats"[2]. The place had been declared as a dangerous area and habitation was forbidden. However, the people continue to stay, hoping to find gold for a living.

Earning a living is a basic necessity for survival, to sustain life. Yet many times, the means to earn also become the path to disaster. Left with no option, people consciously face rare natural hazards in order to sustain their daily livelihoods. For instance, we hear about children diving into the bottom of the sea, disturbing the fish to help the commercial fishers get a voluminous catch. With the use of chemicals, soil quality turns acidic, affecting agricultural productivity and the health of the consumers.

Such concerns go beyond occupational hazards. In the risk-taking economic activities, the environment is regarded as a mere resource and input in the production processes. The immediate concern for productivity prevails over sustainability and safety. As such, the outcomes are flashfloods, landslides, subsidence, health epidemics and other hazards that destroy development nurtured for years. Human relations with nature have fallen to the extent that some natural phenomena and hazards have become anthropogenic, as in the case of climate change.

"Kapit sa patalim" (Hold on the knife) is an apt Filipino metaphor referring to people who endure dangerous situations, even if it is already hurting and causing them sufferings. It depicts the absence of one's choice, although it can also be labeled as a manifestation of resilience, the power to withstand dangers. However, there could also be a miscalculation of one's capacity and inability to control or foresee disastrous events. The sense of resilience can become a false hope of security when the people underestimate or ignore the risks.

Relying on experiences alone in ascertaining possible disasters is no longer tenable because disasters can occur beyond what the people have witnessed. For climate related hazards, for example, areas that used to be free from typhoon paths in the country are now experiencing heavy rains during storms. The magnitude of the flood worsened beyond imagination of people who never thought that they would experience flashfloods at a level they never had. Service providers are also caught flat-footed as they are overwhelmed by the magnitude of disaster impacts.

There are processes taking place where the ordinary people are affected. Despite the declaration that logging is illegal, logs were among those carried by the flood during the 2004 disaster in northern Quezon province and lately, in northern Mindanao. This is just an example of local governments not having the political will to enforce policies that could have prevented or mitigated disaster impacts.

This journal issue relates disaster risk reduction to social development. Disaster is a social phenomenon, more than natural or technological. This is a basic tenet for the paradigm shift in the way we respond to disaster, from emergency management to disaster risk reduction. Poverty, injustice, inequality, unjust relations, discrimination, seclusion, and powerlessness are social realities that increase people's vulnerability. In many situations, the desire to achieve social development is also associated with environmental violation and social risks as described earlier. Accomplishments in social and economic development nurtured for years can be easily destroyed in less than an hour.

The conditions of the poor and the most vulnerable under 'normal' situation is aggravated by disasters, exposing them to consequential risks and pushing people to social disasters. Thus, how we pursue social development without birthing environmental risks remains a challenge. How we reduce disaster risks to protect social development is a goal each individual, community and society must be conscious about. The recognition of the reality of dangers requires corresponding disaster risk reduction measures such as comprehensive risk assessment and rational decision making to reduce and manage these risks.

While this journal called for papers dealing with disaster risk reduction concerning all types of hazards (climatologic and meteorological, geologic, technological, biological, astronomical and human induced), all the papers submitted dealt with only one type, that is, climate related. Somehow, this shows the urgency to address the increasing pressures brought about by climate change and related hazards such as typhoons and floods, and rain-induced landslides. Commonality in the papers stressed the reality that climate-related hazards are the ones triggering more disasters and devastations in the country as experienced in different areas such as Metro Manila, the province of Albay, and the KAMANAVA (Kaloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela). Jagoon, Kaneko and Komatsu's article provide a characterization of flooding in the northern part of Metro Manila and its socio-economic impact to property, health and livelihood.

The flooding in the province of Albay and KAMANAVA are perennial occurrences contrasting flooding in urban and rural settings. The 2009 flood that submerged low areas of Metro-Manila and suburbs was never experienced before. While those from the lowland areas are used to flooding, the flood due to Typhoon Ondoy gives us the worst scenario of flooding in the city.

The papers in this issue present frameworks and how these formulations are operationalized. The paper of Ofreneo is presented in its entirety to show the complex relationships of strategies, namely, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and social protection. It provides an analytical perspective of the social implications of climate change and disasters.

Bawagan shares the community-based disaster risk reduction and management (CBDRRM) framework as it is being implemented by various stakeholders, such as non-government organizations, people's organizations, local government units, academic institutions and other civil society organizations.

Adopting the humanitarian principles in emergency and disaster response, Firmase and the members of the team involved in relief operation, share their experiences during the relief operations as the affected families responded to the flood brought by Typhoon Ondoy in 2009. They looked into the processes, good practices as well as

challenges and issues faced during the provision of relief goods from needs assessment, pre-distribution preparations, actual distribution and post-distribution activities.

Using the community development framework, Luna's paper looks at the recovery and rebuilding processes of communities affected by the Ondoy flood in two communities: one where the families went back to where they used to live before the flood and one where the families were resettled. While the people affected by the flood had their own mechanisms for recovery, community development processes such as education, organizing, resources and disaster risk management contributed to the enhancement of the recovery of the families.

Considered as effective indigenous practices of the Filipinos, Barrameda and Barrameda affirm the role of *damayan* and *bayanihan* in disaster risk reduction. They are as social resources in the people's day-to-day survival; as coping mechanisms in times of typhoons and flooding; and as adaptive strategies in building their resiliency. These practices help in developing the people's sub-cultures of safety and promoting the emotional well-being of the people.

Focussing the PJSD issue on disaster risk reduction towards social development is not a mere academic exercise but an expression of concern and an advocacy to place DRR and climate change at the center of the agenda. The efforts and resources being invested have to effectively penetrate all sectors of society, across geographic space, at all levels particularly the local communities and the most vulnerable.

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Endnotes

[1] National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. (2012, January 23). Cited by Panlilio, C. & Rosauro R. in Cagayan de Oro schools start slow recovery. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

[2] AFP 2012. ph.news.yahoo.com/25-dead-100-missing-philippines-landslide-034419984.html accessed Jan. 5, 2012