

Natural calamities affect some MDG targets in EV - NEDA

PALO, Leyte –Impact of natural calamities will affect the national government's ability to hit some targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially for poor regions like Eastern Visayas, an official of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said.

NEDA Regional Director Buenaventura Go-Soco said that with the damages wrought by flooding, the government and residents will focus their efforts on repairing damages and recovering losses instead of working on improving their lives.

"Natural calamities can

alter or reduce harvest of crops. Aside from poverty targets, it can also affect literacy because of damaged infrastructures and health because of water supply problem," said Go-Soco in an interview.

In Leyte, the flooding has displaced over 10,000 families last week. In terms of crops, it has damaged over 2,000 hectares of rice lands with an estimated production value of P11.2 million, according to initial reports of the Department of Agriculture.

"Farmers should be resilient by cultivating alternative crops other than rice which is more prone to flooding," he added.

In terms of infrastructure, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported that the recent flooding has incurred a P24-million damages in roads, bridges in the towns Dulag, Dagami, Burauen, Mayorga, and Pastrana, all in Leyte.

"Repairing damages is competing for the same kind of budget that they have and it is hard for the government to rehabilitate all damages since there are so many demand for the budget all over the country," Go-Soco said.

The official said that it is high time for local government units to step up preparation for

the impact of natural calamities. "If they are not prepared, they should have some measures to recover."

In a November 2011 monitoring report released by the National Statistical Coordination Board, Region 8 has shown low probability to attain target on poverty reduction, universal primary education, and combating diseases.

By 2015, under MDG, the national government is targeting to reduce by half the proportion of poor families, ensure that all children have finished basic education, and reverse the incidence of many diseases. (SARWELL Q. MENIANO)