

## **Video Teleconferencing (VTC) Proceedings**

**Event Title:** Webinar on Operational River Basin Center Flood Forecasting & Warning Services under the New Normal  
**Target Participants:** PAGASA's River Basin Flood Forecasting & Warning Centers  
**Time / Date:** 8:30 AM, 03 December 2020

### **Backgrounder:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has definitely made a significant change in our daily activities. A "new normal" state came about because of this pandemic. This situation remains unclear as to when it will end although some promising developments of a vaccine have already been reported. At the moment, while we are still coping with the present situation, the threat of natural hazards continues, especially those relating to hydrometeorological. With the current pandemic situation, many of the local communities have become even more vulnerable to these potential hazards leading to unabated disasters.

A nationwide lockdown as a response to the pandemic brought most of the commerce and industry establishments to a halt and including many government agencies. PAGASA was one of the many government agencies who was not prepared for such a situation.

On December 03, 2020, a seminar entitled "Operational River Basin Center Flood Forecasting & Warning Services under the New Normal" was held through a virtual platform (video teleconference) to specifically address the continuity and enhancement of the provision of hydrological information and other related activities of the PAGASA River Basin Centers under the existing pandemic situation, the new normal. While the event was more focused on the river basin centers of PAGASA, some of the topics covered relevant agency information such as the new PAGASA inter-office guidelines of activity-business transactions during the new normal state and many more.

The VTC webinar was conceptualized and proposed by the Pampanga River Basin Flood Forecasting & Warning Center (PRFFWC) as a means of enjoining the River Basin FFW Centers to adapt to the present new normal state and to engage them in enhancing further their FFW services during this critical times. The event was a collaborative activity worked-out by the PRFFWC through its division NCR-PRSD and with the assistance of the organizational capacity and support of the Training Section of the RDTD.

### **Rationale:**

The pandemic has definitely changed our daily activities. Many government agencies were not prepared in providing continuous public service at the height of the physical restrictions imposed that time. For PAGASA RBFFWCs the imposition of the lockdown and movement restrictions has caused some issues that practically affected the services of many of the river basin centers which includes:

1. Longer duty shifts for the only readily available personnel who were on hand at the river basin center as a result of the imposed restricted movements; stoppage of mass public transportation during the lockdown – ECQ-MECQ-GCQ situations;
2. Streamgaging activities and on-site data (particularly water level) validation were curtailed due to the varying inter-LGU area movement containment measures;
3. Regular maintenance and services, including emergency trips, of telemetry stations were not carried-out (on time) resulting to substantial data transmission downtimes;
4. Other related issues and concerns

PAGASA River Basin Flood Forecasting & Warning Centers' main function is to issue hydrological information in their respective basin of concern. Hydrological information includes daily hydrological forecast, flood advisory (FA) and flood bulletin (FB) which are issued during inclement weather

condition and / or imminent river flooding within the basin of concern. The information is provided to the national, regional and local partner agencies / other entities leading down eventually to the target communities within the basin. PAGASA is mandated to provide adequate, up-to-date, and timely information relating to hydrometeorological phenomena to afford greater protection to the people.

It is on these premise that the VTC webinar-discussion for the RBFFWCs of PAGASA was deemed appropriate and fitting especially at this pandemic time. It is to drive the RBFFWCs of PAGASA to better prepare, organize, and equip them in the ongoing unusual situations occurring not only in their respective river basins of concern but also in the whole country.

### Highlights of the event:

The annual River Basin FFW Centers' Conference and the Streamgaging Workshop were not implemented this year due to the pandemic. The VTC webinar was the first and the only activity gathering held that was focused specifically to PAGASA's River Basin FFW Centers.

The event presented quite relevant topics not only for river basin operational flood forecasting & warning activities but also timely and appropriate functions related to the existing situations that beset the country at the moment.



The event took about 3.5 hours of presentations and discussions that included the topics such as office functions during the new normal, public service continuity plan, health and safety protocols in the workplace, and enhancement and sustaining of flood forecasting & warning / hydrological activities and services.

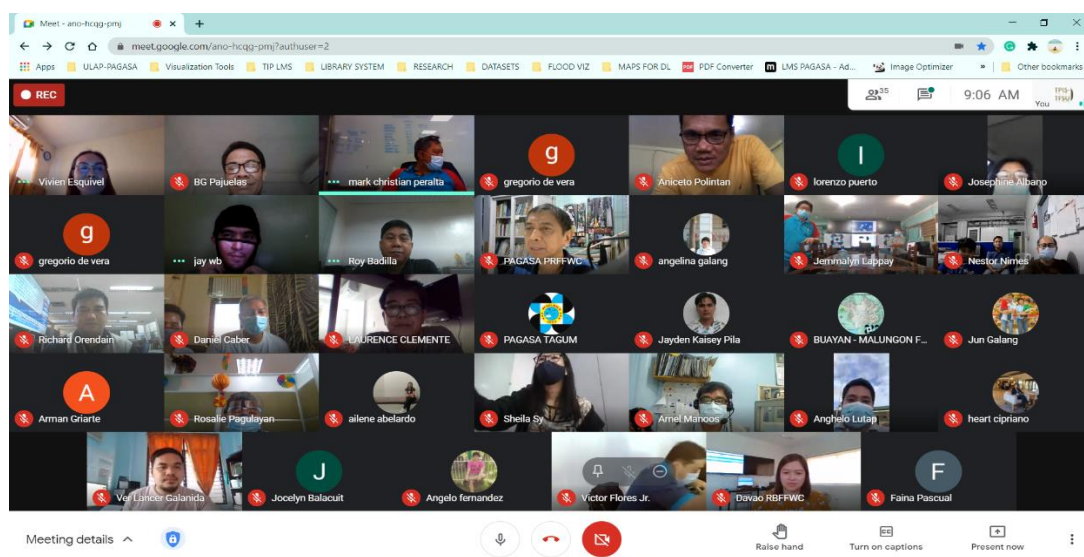
The following PAGASA key officials who attended the workshop included:

- Dr. Nathaniel T. Servando, Chief of RDTD
- Engr. Roy A. Badilla, Chief, HMD
- Dr. Bonifacio G. Pajuelas, Chief, NCR-PRSD

A total of 46 persons attended the event. Breakdown of those who attended and event roles are as follows:

Name	Gender	Division	Event role
1. Ailene R. Abelardo	Female	HMD	Participant
2. Romeo A. Aguirre	Male	VPRSD	Participant
3. Josephine G. Albaño	Female	SLPRSD	Participant
4. Alvin G. Anog	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
5. Jaymar L. Artigas	Male	MPRSD	Participant
6. Jocelyn B. Balacuit	Female	RDTD	Training Support Staff
7. Jayson W. Bausa	Male	HMD	Participant
8. Amor E. Benitez	Female	NLPRSD	Participant
9. Leo L. Buñag	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
10. Daniel L. Caber	Male	VPRSD	Participant
11. Lory Jean L. Canillo	Female	RDTD	Training Support Staff

12. Juan Elmer S. Caringal	Male	HMD	Participant
13. Heart M. Cipriano	Female	MPRSD	Participant
14. Laurence G. Clemente	Male	HMD	Participant
15. Oskar D. Cruz	Male	HMD	Participant
16. John R. Dabu	Male	NCRPRSD	Participant
17. Gregorio B. De Vera II	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
18. Vivien S. Esquivel	Female	NCRPRSD	Facilitator
19. Angelo C. Fernandez	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
20. Victor B. Flores Jr.	Male	MPRSD	Participant
21. Angelina S. Galang	Female	RDTD	Facilitator
22. Ver Lancer D. Galanida	Male	MPRSD	Participant
23. Hilton T. Hernando	Male	NCRPRSD	Resource Person
24. Jemmalyn B. Lappay	Female	NLPRSD	Participant
25. Loreto M. Lavadia	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
26. Jermie C. Lugtu	Male	NCRPRSD	Participant
27. Leo Anghelo A. Lutap	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
28. Araya A. Mahilum	Female	MPRSD	Participant
29. Arnel R. Manooos	Male	ETSD	Resource Person
30. Berlin V. Mercado	Male	HMD	Resource Person
31. Ronaldo C. Naragdao	Male	VPRSD	Participant
32. Nestor B. Nimes	Male	NCRPRSD	Participant
33. Richard C. Orendain	Male	HMD	Participant
34. Rosalie C. Pagulayan	Female	HMD	Participant
35. Bonifacio G. Pajuelas	Male	NCRPRSD	Resource Person
36. Maximo F. Peralta	Male	HMD	Participant
37. Darwin R. Pila	Male	SLPRSD	Participant
38. Lorenzo C. Puerto	Male	VPRSD	Participant
39. Gener M. Quitlong	Male	NLPRSD	Participant
40. Joel C. Rivera	Male	AD	Resource Person
41. Sheila S. Schneider	Female	HMD	Participant
42. Nathaniel T. Servando	Male	RDTD	Key Official
43. Bema C. Tajones	Female	MPRSD	Participant
44. Larry Andrew D. Urriza	Male	NCRPRSD	Participant
45. Rommel P. Yutuc	Male	NCRPRSD	Participant
46. Nivagine C. Zamudio	Female	SLPRSD	Participant



The Program of Event Activities are shown below:

Programme of Activities		
Time	Details	Resource Person
8:30am – 9:00am	Invocation & National Anthem Welcome Remarks  Acknowledgement of Attendees/ VTC photo session Presentation of the webinar outline	TPIS, RDTD <b>Dr. BONIFACIO G. PAJUELAS</b> Chief, NCR-PRSD TPIS, RDTD <b>Ms. VIVIEN S. ESQUIVEL</b> Asst. Weather Services Chief, NCR-PRSD
9:00am – 9:20am	The New Normal (Focus on PAGASA's daily activities)	<b>Dr. BONIFACIO G. PAJUELAS</b> Chief, NCR-PRSD
9:20am – 9:40am	Brief on Public Service Continuity Plan	<b>Mr. ARNEL R. MANOOS</b> Asst. Weather Services Chief, ETSD
9:40am – 10:00am	Health and Safety Protocol in the Workplace	<b>Mr. JOEL C. RIVERA</b> Chief, GSS, AD
10:00am – 10:20am	Issues on RBFWCs' Hydrological Information (Flood Information: hydroforecasts/ warnings); Virtual operational activities	PRFFWC
10:20am – 10:40am	River Basin Monitoring System	<b>Mr. BERLIN V. MERCADO</b> Asst. Weather Services Chief, HMD
10:40am – 11:00am	Capacitating River Basin Centers (Needs/Activities under the New Normal)	PRFFWC/NCR-PRSD
11:00am – 11:40am	Moderated Discussion/Open Forum	PRFFWC
11:40am – 11:50am	Closing Remarks	<b>Dr. NATHANIEL T. SERVANDO</b> Chief, RDTD
Master of Ceremonies <b>Ms. VIVIEN S. ESQUIVEL</b> Asst. Weather Services Chief, NCR-PRSD		

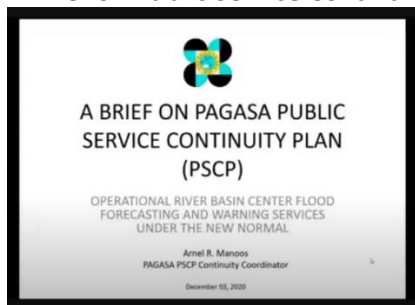
### Brief summary of workshop presentations:

#### 1. The New Normal (Focus of PAGASA's daily activities) (Dr. Bonifacio G. Pajuelas; Chief, NCR-PRSD)



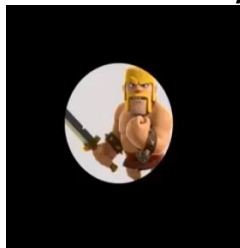
Dr. Pajuelas initially discussed on the effects of the pandemic in our daily activities. Focused of his discussion was on the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) which gives details on the operational duties and responsibilities of personnel who are based in river basin FFW centers. The achievements of the programs and activities of the center are specifically based on the specific accomplishments of center individuals leading to carrying-out the agency's main objective.

#### 2. Brief on Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP) (Mr. Arnel R. Manoos, AWSC, ETSD)



A very timely presentation on how to carry-on with the uninterrupted operational services offered by PAGASA during these critical times was given by Mr. Manoos. A brief on specifics of the legal basis on having such plan for both public and private sectors; how the government at all levels will be able to continuously function during an emergency or disaster, etc. He also showed details of the development of a PSCP, highlights leading to its development, distinguishing PSCP with CP, and the many other salient issues related to it.

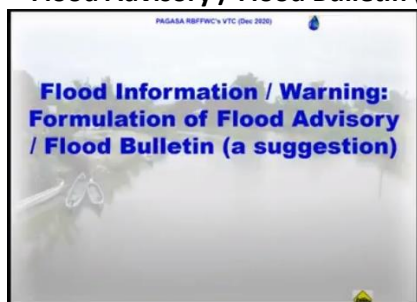
#### 3. Health and Safety Protocol in the Workplace (Mr. Joel C. Rivera, Chief, GSS, AD)



A very important discussion by Mr. Rivera which tackled matters relating on how to work-out health and safety protocols in the workplace during the pandemic. He mentioned about the Civil Service Commission (CSC) memos on various work format being observed now, one such memo is the alternative work arrangements; filling-up of inter-office health declaration forms upon entry to a workplace; office disinfection; isolation areas; and many other practices to ensure a healthy and safe workplace environment.



4. **Issues on RBFFWCs' Hydrological Information - "Flood Information / Warning: Formulation of Flood Advisory / Flood Bulletin (a suggestion)"** (Mr. Hilton Hernando, Chief, PRFFWC)



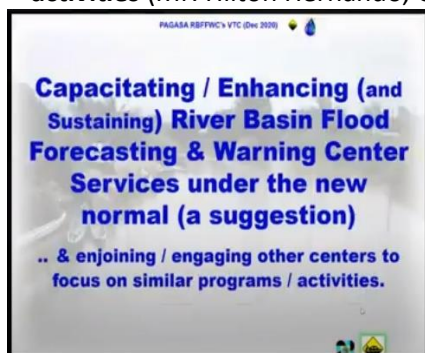
The topic focused on enhancements on the various regular hydrological information being issued by RBFFWCs with a particular view on improving the quality of statements and contents in the flood advisories / flood bulletins. The presentation also dealt with the specifics on how to prepare and present a more comprehensive, understandable and user-friendly information relating to flood warnings, etc. as an eye-opener to many of the RBFFWCs in coming-up with more acceptable hydrological information.

5. **River Basin Monitoring System – "HMD-HMTS Data Logger"** (Mr. Berlin V. Mercado, AWSC, HMD)



Mr. Mercado specifically discussed in his presentation about the HMTS developed data logger which he hopes will be used as another platform for monitoring hydrological elements and / or as backup to the present monitoring system in a river basin set-up. He showed the various parts, functions and features of their said developed item.

6. **Capacitating / Enhancing (and Sustaining) River Basin FFW Center Services under the New Normal (a suggestion) ... and enjoining / engaging other centers to focus on similar programs / activities** (Mr. Hilton Hernando, Chief, PRFFWC)



The presentation was about the various programs and activities that can be worked-out even during this pandemic period. It also showcased most of the activities that the PRFFWC has been doing during these past several years; even other river basin centers who came up with the trend of producing their own monthly accomplishment reports, post-flood surveys, and even their annual year-end report. The presentation, precisely gave a ton of materials that RBFFWCs can do not only during normal situations but also during the new normal conditions.

Almost an hour of moderated discussions and open forum followed afterwards which actually went beyond the 12 noon event end time. This basically showed how significant the webinar was to many of the participants inasmuch as all of the topics were very much timely and necessary at the height of the ongoing pandemic.

The recorded webinar video can be access through the following link to better appreciate the event presentations and discussions:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MAINRYaGKB3Zcft3n9WJeu6GP2hSOkG/view?fbclid=IwAR2IT6jr\\_sIUIMTsdbVTwcdT5mRbpl9tBSFudh9iWJRuzxBjkmeyUymbv4](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MAINRYaGKB3Zcft3n9WJeu6GP2hSOkG/view?fbclid=IwAR2IT6jr_sIUIMTsdbVTwcdT5mRbpl9tBSFudh9iWJRuzxBjkmeyUymbv4)

Prepared by:

PRFFWC  
December 2020