

# DSWD partners with Australian gov't to strengthen disaster response, social protection efforts



*Department of Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian (center) and other officials meet with the delegation of the Australian Embassy in the Philippines, headed by Ambassador HK Yu PSM (6<sup>th</sup> from right) on Wednesday, March 15, at the DSWD Central Office.*

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian met with Australian Ambassador to the Philippines HK Yu PSM and the Australian Embassy delegation on Wednesday, March 15, to discuss ways on further improving the Department's disaster response mechanisms, community development initiatives, and social protection efforts.

During the meeting, the Secretary mentioned that one of his priorities is to strengthen the disaster response system of the DSWD. The Australian Embassy representatives shared the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change (SHIELD) Program, a disaster preparedness program supported and funded by the Australian government. The SHIELD program is being implemented with 11 local government units in the country. The embassy delegation committed to share with the Department their disaster response framework and best practices.

Secretary Gatchalian also mentioned the plan of the Department to revitalize the Social Welfare and Development Center for Asia and the Pacific (SWADCAP) as an academy that will offer

short-term courses and certificate programs to further equip and train the social service workforce, especially the social workers, non-governmental organizations, local government personnel and other service providers involved in the implementation of social protection packages to the vulnerable and disadvantaged sector.

Ambassador HK Yu PSM, in her response, expressed the Australian government's full support to provide technical assistance in crafting training packets or pathways for continuing professional development programs as well as conducting training of trainers for the academy.

The DSWD continues to build and expand its partnerships with international organizations to better improve the quality of services for the benefit of Filipinos. ###