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Dear colleagues in CDRN,

Warmest Greetings and a Liberating New Year!

The year 2018 was filled with challenges and obstacles, but cheers to all of us that we overcame all these with shining glory because we have always put the interests of the poor and exploited above our own personal interests!

Our Regional Center MISFI in Mindanao, despite attacks from the regime, has persevered in providing literacy for poor lumad youth and fulfilling the dream of all indigenous peoples --- that of having a decent education.

Our Regional Centers in Northern Luzon namely ICRED, CORDIS and CVDRRC, with CDRC in the lead, have effectively responded to Typhoon Ompong (international name Mangkhut) survivors' needs, and will continue to assist them up to recovery. .

In the Visayas, PCDR, CPRS, CRRC and LCDe have persevered in fulfilling its mandate in all phases of disaster risk reduction and management.

Typhoons Urduja (int'l name Kai-tak) and Vinta (int'l name Tembin) humanitarian responses were launched in the first quarter of 2018 involving CDRC and three Mindanao RCs (Panday Bulig, Kadait and MISFI) as well as LCDe. We were able to serve at least 3,000 survivors with shelter repair kits, food and cash grants.

We lost two dear CDRN colleagues in 2018, Carol Abrio, former Executive Director of Panday Bulig in Cagayan de Oro in November 2018 and Carlos "Caloy" Padolina, former CDRC Deputy Executive Director in April 2018. Both were true servants of the people and were fulfilling their tasks till the day they passed away. We offer them the highest tribute by continuing their advocacies and principles --- that of giving one's totality in the service. Turn grief into strength!

Disaster risk reduction, which would translate into achieving resilient communities which are food secure, is still foremost among our programs. Community-based disaster management (CBDM) is relevant as our strategy and complements consolidation of our sectoral organizations in the grassroots. CBDM was conceptualized by CDRC in the mid-80s and as CDRC approaches its 35th year in 2019, it is fitting that this be strengthened to respond to the needs of the times.

As 2019 unfolds, we must anticipate more repressive measures from the Duterte regime. It shifts its target from drug suspects to government critics and human rights workers. The number of extra judicial killings has reached alarming proportions, which is unprecedented. These will be very trying times indeed, as we have been,

still are, and will be subject to all forms of suppression from the powers in place. We are one with the masses as they struggle for their emancipation from poverty and oppression. Tyranny cannot obliterate a whole bastion of resistance.

But let us not be daunted, victory is just around the bend, and surrender is not an option! Let us strengthen our commitment and collective effort as we face more challenges and sacrifices ahead. Mabuhay ang CDRN!

Minet Aguisanda-Jerusalem
CDRN Chairperson