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**Iloilo gets water ambulances from Italian shipping company**

**ILOILO CITY -- An Italian shipping company has donated \$100,000 for the purchase of watercraft equipped as ambulances to deliver health and disaster relief services in Iloilo province.**

D'Amico Societa di Navigazione turned over the donation last week to nongovernment organization One Meal Program, headed by local philanthropist and businesswoman Maria Teresa Chan, which will implement the project.

Salvatore d'Amico of D'Amico said the donation recognizes Filipino seafarers employed by the company, noting their "remarkable performance that contributed to the company's success."

D'Amico operates cargo ships and tankers and provides ship management and telecommunications services.

Of the total amount, P3.3 million will be used to build two patrol boats that will also serve as water rescue ambulances, P600,000 for two rubber boats, and the remainder for medical equipment and supplies.

Italian Ambassador Massimo Roscigno, who is married to a Filipina from Iloilo and was present during the turnover of the donation, said the assistance is valuable to the province which was one of the areas hit by typhoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan) in November 2013.

"I think this part of the Philippines is a little bit neglected by international donors in the post-Yolanda recovery efforts. As you all know, many concentrated in the provinces of Leyte and Samar when Iloilo was also badly hit," Mr. Roscigno said.

The government of Italy sent P23 million worth of aid in the aftermath of Yolanda, which was allocated for the purchase of 130 hand tractors and 55 rice threshers for farmers in the typhoon hit towns such as Carles, Estancia, Batad, San Dionisio and Concepcion.

Iloilo Governor Arthur D. Defensor, Sr. said the vessels will replace some of the province's own patrol boats that were destroyed during the typhoon.

"The donation will ease delivery of basic health care services to island barangays in northern Iloilo," said Mr. Defensor, adding that it will also help minimize neonatal and maternal deaths in remote areas during disasters. -- **Louine Hope Conserva**

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