

Mayor Beng Climaco has expressed elation over continuous support pouring in for the city's effort at rebuilding Zamboanga from the destruction caused by the 23-day conflict last month.

"It is very heart warming to note that in this time of crisis, there are those who remember us and giving us all these help", Mayor Climaco said yesterday after meeting with Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos and officials from the Mandaluyong Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, who flew to Zamboanga to personally pledge a package of assistance that includes the construction of a school building and financial support.

The mayor thanked the ZC Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce for coordinating with its Mandaluyong counterpart for the school and development programs.

Last weekend Senate President Franklin Drilon turned over to Mayor Climaco a P200,000 check, on behalf of the Senate. On the same day, she received a P3 million assistance from the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) which was facilitated by Councilor Rommel Agan.

The mayor said that Sen. Drilon and Sen. Bam Aquino had assured Zamboanga City, Bohol and Cebu of rehabilitation funds from the money that will be diverted from their Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF).

She also cited a brick-by-brick program with MVP group of companies wherein funds for rehabilitation will be given to Zamboanga City, and the earthquake-hit provinces of Bohol and Cebu.

The mayor has vowed that transparency and accountability will continue to be her administration's thrust in the rehabilitation program, as she tasked the communications cluster under the rehab coordination structure to ensure that every single centavo received and spent will be properly reported.

Meanwhile, Antonio Yap, a member of the Board of Directors of the Mandaluyong

Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, vowed to help Zamboanga in its rehabilitation efforts, citing the extent of damage the 23-day standoff brought to the city.

“We are so happy to do some service (for Zamboanga). This is not our first time and I find the development of the city quite encouraging. Our chamber is also very active and we can provide some help to the city,” said Andrew Ong, president of the Mandaluyong FCCC.

For his part, Mayor Abalos recalled that he was in Zamboanga City in 2008 when he attended an activity of the National Historical and Heritage Foundation of Mrs. Araneta with then mayor Celso Lobregat.

“I have seen the beauty of Zamboanga. Aside from the school building, what is more important is the symbolism that we are all Filipinos and we are here to help you,” Abalos said as he brought with him the businessmen from his city. — Vic Larato