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Army and LGU conduct joint Medical Mission in Communist Terrorist Affected Barangays

MARIA AURORA, AURORA – The Army's 702nd Infantry Brigade under BGEN EMMANUEL T BAUTISTA, in collaboration MAYOR ARIEL BITONG and municipal officials of Maria Aurora, Aurora Province jointly conducted a medical-dental mission in the far-flung barangays of Decoliat, San Juan, Dianawan, Punglo and Galintuja, all of Maria Aurora municipality. Military doctors, dentists and nurses work hand-in-hand with the Municipal Health Officials and rendered free medical-dental services to the residents of the said barangays. Most prevalent diseases treated include cough and colds, hypertension, urinary tract infection, iron deficiency anemia, intestinal parasitism and hyper-acidity. An estimated 800 residents that include mostly women and children benefited from the joint medical-dental mission held in the Barangay Plaza of Barangay San Juan. Personnel from the military also conducted parlor games that bring delight to children in the barangays.

The said five barangays were reported to have been targets of the Communist Terrorist intensified mass base organizing efforts. Recent armed engagements between government forces against the Communist Terrorist NPA had happened in the outskirts of Barangay Decoliat, Galintuja and Punglo as the military heightened its operations in the tri-boundaries of Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya and Aurora.

LTC MELQUIADES FELICIANO, the Commander of 71st IB operating in the area said that continuous awareness program will be conducted by his troops to uncover the deceptive activities of the Communist Terrorists NPA and prevent the local residents into being lured to join the armed Communist Terrorist movement. "There are issues and concerns of the local populace that is being manipulated by the NPA. These issues and concerns can be addressed through constant dialogue and coordination with government agencies. Once open communications will be established, these issues and concerns will be addressed, and eventually, the Communist Terrorists will lose influence on this barangays" said FELICIANO.

BGEN BAUTISTA, Commander of Army Forces in the area acknowledged the invaluable support extended by the local government of Maria Aurora and the barangay officials of the CT-affected barangays. Further, local officials pledged their full support to the program of the government that is to end insurgency once and for all in order for development to take its due course. The Social Integration Program was also advocated to the populace in the area and the local residents were encouraged to reach out to those NPAs in the mountains to come down and join mainstream society. "The military needs the help of the other sectors of society in order to end insurgency. We are thankful for the support of the Maria Aurora Local Government as well as the barangay officials of the five barangays. With their help, I am sure we will achieve our mandated tasks" said BGEN BAUTISTA.

The Social Integration Program offers livelihood for those rebels who want to renounce and leave their armed struggle. It presents an opportunity for rebels to return to their families and communities and avail themselves of a comprehensive package which include initial financial assistance, livelihood training to go with a provision for initial capital, and remuneration for firearms surrendered. As much as 120,000 pesos or more may be made available to them depending on the number and type of firearms surrendered. The Program ensures that the rebel returnee is secured and fully reintegrated back to society. The Program capitalizes on the desire of would-be rebel returnees to live normal lives in the comfort of their families, away from harm's way and difficulties of living in the mountains.

