



**Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman  
Climate Change Commission**

**OPENING REMARKS**

**4<sup>th</sup> NPTE Forum:  
Building the Resilience of Coastal Communities and Ecosystems  
to Climate Change**

08 May 2018

University of the Philippine Visayas - Tacloban College  
Tacloban City, Leyte

Tacloban City Mayor Cristina Romualdez; Vice Mayor Jerry “Sambo” Yaokasin; Dean Virgildo Sabalo; honorable guests and delegates from the different local governments of Region 8; regional representatives of the national agencies; members of our National Panel of Technical Experts; students; ladies and gentlemen:

Maupay nga aga (good morning).

The Climate Change Commission’s Experts Forum Series was piloted in 2017 with the aim of creating an avenue for knowledge sharing on climate-change related issues among scientists, members of the academe, and government and non-government agencies.

We organize these Experts Forums to encourage this notion: It is now time to listen to our experts.

It is now time that we put on the spotlight on our experts and scientists in the field of climate change and disaster risk reduction in order to guide our actions, our policies, and our practices towards our goal of being a sustainable and climate-resilient nation.

Through our Experts’ Forum Series, we bring our National Panel of Technical Experts, a special advisory body of the Climate Change Commission composed of experts on various fields concerning climate change, closer to our local governments and our communities.

It is of great importance that the scientific proficiency of our leading climate experts be made available to develop climate resiliency strategies and pathways, as well as inspire climate action from the different stakeholders.

Our Experts’ Forum Series emphasize the value of science informing policy and practice in the context of climate action.

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The first forum with the theme “Linking Science, Policy and Practice” was conducted last September 2017 and was followed by “Strengthening Multi-Hazard and Early Warning Systems And Services in the Philippines” in December.

This year, we decided to bring our NPTE Forums outside Metro Manila in order to reach more sectors, and to discuss more pressing issues specific to certain regions.

Just recently, the first regional NPTE Forum was held in Batac City, Ilocos Norte with the theme “Water Security in the midst of Climate Change”.

For the topic *“Building the Resilience of Coastal Communities and Ecosystems to Climate Change,”* we only deem it fit to conduct the discussion here in Tacloban.

Tacloban will always hold a special place in history. Not only are you the ground zero of Yolanda but also the ground zero of community resilience.

As Yolanda opened our eyes to the increasing economic cost of climate-related hazards and disasters, Tacloban and the rest of Eastern Visayas showed us the ability of our people to build back better.

Our Yolanda experience should inspire us to implement a whole-of-society approach in coming up with new policies, strategies, and measures—that call for beyond our “business-as-usual” ways—in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

It is in this context that we underscore the critical role of the academe, particularly in bridging the gap between science, policy, and climate change action.

We partnered with higher education institution, such as the University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College, in bringing our Experts Forums closer to our local officials and communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is probably nothing in the history of humanity as game-changing as climate change.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects, up to 20 percent more intense rains and tropical cyclones in the Philippines. This will result in higher storm surges and greater risk of coastal disasters.

Records showed that the Philippines posted the highest average increase in sea level since 1901, roughly three times higher than the global average of 19 centimeters.

This puts at risk 60 percent of our LGUs covering 64 coastal provinces, 822 coastal municipalities, 25 major coastal cities, and an estimate of 13.6 million Filipinos that would need relocation.

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We will need more adaptation measures at regional and local levels to reduce these adverse impacts of projected climate change impacts and variability.

To this end, we in the Climate Change Commission, in convergence with DOST and other concerned agencies, are now facilitating the establishment of a National Integrated Risk Information System or NIRIS to address the fragmentation and shortage of risk information in the country.

A singular platform for risk information will let national and local government stakeholders access risk data that inform policy and planning processes.

This risk information platform will also strengthen multi-hazard early warning system and impact-based forecasting in the country, an innovative approach to saving lives and property, especially in disaster-prone communities, through effective early warning.

This platform shall also benefit the private business sector by providing risk information that informs climate-resilient investment planning.

Furthermore, recognizing that scientific research is key to climate policy reform and innovative climate actions, the National Panel of Technical Experts has identified priority research studies for climate adaptation and mitigation as part of the National Research and Development Agenda.

In this regard, we are also looking into the local proposal to establish here in Tacloban a center for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction research. The lessons of Yolanda have not been fully learned domestically as well as internationally. We are still wanting in analysis and narratives on the impact and lessons of Yolanda that will facilitate learning exchanges and linking science to policy and practice.

Moreover, we are strengthening our Communities for Resilience Series Program, the main platform of the Climate Change Commission for capacity building and training for the academe and the local government professionals, especially on enhancing their local development and investment plans, including their local climate change action plans, local disaster risk reduction and management plans, comprehensive land use plans, and on preparing quality project proposals for PSF grant funding.

These initiatives are in line with the CCC's mandate under the Climate Change Act to exercise policy coordination to ensure the attainment of goals set in the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change and National Climate Change Action Plan.

Ladies and gentlemen, we can build the resilience of our coastal communities if we come together as one people and one nation and if we bring our minds and hearts together on a common, shared purpose.

Let this forum be an avenue for us to come up with new ideas, new strategies, and new ways of thinking to find innovative solutions, with all our available expertise

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and know how, towards our vision of a sustainable and climate-resilient future, safer and more secure—the future that we want for our nation and for our next generations.

*Salamat ngan maupan na kulop ha iyo ngatanan. (Thank you and good morning to all).*

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