



**SECRETARY EMMANUEL M. DE GUZMAN**  
**Climate Change Commission**

**Asia-Pacific Healthy Islands Conference 2018**  
July 26, 2018  
Marco Polo Hotel, Davao City

Excellencies, ministers and officials from different countries, colleagues, welcome once again to the Philippines.

I trust you are all enjoying your stay in the fine city of Davao. As we all heard yesterday during our welcome dinner, the Duterte administration is most conscious of the threat climate change poses to the Pacific.

Since he was a mayor, and especially now as the country's chief executive, Pres. Duterte has been one of the country's top advocates of climate action. He has called out rich nations several times who are historically responsible for the climate crisis. And he is correct. Developed countries need to do far more, far earlier, in taking greater action in terms of reducing emissions but also providing finance and the means by which vulnerable countries can protect our people at the same time as we transform our economies into low carbon, resilient engines of inclusive growth.

In the same breath Pres. Duterte has issued a clarion call to all – that we do what we can now, because we must, despite our limited means. As our countries declared in Paris together, during the most intense and tumultuous moments of the climate negotiations, it is not enough to survive the climate crisis. We need to thrive as well.

In Paris, we fought together to advance what was then seen as an unreachable goal—ensure that global temperatures do not breach the 1.5°C average increase above pre-industrial levels threshold. And we won! Together! Now, our challenge is even greater: we need to implement Paris and deliver our fair share of climate action.

Our work abroad and our domestic agenda is cut from the same cloth – we demand climate justice by taking to task those most responsible for the climate crisis, and we act and deliver what we already can, notwithstanding our meagre and limited resources, because we must, and because we have no greater weapon than to wield the righteousness of our cause. We are vulnerable, my friends, but we are also capable.

It is not difficult to surmise the links between the health sector and climate change. Formally, the event is being undertaken as part of the Philippines' chairmanship of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment from 2016-2019. We are likewise mighty glad to have with us our dear colleagues from Fiji, whose legacy in offering the Talanoa Dialogue to the world cannot be understated, along with the Marshall Islands, which will soon assume the Chair of the 48-country strong Climate Vulnerable Forum after Ethiopia's presidency concludes. The Philippines is proud to be part of the CVF's leadership troika, especially given multiple opportunities to convene interested parties of Pacific Islands to explore practical solutions to climate vulnerability and non-communicable diseases.

**S U R V I V E # 1 • 5 C T H R I V E**

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I am keenly aware of the dangers our people face. Rising sea levels threaten to inundate our communities and wipe out our history and culture. Acidifying oceans threaten the long-term livelihood of coastal communities. The spread of vector-borne diseases poses terrifying risks to our already over-burdened health systems. Rising temperatures threaten nothing less than the viability of our economies.

Yet, I believe in the power of our moral authority to speak not as victims but as leaders.

As we evolve mechanisms that can nurture mutual support through integrated medical initiatives and teams, we must also recognise the way that climate change unites us all.

2018 is a very important year for raising climate ambition and accelerating action at all levels. With current Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs not adding up to a safe trajectory, we need a clear decision coming out of the 24th Conference of Parties to the climate convention in Poland to trigger the process of NDC enhancement so that we can move nearer to achieving the 1.5°C threshold and Paris Agreement goals.

Colleagues, all countries urgently have to step up within a short window through which new NDCs are prepared for submission by 2020. The time is now! We must reach out to our stakeholders because we know governments cannot prepare strong NDCs alone and that we will only succeed when we engage and mobilise all stakeholders.

It is time we advance low cost green design and clean energy for health centers and communities, safe water, and sanitation and waste disposal during disasters. These are today common sense investments we need to make decisively. But we must also not lose sight of the chance to bring our voices together for the greater good.

I therefore wish to invite our Pacific Island colleagues to join and support the coming CVF Virtual Summit on November 21, which our good friends in the Marshalls will convene for the world. It will be the first ever global online political Summit, avoiding emissions and increasing inclusivity, with the support of a Women Champions group that can only strengthen the leadership and convening power of President Hilda Heine. The Summit will provide a leadership platform for vulnerable countries and climate champions and frontrunners who can together demonstrate their climate commitment as a response to the IPCC Special Report on the 1.5°C temperature goal of Paris, which will be issued this October.

I congratulate all the participants for working together towards common goals. The struggle ahead will be difficult. But history reminds us that forces of good will always prevail whenever good people band together to advance a common agenda. It's time to elevate the plight of vulnerable communities and to prioritise the urgent need for transformation in the way we produce and consume resources and the way we relate to one another out of respect instead of considering first the size of wealth and power that a few still manage to wield.

Thank you and good day to all.

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