



SECRETARY EMMANUEL DE GUZMAN
Climate Change Commission

Keynote Address

Communities for Resilience (CORE) Modular Training for Higher Education Institutions

14 August 2018
Tagbilaran, Bohol

Mayor John Yap, my colleague Climate Change Commissioner Noel Gaerlan, civil society partners and members of the academe; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen:

Good afternoon.

First of all, I wish to thank Mayor Yap for warmly welcoming us and for hosting the Climate Change Commission's 6th Communities for Resilience Modular Training for Trainers in this beautiful city of peace and friendship, Tagbilaran.

I wish to thank also the Commission on Higher Education represented by Dr. Custer Deocaris chief of the Research Management Division, for the support and cooperation in making CORE a capacity building program for local government units available and accessible through the country's higher education institutions.

Climate change outlook

The imperative for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort to fight and build community resilience against climate change has never been more pronounced than ever.

Today's newsfeeds bear witness: Typhoon Yagi in China displaces almost 200,000 people. Heat waves hit Japan and Korea, contributing to premature deaths. Multiple fires rage in the United States and Europe. Extensive flooding from monsoon rains affect 1 million people and displace 25,000 in Metro Manila and Central Luzon in the Philippines. Floods displace 36,000 in Kerala, India.

Moreover, in the science front, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that the present year, 2018, is on track to be the fourth warmest on record, with the month of June registering as the 402nd consecutive month with temperatures above the 20th-century average. The UK's Environmental Audit Committee has warned that we could see summer temperatures reaching 38C by the 2040s, leading to a potential 7,000 heat-related deaths a year.

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Furthermore, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Meteorological Organization had reported that 90 percent of recorded disasters caused by natural hazards are linked to water, weather and climate.

Unfortunately, the recurring impacts of extreme weather events bring enormous loss and damage to our local communities and undermine the hard-earned socio-economic gains of countries. Climate change has indeed become the most defining threat to human security and sustainable development that the world confronts today.

Climate action is social justice

With the increasing prevalence of climate change and disaster risks in our cities and local communities, the poor and the marginalized, those who have less in life, are bound to suffer most.

Reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change, therefore, is a pro-poor response. It ought to liberate the poor from the vicious cycle of poverty and risk. It is social justice in action.

For a developing country like ours, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is a must in order for us to survive and to thrive in the era of climate change.

Through the years, the resources of government and private business sectors have been increasingly devoted to risk reduction and adaptation measures, such as undertaking risk assessment, strengthening public health services, protecting ecosystems, improving agricultural methods, managing water resources, building settlements in safe zones, developing multi-hazard early warning systems, instituting better building designs, improving insurance coverage, developing social safety nets, integrating climate change knowledge in formal education, and raising public awareness.

Although much has been done, much remains to be done to face the climate resilience challenge squarely.

Post-2015 global development frameworks

Clearly, apathy, indifference, and business-as-usual will only worsen the problems. We need to change the way we think and the way we do business, and everybody must do his share in bringing about the societal change we seek.

For the sustainable development path ahead, the guideposts are up and lit. Three post-2015 global development frameworks are in place to guide both the government and the private sector in addressing sustainable development challenges in the context of climate change: The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. These are our guide in moving our development agenda forward in a balanced and systematic fashion – such that we do not only adapt to the impacts of climate change, but come out even stronger and more resilient.

The Paris Agreement, in particular, aims to stop global temperature rise at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels – the global warming threshold for climate vulnerable countries like the Philippines to survive and to thrive. This global temperature goal is what defines the global ambition and the individual climate actions of nations.

PH in the line of fire of climate change

Our country is in the line of fire of climate change impacts. We remain among the world's most climate vulnerable countries. And the world will always remember Yolanda tragedy as an iconic testament of climate vulnerability, whose impact on the affected communities still lingers five years since it struck.

Imagine, this unprecedented super typhoon occurred when global warming was less than a degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. How much more intense would future typhoons be when it is beyond 1C.

The country's climate change outlook is grim.

In the last two decades, our country experienced an annual average loss of 2.89 billion US dollars, about 0.6% of our GDP.

Major rainfall changes in patterns and distribution are foreseen, suggesting a decrease in rainfall by 2020 in most parts of the country except Luzon, and an increase in the number of days with heavy rainfall (e.g. greater than 200 mm) by year 2020 and 2050.

With the warming seas, our corals are dying, becoming almost extinct by the end of the century if current global warming trends continue, according to the 2016 Low Carbon Monitor Report. Our rice yields are declining by at least 105 for every 1C increase in the growing-season minimum temperature in the dry season, according to the International Rice Research Institute.

With the rising sea level, which is most pronounced at 60 centimeters in the country at more than three times the global average of 19 centimeters, about 60 percent of our local government units are at risk of flood and salt water intrusion. This covers 64 coastal provinces, 822 coastal municipalities, 25 major coastal cities, and an estimated 13.6 million Filipinos that would need relocation.

Strengthening local climate action planning with LCCAP

With all these, we must realize: If global warming is becoming a seemingly formidable, unstoppable force—then our solidarity, our sense of purpose, our will to survive and to thrive despite the odds must be even more unstoppable.

This is the spirit that should bind and drive us as nation – to uphold and deliver on the Climate Change Act of 2009 and to build and to strengthen the resilience of our local communities to climate change.

This is also the spirit that drives the CCC to enjoin all key stakeholders in building the capacity of local government units and assisting them in developing, enhancing, and implementing their Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) anchored on five strategic actions:

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First: Strengthening participatory local risk governance. This means that our needs, our strategies, and the tasks we identify to serve and protect our people must swell from the ground up.

Second: Enhancing the resilience of rural livelihood. We must prepare our communities to adapt to the climate outlook and withstand the impact of weather extremes and rising sea levels on people's lives and livelihood.

Third: Preserving the integrity of our ecosystems. Our mangroves, our corals, our forests: All of these are threads in the weave that protects us from harm and supports a healthy environment for our families, for our children, and for our children's children.

Fourth: Ensuring that our indigenous peoples' culture remains rich and resilient. With some of our most vulnerable communities living within ancestral domains, their life-ways must be preserved as well as enriched along with their lives, livelihoods and environment.

And fifth: Strengthening early recovery planning. We must battle the disruption caused by disasters, so that our people may go on with their lives and continue contributing to nation-building. We can plan way ahead of any probable disruptive disaster how we can rise quickly and ensure that the engines of local economies get revved as soon as possible.

These strategic actions perfectly align with the current administration's agenda of change. In fact, we can rightfully claim that the LCCAP is our combined contribution to accelerating development in our communities by ensuring climate resilience through effective adaptation and mitigation measures.

LCCAPs are the most rational foundation and justification for securing climate finance such as the people's Survival Fund.

Communities for Resilience (CORE) Training for LGUs

Given our mandate and mission under the law, the Commission has focus its capacity building services on supporting the LGUs through convergence of efforts with relevant national government agencies, institutions, civil society and development partners.

Our flagship capacity building program—the Communities for Resilience (CORE) or CORE Modular Training—is one whole-of-government-and-society approach to fostering such synergistic action across the development agendas of key sectors and the government at the national and local level.

CORE aims to strengthen the climate adaptation and resilience planning capacity of LGUs. Since 2016, the CCC has conducted six (6) CORE Convergence Forums for LGUs in Major River Basins as Wave 1, and six (6) CORE Modular Training of Trainers for academic and teaching professionals, since 2017, as part of Wave 2, in a three-phased implementation of the capacity building program for LGUs.

Convergence with CHED and DAP

The CCC will deliver on its mandate under the law to provide technical support to LGUs through its strategic partnership with Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

This critical convergence will enable our Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to become catalysts of social change and engines of sectoral transformation which our National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), our Nationally Determined Contribution, and LCCAPs ought to achieve.

Together we envision the country's HEIs collectively contributing to climate action through knowledge generation and research across disciplines, from physics to arts to information technology; through teaching and learning, by providing students with the tools to confront the issue for the generations to come; through extension and outreach, by engaging faculty and students to work with the community and industry leading to social innovations, promotion a green economy and fostering climate-awareness, nationhood and socially-relevance in education; and through campus operation, by modeling institutional pathways towards healthier, more sustainable and resilient communities and provide on-campus "living laboratory" to better understand sustainability challenges and pilot new solutions that can be replicated or scaled up.

Recognizing the role of HEIs as one of the institutions in building leadership capacities, we will also partner with the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) to develop an accelerated training program on the CORE Modules Series that pilots Wave 3.

In the long run, the CCC and CHED envision a formal course on the CORE modules at HEIs. This will then ensure that local planners have access to specialized training and skills upgrading in science and risk-based local development planning.

To ensure a long-term low carbon, low emission development, we continue to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation in our national development processes. We also consider opportunities for convergence with the academe and other key stakeholders in updating our NCCAP and fine-tuning our National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs).

More climate actions underway

There are several major climate actions underway.

The CCC, in line with its Resolution on the national policy review on energy, is currently finalizing its final report on the outcome of extensive consultations and also pursuing studies on carbon pricing towards a carbon pricing legislation, among other ways forward.

For a greener and cleaner environment, we are also supporting legislative initiatives on promoting a circular economy and regulating single-use plastics.

The CCC, pursuant to the Green Jobs Act of 2016, is also fast-tracking the development of standards and certification system for providing incentives to enterprises that generate and sustain green jobs – jobs that nurture the environment, promote social protection, and decarbonize the economy.

We have also recently enhanced our national MRV system with the launch of our national platform for data exchange on climate change, which includes greenhouse gas inventory, called National Integrated Climate Change Data and Information Exchange or NICCDIES, now accessible to all.

In support to the whole-of-government program for the indigenous peoples, the CCC will facilitate convergence of national government agencies in the delivery of climate

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adaptation services with a framework for action under the Comprehensive Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program.

In all these climate actions, we make sure that no one is left behind.

Closing

Ladies and gentlemen, as we train another batch of training professionals with this week's CORE Modular Training of Trainers, we fervently hope that we can make a difference sooner than later in strengthening the climate resilience of our communities and reducing the loss and damage incurred by the country from recurring impacts of extreme weather events, and that we can foster collective resolve and meaningful convergence among all sectors of society towards a safer and healthier, cleaner and greener, and more secure and sustainable future for the Filipino nation.

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