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Climate Change Commission

Resilience in the Age of Insecurity
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Climate Change, Resiliency, and Cooperation

Greetings

Deputy Cabinet Secretary Gloria Mercado, esteemed colleagues in government, distinguished guests and speakers; international participants; ladies and gentlemen: Good afternoon.

I would like to thank the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) for having me in this important international forum on resilience.

I wish also to congratulate the leadership of the Department of National Defense together with the NDCP for its establishment of the Philippine Center of Excellence in Defense, Development and Security which is now seen as a potent platform for the exchange of innovative ideas, policies, and practices that advance human security, societal resilience, and sustainable development.

My presentation ought to contribute to the continuing discourse on the nexus of climate change, societal resilience and development cooperation.

Climate change outlook

Climate change is considered the most defining development issue of our time. It is a clear and present threat to human security as well as national security.

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.

Current newsfeeds bear witness:

- Typhoon Yagi in China displace almost 200,000 people.
- Heat waves hit Japan and Korea, contributing to premature deaths.
- Multiple fires raged in the United States and Europe.
- Extensive flooding from monsoon rains affected one million people and displaced 25,000 in Metro Manila and Central Luzon in the Philippines.
- Floods displaced 36,000 in Kerala, India.

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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.

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 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 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.

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In treading the sustainable development path, 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 global blueprints let us move our development agenda forward in a balanced and systematic fashion – such that we do not only adapt to the impacts of climate change, but we 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 now defines the global ambition and the individual climate actions of nations.

PH in the line of fire of climate change

Our country is known to be 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 to 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 outlook is grim. Unity and cooperation in climate action is an imperative for us to survive and to thrive.

Projected loss in annual GDP by 2010. The Germanwatch 2018 Global Climate Rate Index indicated that in the last two decades, our country experienced an annual average loss of 2.89 billion US dollars, which is about 1% of our GDP.[1]

The latest IPCC Assessment Report, on the other hand, concluded that climate change will create new poor between now and 2100.[2]

Major rainfall changes in patterns and distributions. As early as 2011, Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), our national hydro-met service, has already forecast a decrease in rainfall by 2020 in most parts of the country except Luzon.

Continued threats to natural ecosystems. Approximately 1 million hectares of grasslands in our uplands are prone to fires particularly during extended periods of dryness and lack of rainfall during summer.[3]

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1 *2018 Global Climate Risk Index, Germanwatch. https://germanwatch.org/de/download/20432.pdf*

2 *(n.d.). Retrieved January 23, 2018, from https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/.*

3 *Schaeffer, E., Rocha, M., & McKinnon, M. (2016, November 16). The Low Carbon Monitor.*

Dying corals. Recent studies show that 98 percent of coral reefs in our seas will die by mid-century, becoming practically extinct by the end of the century if the current global warming trend is not arrested.[4]

More intense droughts. Global warming will continue to exacerbate the effects of El Niño[5] the most recent of which was experienced in the country from 2015 to 2016.[6]

Water scarcity. Climate change, rapid urbanization, and population growth drives water scarcity worldwide. A study conducted by the World Resources Institute predicts the Philippines will experience a "high" degree of water shortage in the year 2040.As of now, our country ranks 57th likely most water stressed country in 2040 out of 167 countries. The agricultural sector will bear the brunt of the looming water crisis. This is a critical area of concern which the Climate Change Commission has begun addressing in consultation with stakeholders concerned.

Continued decline in labor productivity. Labor productivity is on the decline due to climate change-induced heat in the country's workplace which is projected to render 1% loss in working hours by 2025, 2% by 2050, and 4% by 2085.[7]

More public health emergencies. In the recently concluded Asia Pacific Healthy Islands Conference held a month ago in Davao, it was established that demand for public health services shall increase due to increased incidence of vector-borne diseases, among other emergencies, affecting mostly children and the elderly.

Higher sea level rise. While we pride ourselves as a country of a beautiful archipelago with 7,107 islands, that number could soon be reduced due to rising sea levels.[8]The rise in sea level is most pronounced at 60 centimeters in the country, which is more than three times the global average of 19 centimeters. This makes 60 percent of our local government units (LGUs) at risk of flood and salt water intrusion -- which covers 64 coastal provinces, 822 coastal municipalities, 25 major coastal cities, and an estimated 13.,6 million Filipinos that would need relocation. This readily translates to increased vulnerability and higher levels of poverty.

Investing in adaptation makes economic sense.

Based on a study by the Asian Development Bank on the economics of climate change, the country stands to lose 6% of its GDP annually by 2100 if it disregards climate change risks. This same study found that if the Philippines invests 0.5% of its GDP by 2020 in climate change adaptation, it can avert losses of up to

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4 *Schaeffer, E., Rocha, M., & McKinnon, M. (2016, November 16). The Low Carbon Monitor.*

5 El Niño 2015-2016 | GOVPH. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2018, from http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/laginghanda/el-nino/2015-2016/.

6 *2015–2016 El Niño Early action and response for agriculture, food security and nutrition*. (2016). *Food and Agriculture Organization.* Retrieved January 25, 2018, from http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6049e.pdf.

7 Kjellstrom, T., Otto, Matthias, Lemke, Bruno, et al. *Climate Change and Labour: Impacts of Heat in the Workplace* (p. 15, Tech.). (2016). *United Nations Development Programme*. Retrieved January 28, 2018, http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_476194/lang--en/index.htm.

8 Aside from climate change, the estimated sea level rise is also caused by the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO).

4% of its GDP by 2100 – clearly a short-term investment with a long-term eight-fold gain.

Strengthening local climate action planning with LCCAP

With all these, we must realize: If global warming is becoming a 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 a 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 Climate Change Commission to enjoin all key stakeholders in building the capacity of LGUs and assisting them in developing, enhancing, and implementing their Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) anchored on five strategic actions:

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 in the aftermath of a disaster.

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.

The LCCAP is 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 Climate Change Commission has focused 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 Climate Change Commission has conducted six (6) CORE Convergence Forums for LGUs in Major River Basins as Wave 1, and six (6) CORE Modular Training of Trainers since 2017 for academic and teaching professionals trainings as part of Wave 2, in a three-phased implementation of the capacity building program for LGUs.

Convergence with CHED and DAP

The Climate Change Commission will deliver on its mandate under the law to provide technical support to LGUs through its strategic partnership with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), which we will formally forge soon.

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 (NDC), 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 issues 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, promoting a green economy, and fostering climate-awareness, nationhood and social relevance in education; and through campus operation by modeling institutional pathways towards healthier, more sustainable and resilient communities, providing on-campus "living laboratory" to better understand sustainability challenges, and piloting new solutions that can be replicated or scaled up.

Recognizing the role of HEIs as critical 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.

I do hope that the Philippine Center of Excellence in Defense, Development and Security will soon become a major exponent in accelerating our capacity

building program for local governments and also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and good practices from the international community.

In the long run, the Climate Change Commission and CHED envision a formal course on the CORE modules offered 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.

Several climate actions underway

Energy policy reform. There are several major climate actions underway made possible through inter-agency and multi-stakeholder convergence and cooperation. The Climate Change Commission, 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 energy policy reforms.

Green Jobs. The Climate Change Commission, 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.

Enhancement of MRV system. 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.

National Program for Indigenous Peoples. In support to the whole-of-government program for the indigenous peoples, the Climate Change Commission will facilitate convergence of national government agencies in the delivery of climate adaptation services with a framework for action under the Comprehensive Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program of the Climate Change Commission.

Risk information platform. We propose the establishment of a National Integrated Risk Information System (NIRIS) —an integrated platform that will converge all available vulnerability and risk data and information and will make them available and accessible to local officials and decision-makers in support of risk science-based local development planning as well as multi-hazard early warning system and services.

Climate change experts speak to society. We are also holding Experts' Forum of our National Panel of Technical Experts (NPTE), all open to the public, to raise public awareness on linking science to policy and climate action.

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

Ways forward

To sustain all these gains in climate action, we need to do more and forge even more cooperation at least on five fronts:

First, we should together enhance and sustain awareness and understanding on climate change and associated risks, through all media platforms and formal education system, and through more research and analyses such as the preceding presentation and experts' forums such as this forum made accessible to all stakeholders.

Second, we should together promote sustainable urban planning and development in view of the continuing trend of rapid urbanization, increasing urban population density, and unabated rural to urban migration.

Third, we should together endeavor to accelerate capacity building for LGUs and local communities on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including ensuring that local development plans are based on risk science.

Fourth, we should together invest in social preparation for the implementation of our NDC and the transformation of all sectors towards low carbon development and a green economy is also a good undertaking.

And lastly, fifth, we should facilitate efficient access of our communities to international and domestic climate finance and the transfer of technology and knowledge on adaptation and mitigation.

All these we shall articulate in the NCCAP which the Climate Change Commission, through a whole-of-government-and-society process, is updating right now, pursuant to law.

Closing

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, allow me to affirm the importance of this conference and its theme.

As leaders emerge in these trying times, *Resilience in the Age of Global Insecurity* should inspire leaders to heed the resilience challenge in this era of climate change.

To the many leaders present here today, we fervently hope that you will join and help the Climate Change Commission make a difference sooner than later in strengthening the climate resilience of our communities and reducing the losses of the country from the recurring impacts of extreme weather events – through linking science, policy and practice in climate action and resilience building.

Let us renew and strengthen today our collective resolve to act and to foster more meaningful convergence among all sectors and stakeholders for a safer, greener, and more secure future for the Filipino nation.

Thank you and Mabuhay.

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