



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

**WELCOME REMARKS**

**6<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum**

Good morning and welcome to Manila. I hope that those of you from abroad and from other provinces had a good flight in. I also hope the good weather holds.

It seems, to the casual observer, that it would take a literal disaster for climate discourse to enter mainstream consciousness. A hurricane in the Caribbean. Water levels threatening to engulf entire island-nations in the Pacific. Another super typhoon in Southeast Asia.

Last week, however, I was surprised to see my social media feed flooded with viral articles on climate change.

This time, however, the stories were not about another disaster that claimed hundreds of lives or billions in damages, but about the recently concluded IPCC meeting.

The headline from the Guardian said: "We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe."

From CNN: "Planet has only until 2030 to stem catastrophic climate change."

From the New York Times: "Major Climate Report Describes a Strong Risk of Crisis as Early as 2040."

These headlines echo sentiments we have all known for a while.

Climate change is not a specter on the horizon. The disasters are not looming or impending. They are happening now, and they will only get worse if we continue with business as usual, and yet take note, what might be the bigger threat is that which we can't see. Slow onset climate impacts that occur without the drama of calamities but which slowly bleed our economies and will power. Rising seas, souring oceans, less rainfall here, more rainfall there that does not result in massive flooding or severe drought but which are causing entire agricultural communities to collapse.

Many of our fingers have been pressed firmly on the panic button for years now. I could say this for certain of our brothers and sisters in the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

**S U R V I V E # 1 0 5 C T H R I V E**

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Especially here in the Philippines, our programs are adaptation and resiliency-heavy: We're empowering Communities for Resilience, building capacity across our provinces, especially those that are most prone to disaster. We're developing, enhancing, and ensuring the implementation of Local Climate Change Action Plans. We've put up a People's Survival Fund specifically in relation to disaster resilience.

Climate talk all over the world is happening in the same vein: The sense of urgency has finally sunk in.

It is now becoming even clearer: The threats are shared by all. The vulnerabilities are shared by all. The efforts to build adaptation and resiliency are not anymore limited the global south.

As UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa reported last April at the National Adaptation Expo in Egypt, the Adaptation Fund, already a central part of the Paris Agreement, exceeded its 2017 funding target of 80 million dollars by 13 million.

Last COP23, InsuResilience was launched. It focuses on post-disaster response, as well as risk finance and insurance.

On paper, the Climate Vulnerable Forum may consist of only a few handfuls of nations, but in truth, we are all vulnerable because the entire planet is under threat.

The world order—with its entrenched economic system, its fossil-fuel dependence, and its culture of profit and waste—cannot be transformed fast enough.

This is the spirit of our gathering for these two October days. What we said in Paris we say again today—fight for 1.5, not only to survive but also so we may thrive despite the enormity of challenges we face.

And so even as we work together to avoid the worst, we must also work to withstand what cannot be avoided.

We are not here to keep some running tally of each other's contributions, as if giving more, doing more, could somehow save an individual nation from doom. No, it cannot.

The truth is that if we do not all pull together and do absolutely everything within our power, then we will all suffer the consequences. Our GDP does not matter. Whether we are a net borrower or lender to international funds does not matter.

What is relevant, what matters, is that we continue our work—we must do as much as we can, as fast as we can. We must take stock of everything we can do, and we must do it. We must adapt but also deploy more efficient, competition-driven, decentralised clean energy systems, promote inclusive mobility, build green, embed transparency, promote accountability, bake resilience into long term development policy.

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These efforts require massive coordination and visibility across regions. And we are here because we understand that the work of adaptation requires sharing what we know, deepening our linkages, and moving in lockstep with each other.

It is on this note—a note of urgency and solidarity—that I formally welcome you to the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network’s 6<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum.

I look forward to insightful sessions with you. Thank you.