

CCC-GIZ Planning Workshop

Message of Usec. Emmanuel de Guzman for CCC-GIZ

Novotel, Cubao
November 12, 2015

1. Thank you, Germany.

I am pleased to open this CCC-GIZ Strategic Planning Workshop that paves the way for an effective and meaningful implementation of critical bilateral projects with the German Government for climate resilience.

At the outset, I wish to thank Dr. Bernd-Markus Liss of GIZ, who I met just before I left for the Bonn climate talks a few weeks ago. He impressed me with a comprehensive briefing of the bilateral initiatives between our two countries through the decades until these initiatives that we plan for today.

Indeed, the German Government has been a long-time partner in our country's sustainable development pursuits. For the continuous support and cooperation of the German Government, as exemplified by the five new projects that ought to strengthen our country's climate risk governance, I wish to convey, on behalf of all stakeholders present here today, our most profound gratitude to Germany. In particular, I wish to thank Minister Goresen, whom we met with in the margins of the recent Bonn climate talks, for making this sustained cooperation happen.

2. Climate and disaster risks prevail.

The growing prevalence of climate and disaster risks throughout the country is a problem that the Philippine-German cooperation on climate change could address effectively as we endeavor to preserve our development gains and to pursue sustainable development.

Time is fleeting and our environment is fast changing. The Philippine Government has been unrelenting in investing its resources for a meaningful and enduring improvement in the life and well being of the Filipino people.

Although our country has made significant headway in its socio-economic development pursuits, by and large our people remain vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. In the 2013 Climate Risk Index, the Philippines ranked first among ten most affected countries. In this year's Climate Change Vulnerability Index of Maplecroft, the Philippines ranked 8th among 32 countries extremely at risk of climate change impacts.

We continue to experience significant losses to disasters mostly triggered by hydrometeorological hazards. In the year 2013 when Supertyphoon Haiyan struck us, we topped the roster of countries most affected by disasters in terms of human lives lost, with a total annual death toll of 8,382, and similarly in terms of annual economic loss as a percentage of GDP, recorded at 5%, or about 12.4 billion US dollars in disaster losses.

With these discouraging realities and the many recurring and lingering images of the tragic impacts of extreme weather events in our communities, the Philippines, in the eyes of the world, has inevitably become the face of climate vulnerability, and Manila as a most fitting starting point for mobilizing global climate action on the road to Paris COP21 and beyond.

3. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

As our cities become more complex and densely populated with rapid urbanization, as our rural livelihoods remain vulnerable to weather extremes and variability, and as our ecosystems continue to decline, reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change have become priority development strategies for building the country's resilience. The passage of landmark legislation on disaster and climate risk management - the Climate Change Act of 2009, as amended by the People's Survival Fund of 2012, and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 -- has institutionalized and mainstreamed disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in development policies, plans and programs, as well as in public funding.

Given these laws, which the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction considers legislation exemplars, together with many other laws that promote the protection of the environment, the country has as strong policy framework for risk governance. However, the full implementation of these laws entails at all levels a strong political will, cooperation and coordination among agencies and stakeholders concerned, resources as well as resourcefulness.

4. The post-2015 era of development challenges and goals

As today's workshop details the five new projects, it is important to articulate their links and contributions to the implementation of our laws and our national policy frameworks and plans on climate and disaster risk reduction, particularly our National Climate Change Action Plan and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan.

Moreover, we must all be mindful that we are embarking on a post-2015 era of development pursuits. As you know, the Philippines is committed to implementing three post-2015 international development frameworks, i.e. the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda or Sustainable Development, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement that we look forward to next month. In this regard, the new GIZ-supported projects, and all other CCC projects, should effectively articulate how they link

with these frameworks and how they would contribute to achieving their goals and targets.

5. Convergence of action on reducing climate and disaster risk

Given the post-2015 development challenges and frameworks for action, the CCC, starting next year, will endeavor to facilitate the convergence of government action on strengthening the understanding of climate and disaster risk, especially at the local level. This shall entail the consolidation of all learning, methodologies, and tools, including for risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis, acquired through special projects and their promulgation to benefit more local government units and village communities. Through convergence, sharing of knowhow, and developing competencies at the local level, we shall ensure a holistic, science-and-risk-based local development planning, especially for the development of local climate change action plans, local disaster risk reduction and management plans, comprehensive land use plans, and comprehensive development plans, and facilitate a bottom-up development planning with high resolution local risk profiles and priority interventions and investments as solid bases.

6. COP21 and beyond

Finally, I am pleased to note that the projects will also address capacity building for the pursuit of our INDC commitment for mitigation, climate risk financing, and renewable energy planning. This will strengthen the Philippines pre-2020 action relative to the post-2020 ambition of capping global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius, and even to overachieve it with a 1.5 degrees Celsius target. The Philippines has been doing its part in contributing to pre-2020 action through our 2008 Renewable Energy law and our new Green Building Code adopted early this year. The projects should also find their links to implementing these and other relevant laws.

The Philippines has been doing its part to help generate ideas for mobilizing post-2020 climate finance. As head of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), the country established the Vulnerable 20 Group of Finance Ministers in Lima on 08 Oct. The finance ministers discussed the idea of a Climate Risk Pooling Scheme for those suffering from climate impacts. The idea of a financial transaction tax was also discussed. The Philippines will continue to constructively help in contributing ideas to mobilize climate finance.

In a few weeks, the Philippines joins the community of nations in forging a historic climate agreement in Paris, an agreement that is ambitious, that is based on robust science, that has the right architecture to allow all to achieve our shared objective, that provides direction to a low carbon, climate-resilient global economy, and that will support the climate adaptation efforts of the poorest and most vulnerable countries. But much remains to be done. We are all challenged to do more, to do better and to sustain our development gains. We cannot fail this time around. To succeed is the only option. We must succeed for the sake of my children, of your children, and for future generations.

Thank you for your kind attention.