

*Remarks
Recognition Ceremony
2nd Bayanihan sa Daan
Kalayaan Hall, Malacanan
8:30 AM, January 29, 2016*

Traffic Jams in Metro Manila Creating More Pollution and Health Problems

By Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman
Vice Chair, Climate Change Commission

Good morning to all. Thank you for braving the traffic to be with us today just to discuss our horrible traffic conditions.

According to a global GPS-based survey, Metro Manila has the "worst traffic on Earth." On a city level, Metro Manila ranks No. 1 with the worst traffic conditions in the world. Closely following our capital city is Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Sao Paulo also in Brazil, and Jakarta in Indonesia.

Recently, a senior advisor of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, warned that if roads and other infrastructure are not upgraded soon, Metro Manila is at risk of becoming uninhabitable or unlivable with the number of cars rapidly increasing every year. By 2020, four years from now, there will be an additional 500,000 vehicles on the road. By 2030, transportation will also account for about approximately two-thirds (61.5%) of the country's total oil demand, which will come mostly from land transport.

The problem is that Metro Manila roads will not expand fast enough to accommodate these additional half a million vehicles. This has a significant impact on our economic productivity. Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan believes that time lost by people stuck in metro traffic and the extra cost of operating vehicles in gridlock amounts to 3 billion pesos a day, and that is a conservative estimate. On an annual basis, this cost translates into 0.8 percent of the Philippine gross domestic product.

The concern of the Climate Change Commission is the growing and harmful air pollution caused by our road traffic. Transportation is a significant emitter of greenhouse gases. A sixth of total country (non-forestry) emissions can be attributed to transportation, the second largest GHG contributor next to electricity generation.

Some 80% to 95% of air pollution in Metro Manila comes from vehicles, particularly jeepneys, buses and commercial vehicles that use diesel. The pollution is mostly Black Carbon. Black Carbon or black soot is formed by the incomplete combustion of diesel of public utility vehicles which produce some 22,000 metric tons of black soot emissions per year. The World Bank has estimated 5,000 annual premature deaths or 12 percent of all deaths in Metro Manila, the highest of any region in the Philippines, due primarily to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases from exposure to harmful air pollution.

There is clearly a need to mitigate both road congestion and transport sector emissions—after all, they are interrelated. Bayanihan sa Daan’s campaign to restore sanity on our roads therefore deserves the support of every sector in Metro Manila. And today’s recognition ceremony is important because it encourages people and institutions to ease or solve our distressing traffic quandary.

Maraming, maraming salamat po for helping the Climate Change Commission with your Bayanihan sa Daan campaign.

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