

REMARKS

Adaptation Project Launching

Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project

*Century Park Hotel * March 1, 2016*

Mainstreaming Climate Adaptation Practices In Community Plans and Practices

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

As we all recognize, our country has one of the highest exposures to natural hazards in the world. And as we also know, global climate change is intensifying and expanding the natural hazards that Filipinos face, especially those who live in coastal and rural regions.

These natural hazards, combined with the growing impacts of climate change, deeply affect the livelihood, health, and food security of our people. Several times a year, local authorities are tormented by their lack of capacity to deal with floods, waste pollution, land degradation, deforestation, typhoons and droughts.

Drought will be our major concern in the weeks ahead. According to PAGASA and international weather bureaus, the 2015-2016 El Niño may be worse than the 1997-1998 phenomenon. Acting on this forecast, President Benigno Aquino III has already approved a P19 billion budget to combat the effects of El Niño, which may last until May 2016.

The impact on our agricultural sector will be devastating. A severe El Niño can easily destroy as much as P20 billion worth of crops until this coming May. This is excluding huge losses in the transportation and marketing of these crops and excluding, further, the losses in the power sector since dams and hydropower plants cannot operate during a long dry spell.

From this perspective alone, we can see the tremendous value and importance of the Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project that we are launching today. The pillars behind PhilCCAP are the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and we thank them profoundly for their support.

Everyone is familiar with the World Bank since it has been around for the last 71 years. GEF, in contrast, was founded only in 1991 or 25 years ago, just before the environment became an explosive global issue. What I want to stress here is that GEF has been helping China

address that country's environmental problems with some degree of success. There is, therefore, no reason to doubt that PhilCCAP will be another success story in the annals of GEF since the Philippines is a tiny country compared to China.

PhilCCAP will focus on developing practical examples and methodologies that demonstrate the benefits of mainstreaming climate change adaptation in the plans and practices of local government units. This will enable communities to adjust and adapt to the potential impacts of climate variability and change.

More specifically, this project is targeting highly vulnerable communities in three regions, concentrating on cost-effective adaptation strategies in our agriculture and natural resources sectors. Through these strategies, local governments and communities can improve the quality of life of citizens and contribute to protecting the environment.

The role of our Commission is to help strengthen the Philippines' institutional framework for climate change adaptation. We will do so by undertaking a "Community of Practice" program – the information, education and communications component of PhilCAPP.

I am certain that the outcomes of PhilCCAP are not in doubt. So let me take this opportunity to invite the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility to launch another important project. The project I propose is solving the traffic problem in Metro Manila. The traffic problem is not only costing P2.5 billion in wasteful daily fuel consumption; it is also undermining our economic productivity and inflicting serious health problems on our population.

While you ponder this challenge, the Climate Change Commission and the collaborating government agencies in PhilCCAP thank you again for this worthy and far-reaching project.

Thank you and good day.

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