

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

CCC-UNISDR-French Embassy-NEDA-
DOTC-DOE-NEDA-DENR
Stakeholders Consultation on NDC
Ateneo de Davao, Davao City
March 11, 2016, 9:15am – 9:30am

MOVING FORWARD ON PHILIPPINE COMMITMENTS TO THE PARIS ACCORD

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

Rev. Fr. Joel E. Tabora, Distinguished Representatives of the Sponsor Organizations, Local Chief Executives, Co-Workers in Government & Civil Society, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to conduct this stakeholders consultation on the campus of this university, one of the great institutions of learning in our country and Asia.

This university's motto of *Fortes In Fide* -- meaning "Strong in Faith" -- expresses our wilful purpose here today. We are here, strong in our faith, to promote a better understanding of the Paris Climate Agreement. And we are here, strong in our faith that we can move our country towards the Philippine goals set in that universal agreement.

We are grateful to the UNDP, UNISDR, and the French Embassy for supporting this consultation and workshop. Through our deliberations today, we have an opportunity to help put our country on a sustainable path by clearly defining our nationally determined contributions (NDCs). We hope to build consensus on the critical issues we face. And we hope to make some important decisions that will shape our NDC roadmap.

In shaping our roadmap, we must keep two factors in mind. One is that our roadmap must be able to attract the approval and support of the sectors where the impacts of the NDC will be greatest. The impacts and carbon emission reductions will primarily be in the sectors of energy, transport, waste, forestry, and industry.

The second factor is that the roadmap we are creating must find acceptance and support by the new political leadership that will assume office in

July this year, a brief three months away. We must be able to sell this roadmap to the incoming leaders on the local and national levels. We must be able to persuade the newly-elected President and members of Congress that our roadmap and its desired outcomes are not only ambitious, equitable and transparent; they are also in keeping with Philippine commitments in the Paris Agreement.

So as we proceed to do our tasks, we should also be mindful of criticisms that have been levelled at our Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. If we wish to collaborate effectively in forming a more effective and attainable NDC, we must accept honest criticisms and learn from them. That should be our policy.

In October last year the Climate Action Tracker (or CAT for short), an independent scientific international organization, assessed the Philippine INDC. The findings of Climate Action Tracker are supported and co-produced by four highly reputable groups -- Climate Analytics, Ecofys, NewClimate Institute, and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

The conclusion of CAT was that the Philippine climate commitments deserved only a “medium” rating. A medium rating is between “Inadequate” and “Sufficient.”

Why a medium rating for the Philippine INDC? According to the assessment of CAT, the “Philippines’ climate commitments are at the least ambitious end of what would be a fair contribution. This means [that the Philippine INDC] is not consistent with limiting warming to below 2 degree Centigrade unless other countries make much deeper reductions and comparably greater effort.”

Now let us be of good cheer and let us take this criticism in stride. I believe it will be worthwhile for this workshop to design our roadmap and define our outputs in accordance with five basic points advocated by the Climate Action Tracker. These five points focus on:

- Government climate action pledged to the UNFCCC (for example INDCs and other commitments).
- Policies of government actually implemented to meet its commitments.
- Whether a government is doing its “fair share” compared with others.

- Comparison to emission reduction potential based on a literature review.
- And comparison of national and sectoral decarbonisation indicators.

There is another point that we should focus on. In order to strengthen convergence among local stakeholders for an effective NDC strategy, we should strive to integrate disaster risk reduction as a key component of adaptation.

There has always been a fundamental link between DRR and CCA. In fact, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) advocates for a synergy between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. UNISDR regards DRR and CCA as essential elements of climate risk management and sustainable development.

What I want to stress is that our NDC roadmap must also address the interlinked challenges of disaster risk, sustainable development and climate change as a core priority. Some 90% of recorded major disasters caused by natural hazards from 1995 to 2015 were linked to climate and weather anomalies including floods, storms, heatwaves and droughts. During this 20-year span, the five countries hit by the highest number of disasters were the United States (472), China (441), India (288), Philippines (274), and Indonesia, (163).

Finally, our NDC roadmap should be able to pass the scrutiny of our peers in the Executive Branch and in Congress. We should strive to secure the widest possible support of the Senate and House committees on climate change and environment simply because the principal aspects of our NDC strategy will need strong and visionary legislative support.

The key to unleashing potential investments needed for energy infrastructure development may lie in legislating carbon pricing. Should we impose a higher level of taxation on coal to discourage coal dependency in our energy sector? What tax, financial and corporate incentives should we provide to encourage the rapid development of our clean energy sources? What economic mechanisms can we promote to leverage investments in alternative energy? Should we advocate amendment of the the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 so that the power industry will be re-aligned with the goals of the Philippine NDC?

These are questions we must study as we craft our NDC roadmap. In this national effort, the roles of our local government units and local communities are indispensable. Our LGUs are not only implementers of plans and policies. They are responsible for translating national action plans and for ultimately implementing them. Thus, in the final analysis, LGUs are catalysts of change that interlink global goals to local communities.

It has been estimated by the United Nations Development Programme that over 70% of disaster risk reduction measures are undertaken by local communities. And up to 90% of climate change adaptation measures are undertaken by provincial and municipal governments.

Today therefore, in the City of Davao and in your presence, let us declare to our nation and to the international community that we are beginning a nationwide consultation process that will gradually result in a rational and orderly shift towards a low-carbon economy, towards intergenerational equity and social justice, and towards sustainable development.

Let me close by quoting the dramatic statement of Leonardo DiCaprio when he won his first Oscar award last week. The actor DiCaprio focused a brilliant spotlight on climate change when he received the award, and I want to echo his passionate sentiments with the same powerful conviction:

“Climate change is real, it is happening right now. It is the most urgent threat facing our entire species, and we need to work collectively together and stop procrastinating. We need to support leaders around the world who do not speak for the big polluters, but who speak for all of humanity, for the indigenous people of the world, for the billions and billions of underprivileged people out there who would be most affected by this. For our children’s children and for those people out there whose voices have been drowned out by the politics of greed. .. Let us not take this planet for granted.”

To all I say again: *Fortes In Fide*. Let us be strong in our faith.

Thank you and Mabuhay. # #