

**Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman
Climate Change Commission**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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Architect Edgar Reformado, Founding Chairman of Green Architecture Advocacy Philippines (Green AP), Architect Miguel Guerrero, Incumbent Chairman of the Green Architecture Green AP, Incorporated; distinguished guests; resource speakers; fellow advocates of climate action and greening; ladies; and gentlemen: A pleasant morning to you all.

Allow me first to extend my sincerest appreciation to the Green AP for having me as keynote speaker. I am not an architect, so I am humbled by this opportunity to address the profession today to call for solidarity on urgent climate actions for the nation and for the world.

I am personally impressed with Green AP and your leaders. I firmly believe together we can make a significant difference to the country.

Climate context and scenario

All of us here have been witness to how climate change has drastically affected and will continue to affect the lives of people and nations. You have probably seen the recent flood disaster in Houston, Texas brought about by Hurricane Harvey. Climate change impact is worse for climate-vulnerable countries, like ours. We have undergone cycles of destruction and reconstruction in the past, which has stalled our economic growth.

As an archipelagic country situated along the typhoon belt, the Philippines is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Every year, we are ravaged by an average of 20 typhoons, the intensity of which has increased. In recent years.

Typhoon Yolanda alone in 2013 inflicted more than P89 billion pesos worth of damages to public and private infrastructure and lands. But the most critical aspect that the supertyphoon had affected is the very life of our nation—our people. It claimed 6,300 lives, left 28,688 injured and 1,062 missing, and displaced 3.4 million families away from their home.

Sea level rise, which worsen storm surges and floods, is also a major threat to our country, where the rise is three times higher than the global average level. This puts at risk 60% of our LGUs covering 64 coastal provinces, 822 coastal municipalities, 25 major coastal cities, and an estimate of 13.6 million Filipinos that would need relocation.

Moreover, just last year, our country experienced one of the most severe droughts ever recorded. Because of this, about 6,000 affected farmers held a protest in Kidapawan, North Cotabato to demand flood assistance from the government. What a tragic irony: our own farmers—those who are supposed to produce for us—are the ones seeking food aid.

These are just some examples of how climate change has affected the lives and livelihoods of our people. Extreme weather events, magnified by climate change, have become the new norm and will continue to wreck havoc in our country.

However, it is worthy to note that these extreme weather events have occurred when the global temperature was below one-degree Celsius. If we do not limit global warming and remain complacent or content with the business as usual, the world's temperature would increase to 4 to 6 degrees.

A problem as massive as this would require all the help we would need. Through convergence, we can break the cycle of destruction and reconstruction by enhancing the resilience of our communities in order to mitigate further loss and damage.

It is in this context that I address all of you here today: Addressing climate change is not solely the government's responsibility anymore. It is now everyone's business.

Post-2015 global frameworks

In 2015, the Philippines found common ground as we took part in three major international agreements that set the overarching direction in mainstreaming efforts on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction.

These are the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

In the international arena, we have been regarded as the voice of the climate vulnerable. Our unwavering Filipino spirit through numerous disasters that come our way has inspired the world to pursue greater climate action.

With this voice, we have led the Climate Vulnerable Forum—an international alliance of countries highly vulnerable to a warming planet. This same group created the Vulnerable Twenty or V20, consisting of Finance Ministers from member states of the CVF, which aims primarily “to act collectively and decisively to promote the mobilization of public and private climate finance from wide-ranging sources.”

Together with the member-countries of the CVF and V20 that sought for climate justice, we have triumphed over giants as we successfully championed the 1.5-degree climate goal in the Paris Agreement.

We have already made our mark in international negotiations as we held accountable the developed countries for contributing the most to global warming and called for greater responsibility in providing technical and financial support to developing countries. For us, the climate-vulnerable, this is climate justice.

The Great Transformation Challenge

Progress towards our climate goal is contingent upon the implementation of the countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which identify mitigation actions and adaptation priorities that countries commit to undertake.

With the Philippines' accession to the Paris Agreement, the Climate Change Commission is taking the lead in facilitating a bottom-up approach to develop our own NDCs.

Our NDCs will serve as our roadmap on how intend to transition towards a green economy. It will provide convergence points where the government, private sector, academe, development partners, CSOs, and other stakeholders could collaborate in implementing green initiatives in all our sectors.

More importantly, our NDCs will provide a menu of climate change projects and programs that anyone could invest or undertake.

CCC programs and ways forward

Adhering to the principles of the Paris Agreement—especially on limiting global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to attain climate justice—complements our efforts here in our country. We have already enacted landmark laws that set our direction towards a climate-resilient Philippines, but more work needs to be done.

The updating of the National Climate Change Action Plan or NCCAP, which was crafted pursuant to Republic Act No. 9729 or the Climate Change Act of 2009 in order to mainstream climate change projects and programs in national and local policies, is underway.

We are also targeting to accomplish the formulation of Local Climate Change Action Plans by all of our local government units before the end of the year. We are in partnership with state universities and colleges to provide technical advisory services to LGUs to aid them in preparing their LCCAPs.

MOUs with SUCs

For this year, the CCC has forged and strengthened partnerships with the academe and other government agencies in helping local government officials and planners better understand climate and disaster risks in order to formulate more appropriate plans of action in addressing climate change within their communities.

Through a series of coaches' training, we unveil various processes in preparing and enhancing local climate change and disaster action plans. As envisaged, it will demonstrate skills in applying the Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment (CDRA) as support to local climate change action planning and recognize the concept of mitigation as a function of adaptation and co-benefitting adaptation investments through local low-emission development strategies.

These trainings are supported by formal agreements between the CCC and 39 SUCs to provide technical services to all 1,710 LGUs, including provincial governments, throughout the country. We have also forged a MOA with DILG-LGA at the launch of this Coaches' Training series.

These trainings are actually part of the second wave of the CCC's flagship program called Communities for Resilience (CORE) Initiative that we launched together with key national government agencies and development partners in March 2016 in Davao City.

In equipping our faculties in SUCs with a set of standard teaching modules on basic analytical and planning tools and modules, we help ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching local officials on risk-and-science-based local development planning.

Through the CCC's National Panel of Technical Experts, in collaboration with SUCs and other partners in the academe, we are now finalizing the first set of CORE modules, which will equip LGU planners with the standard analytical tools for risk-and-science-based local development planning.

The next set to be developed, together with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and Office of the Civil Defense, is comprised of guidance modules for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation in policy, plans, and program, while promoting early recovery planning.

We are also arranging that these training modules provided to LGUs would come with the academic certification and university credits.

GHG inventory trainings

The CCC is also conducting trainings on GHG Emission Inventory, which enhances the knowledge and capacities of our local government units to gather, manage, and quantify GHG data and information in their respective communities.

Just yesterday, the Information Matters Project, an initiative in partnership with the German Government, turned over knowledge products that will aid our country, primarily in the measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) of carbon emissions.

These products will aid us in enhancing the knowledge and capacity of our local government units, especially in understanding climate risks and in conducting greenhouse gases inventory trainings.

These knowledge products also came at an opportune time now that we are ramping up efforts to transition our nation towards a green economy. These materials will be instrumental as the CCC takes the lead in finalizing our Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs, as part of our commitment to the Paris Agreement.

Other green initiatives

Moreover, the CCC, along with concerned government agencies, is establishing an accreditation system to develop green standards and incentivize businesses that support green jobs and just transition, pursuant to the Green Jobs Act of 2016.

Together with the Office of Senator Loren Legarda, we are also starting to venture into green banking and financing through our financial institutions. We believe that there should be more avenues where climate finance could be accessed or initiated by just about anyone. We see that our public and private banks could be our instruments to catalyze this much-needed green growth.

Climate action is in line with our development pursuits. The reshaping of the country's development path and economy in the years to come unlocks opportunities for the private sector to innovate, invest in new technologies, and compete. Climate action will drive innovation, create new and greener job opportunities, and grow our economy even more.

Transition to green economy

Through these initiatives, we also open more avenues with which the private sector could be engaged or take the lead in. For us to be effective in our commitment towards this transition of our sectors, the shift from a business-as-usual perspective to a green economy mindset is crucial.

We need to understand that we are pursuing climate action not only because it is good for our environment, but also because it makes economic sense. We need to create an environment where we can show to the private sector that businesses can thrive in a green economy.

Climate change in the urban context

In the next 20 years, we estimate that nearly 60% of the population would be living in urban areas in the Philippines.

There is indeed an immense challenge not just for our government officials, but also for our private sector leaders to prepare this early on. Climate change impacts in the urban context calls for a different but also greater and more ambitious climate action.

With the rise of informal settlements, we expect surges of diseases among Filipinos living in areas without adequate waste and water management. This will affect our water supply, which would also provide further health risks to our fellow Filipinos.

Extreme heat in our workplaces will also be an issue. We expect losses of productivity and losses of lives because of heat strokes and dehydration in our environment.

Moreover, without proper sustainable urban planning and design on our buildings and other infrastructure, we subject our country, yet again, to the cycle of destruction and reconstruction whenever storms, typhoons, and floods hit us.

Ladies and gentlemen, now more than ever, our country needs your skills and expertise in the field of architecture and construction design in order to address the inevitable impacts of climate change. Let us remain steadfast in our commitment to provide sustainable and climate-resilient living conditions for our people.

MOU on the NAMA roadmap

Last August, the CCC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Housing Authority and the Philippine Green Building Council to address the impacts of climate change, through the development of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions or NAMAs for our building sector.

We manifest, through this MOU, the importance of convergence in mainstreaming climate change policies, especially for our building sector, which has an oversized environmental footprint.

It is estimated that more than 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to buildings, and these emissions could double by 2050 if we carry on with business-as-usual.

We are hopeful that the social housing and the building sector could be transformed through the NAMA roadmap, which pursues mitigation actions co-benefiting adaptation through local low-emission development strategies.

Convergence in linking science, policy, and practice

Our approach has always been to link science, policy, and practice in addressing climate change. We have always recognized the critical role of the academic community.

By law, we are mandated to lead and facilitate policy development and mainstreaming efforts on climate change adaptation and mitigation by our government and other key sectors. And we could only carry out this mandate through an effective multi-stakeholder convergence and a whole-of-society approach.

Partnership with the Green AP

It is with fervent hope that our gathering today reaffirms the partnership between Green AP and the CCC. As we transition our nation towards a green economy, I hope that the CCC can count on the strength of Green AP, especially for our local government units, by providing climate-resilient building and houses designs for our communities most at risk to climate change.

The Wave: Tacloban Climate Resilience Center

As I close, allow me to share a video on the Philippine Center for Climate Resilience with its Wave Plaza that will soon rise in Tacloban City.

The Wave will serve as the center for our climate change advocacy, which will include the hosting of capacity-building trainings and other activities for climate change projects and programs.

Two weeks ago, we led the groundbreaking ceremony for The Wave, together with the Philippine Haiyan Advocacy Cooperative, national and local government officials, and of course, the Green Architects of the Philippines, which designed this iconic facility a symbol of the Filipino spirit resilient and inspiring hope.

It is meaningful convergences, such as this one, that I hope the CCC and Green AP could prove and sustain to advance our common climate change cause and advocacy.

To all the architects, officials, and members of Green AP, may we all heed the call for greater resolve and more ambitious climate action, and altogether usher the Filipino nation towards sustainable development and a green, low-carbon, and climate-resilient future.

Thank you very much.