



Intervention of

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Secretary, Climate Change Commission

Midterm Review Plenary 3: Rethinking Sustainable Development: Investing with Strategic Foresight to Build Resilience

27 May 2022

Excellencies: Thank you for giving the Philippines an opportunity to share our insights on sustainable development.

Now is the time to assess and reassess sustainable development, our commitment to them and our individual and collective strategies on how these can be achieved.

We do so in the context of climate change.

The IPCC raised code red for humanity – climate change is real. And it is happening now.

The Glasgow Pact calls us to act more urgently. But in terms of actions, where exactly do we stand right now?

Excellencies: The Philippines experience is an ongoing tale of commitment compounded by the challenges of climate change.

When the Duterte Administration began in 2016, the directive was simple and fundamental: achieve “a comfortable life” for our people.

To achieve the SDGs, the Philippines established institutional arrangements to mobilize and ensure adequate domestic and international resources for SDG programs.

We put in place a system to track progress through the SDG Watch.

We also invested heavily in climate change action. We scaled up national budget for climate change programs, activities and projects.

In fact in 2019, our National Economic Development Authority stated that the Philippines was on track to achieve all SDGS by 2030. The Philippines was also on track to becoming an Upper Middle Income economy by 2023.

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But the COVID-19 pandemic happened. And the series of severe typhoons cast an additional strain to our finite resources.

Yet we remain unfazed. We are working hard. And indications are our economy is showing clear signs of growth. The OECD projects the Philippines to post the highest growth rate in Southeast Asia.

But the problem remains: COVID-19, climate change – and now armed conflict beyond the region – have become triple threats.

The fact is that the Philippines contributes less than 0.5% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions, we suffer the most from the impacts of climate change.

This is a tale that's repeated in many developing countries. This story cannot be repeated. And we need to find a better ending, or maybe a better restart for all.

Excellencies: To do this, we must accelerate the momentum in the race against climate emergency. And give it clear direction.

We need to ensure that in a changing climate, the environment is revived, economies thrive, and humans more than just survive.

Resilience is relational. For us to survive and thrive in this era of uncertainties we need to act beyond our silos. We need better coordination and cooperation.

At the core of climate change governance is climate justice– let us address the needs of the people and ensure that no one is left behind.

We must rethink our paradigm and focus firmly for the present and the future.

More than build back better, the Philippines proposes that, we ***Build Right at First Sight***.

We have, after all, learned so many lessons in the past which are instructive and can help us minimize if not avoid disasters.

To Build Right at First Sight, we need to work smart, we need to have resources, and we need to anchor our policies and programs on climate science.

To this end, the Philippines proposes the following:

- Strengthen framework for cooperation and capacity building up to the smallest unit of governance;
- Build capacities that are country-driven and specific, up to the smallest villages, and,

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- Intensify cooperation in and transfer of the science of Disaster Risk Reduction - Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA).

The international community needs to do this together. We cannot do it alone.

Our call - unlock climate finance now.

The clock is ticking. The future of the current and the next generations are at stake. We need to be pragmatic, practical and progressive.

This GP 2022 is a beacon to transform our societies and save our only home-for humanity's sustainable development.

We ask the hard questions. It is our responsibility to come up with solutions. And most importantly, implement them.

We are facing the most existential of threats. We should not allow these threats to define humanity and its collective leadership as one of inaction. Let us act together now.

Thank you. **END**