



Office of the President of the Philippines
CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION



COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2018 - _____

**RESOLUTION CREATING THE BLUE CARBON STEERING COMMITTEE (BCSC)
AND THE BLUE CARBON TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (BCTWG) OF THE
PHILIPPINES**

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9729, as amended, created the Climate Change Commission (CCC) as the lead policy-making body of the State tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate its programs and action plans relating to climate change;

WHEREAS, the Philippines, as a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is committed to working in cooperation with the global community in the resolution of climate change and environmental issues;

WHEREAS, in acceding to the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, the Philippines aims to adopt measures towards achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention for the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere that would prevent dangerous effects on humans and the environment and committing to undertake timely mitigation actions towards the transformation to an inclusive and sustainable climate smart economy;

WHEREAS, the Philippines has also adopted the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as development frameworks for achieving a balance between economic growth and environmental protection, with the end view of addressing the impacts of disasters and climate change;

WHEREAS, coastal ecosystems of mangroves, tidal marshes, and seagrass meadows provide numerous benefits and services essential for climate change adaptation, including protection from storms and sea level rise, prevention of shoreline erosion, regulation of coastal water quality, provision of habitat for commercially important fisheries and endangered marine species, and food security for many coastal communities apart from being important to climate change mitigation strategies as carbon sinks that sequester carbon from the atmosphere and store them aboveground in the biomass of plants (tree trunks, stems and leaves), below ground in the plant biomass (root systems and rhizomes), and in the carbon-rich organic soils typical to these ecosystems for long periods of time;

WHEREAS, the International Blue Carbon Initiative cites scientific estimates that 340,000 to 980,000 hectares of these ecosystems are being destroyed worldwide each year, that up to 67% of mangroves, at least 35% of tidal marshes, and 29% of seagrass meadows respectively have been lost, and if these trends continue at current rates, a further 30–40% of tidal marshes and seagrasses and nearly all unprotected mangroves could be lost in the next 100 years;

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[Handwritten signatures and initials]

WHEREAS, the International Blue Carbon Initiative, a "coordinated, global program focused on mitigating climate change through the conservation and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems", uses established techniques to quantify the mitigation potential of coastal blue carbon ecosystems to inform national and international mitigation policies and measures of the knowledge gaps in the following areas:

- a) Geographical extent – Unsurveyed large areas of seagrass meadows in Southeast Asia, eastern and western South America and the west coast of Africa, and global tidal marsh and undocumented rates of tidal marsh and seagrass meadow loss;
- b) Sequestration and storage – Limited scientific data on the carbon sequestration and storage rates of coastal blue carbon ecosystems in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia;
- c) Emissions – Additional mapping of converted, disturbed, and degraded coastal blue carbon ecosystems and the associated CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere or ocean;
- d) Human drivers – CO₂ Emission rates associated with specific causes of loss or degradation (e.g., wetland drainage for aquaculture, burning, harvesting or clearing of vegetation at different intensity levels), especially for seagrasses; and
- e) Coastal Erosion – The fate of coastal blue carbon that may enter the ocean-atmosphere system, directly contributing to climate change, be it deposited in offshore sediments or sequestered, or carried offshore by waves and currents;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a member of the International Blue Carbon Scientific Working Group which provides the scientific foundation for the Blue Carbon Initiative through robust research on coastal conservation, management and assessment of the blue carbon ecosystems;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a member of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF), a multilateral partnership among six (6) Coral Triangle countries along with Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, whose goal is to sustain extraordinary marine and coastal resources by addressing crucial issues such as food security, climate change and marine biodiversity;

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WHEREAS, the members of the CTI-CFF committed to implement a Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) with five goals namely: (1) designation of effectively managed seascapes; (2) application of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management; (3) establishment of a fully functional marine protected area system; (4) strengthening climate change adaptation and resilience; and (5) improving the status of threatened marine species;

WHEREAS, in its 12th Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), the CTI-CFF identified Blue Carbon as priority action for Goal 4;

WHEREAS, sea level rise (SLR) caused by the melting of glacier ice and thermal expansion due to climate change poses a serious threat to the 36,289 km. Philippine coastline, especially the low-lying coastal zones where 60% of the Philippine population live, in the country's busiest commercial hub, Manila, and 10 of the largest cities;

WHEREAS, the Philippines has an estimate of 310,593 hectares of mangrove and 27,282 hectares of seagrass areas;

WHEREAS, the Philippines intends to harness the adaptation and mitigation potential of the Blue Carbon, which could be included in the subsequent submission of the Nationally Determined Contribution;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Philippines Blue Carbon Steering Committee (BCSC) is hereby created with the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) as Chair, the Climate Change Office of the Climate Change Commission (CCO-CCC) as Vice-Chair and Secretariat, and the Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and attached agencies of the DENR, namely the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB), Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) and Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB) as committee members, with the primary mandate of developing and setting policies and directions, programs and projects, and ensuring support for the implementation and adequate and timely delivery of committed outputs to the identified beneficiaries of the National Blue Carbon Initiative.

RESOLVED Further, that the Philippines' Blue Carbon Technical Working Group (BCTWG) is hereby created to undertake and promote research on Blue Carbon in the Philippines, provide technical assistance and advice to the BCSC and Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM) in the development and implementation of the National Blue Carbon Initiative. The BCTWG shall consist of coastal and marine experts representing relevant national government agencies,

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civil society organizations, academic institutions, and private sector representatives to be identified and designated by the BCSC.

Signed this ___ day of _____, Quezon City, Philippines.


RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
Chairperson and President of the Republic of the Philippines



EMMANUEL M. DE GUZMAN
Vice Chairperson



NOEL ANTONIO V. GAERLAN
Commissioner



RACHEL ANNE S. HERRERA
Commissioner

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