

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT AT THE 3RD UN WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (3WCDRR)



OPENING PLENARY OF THE 3RD WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION SENDAI, JAPAN, MARCH 2015

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning!

We, the Philippine delegation, would like to extend our gratitude to the people and Government of Japan and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and its partners for organizing this Conference. We also come to express our solidarity with the nation of Japan, as we honor the memory of those who perished in the Great East Japan earthquake in March 2011.

This year, 2015, stands at a critical juncture for the global community as we take action on and advance the inter-related Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Sustainable Development and Climate Change agendas in Sendai, New York and Paris. Philippines' Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) capacities and capabilities are constantly put to test due to our geographic location and natural attributes, making us highly vulnerable to natural as well as human-induced hazards. The Philippines is grateful for the outpouring of international assistance in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yolanda (I.N. Haiyan), one of the strongest tropical cyclone in recorded history, for response as well as for our efforts to "Build Back Better" – as we build a more resilient nation.

The Philippines is privileged to share its experiences and successes on DRRM with you here in Sendai, and to meaningfully contribute to a robust and dynamic Post 2015 Framework for Action which will serve as our DRR manifesto in the coming years. The cornerstone of the Philippine DRRM efforts is effective legislation. The passage and implementation of the landmark DRRM Act of 2010, serves as the country's overall guiding policy and framework for DRR. It transformed the Philippine disaster management system from a focus on disaster response towards a more wholistic

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management approach. The Act called for the establishment of the National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Council (NDRRMC), coordinated by the Office of Civil Defense of our Defense Department. The inter-agency Council guides our DRRM efforts, on the national and local levels. This framework promotes a whole-of-society approach at all levels in achieving “Safer adaptive and resilient Filipino Communities towards sustainable development through four (4) interrelated thematic areas, namely, Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Rehabilitation and Recovery.

Realizing the importance of investing in risk reduction, we have improved the way we conduct risk assessment through implementation of various milestone programs and the institutionalization of the Pre-Disaster Risk Assessment-Actions, Protocols and Programs (PDRA-APP), a tool and a process that addresses the possible risks and impacts of impending hazards in a manner that is Hazard specific, Area focused, and Time bound. We developed new tools to increase our communities’ awareness and deliberate action for disaster preparedness and response.

We emphasize that our DRR efforts go hand-in-hand with our Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Development plans and programs. This year, the Philippines has the honor to serve as Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Our current Chairmanship of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) also affords us the opportunity to advance the mainstreaming of DRRM agenda with Economy and Business. The Post-Haiyan Tacloban Declaration adopted during the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) held in Manila last year affirms the importance of central role of governments in enhancing risk governance, transparency, responsibilities and accountabilities of all stakeholders. We also highlight the importance of recognizing migrants, women, persons with disability, and indigenous peoples as particularly vulnerable communities to disasters brought about by natural hazards.

At home, the NDRRMC works closely with the Philippine Climate Change Commission. As building resilience is a whole-of-society effort, we closely engage civil society and the private sector, and ensure the prioritization of resilience at all levels. We have integrated DRRM and Climate Change Adaptation in the entire education system and in the national and local planning processes. Among the priorities for resilience we have identified are ensuring adequate DRR finance and investment particularly for local levels of government, better use of risk transfer strategies such as insurance, harnessing of science, technology and innovation, and more resilient infrastructure and agriculture.

Leveraging our experiences and lessons learned from Typhoon Yolanda (I.N. Haiyan), we continue to improve on the gaps and challenges. During Typhoon Ruby (I.N. Hagupit) which hit us last year, our government has demonstrated significant

improvement in executing prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response measures. Our efforts were implemented with the enhanced cooperation of the government and the people. The government ensured that the enabling environment includes policies, structure, resources, and systems for DRRM are in place including early warning and logistics for disaster preparedness and response. The local and international community have lauded the Philippines for its commendable efforts including the preemptive evacuation of almost 800,000 individuals to safer grounds, pre-positioning of goods in twinned provinces outside Ruby's track, enabling quick response to the needs.

While much work has been accomplished, we recognize that there is still much to be done. We need to double our efforts for DRR, in tandem with our national and local development and climate change adaptation policies and programs. We need to complement DRR action with the rest of the DRRM spectrum, with a more robust system for disaster preparedness, and strategic, systematic and efficient recovery and rehabilitation of communities hit by disasters.

The country remains steadfast in its commitment to continue working for safer, sustainable, climate change-adaptive and disaster-resilient communities aimed toward building a stronger nation and world.

As we commit ourselves to addressing these enormous challenges, we, together with other countries in similar situations, need the support of the international community. In this regard, the Philippines calls on the international community to strengthen international cooperation and global partnership to assist developing countries, particularly those in vulnerable situations, the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked countries and African countries, by providing them with enhanced means of implementation, through the provision of finance, technology transfer and capacity building in order for them to achieve a culture of resilience in all aspects.

There are those in Philippine Delegation who have been recognized by the UNISDR as Champions for the Asia-Pacific, legislative, local government, business and other sectors. But the 3rd WCDRRR, and the people of Sendai, Japan are assured that the entirety of the Philippines, our 100 million voices, are all Champions of Disaster Risk Reduction.

Thank you and Mabuhay!