**THIRD SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

**Geneval, Switzerland**

**PLENARY SESSION: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**11 MAY 2011**

**Statement by**

**Honorable Corazon Juliano Soliman**

**Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development**

**PHILIPPINES**

*(Please Check Against Delivery)*

Chairperson,

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Philippine Government, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the UN ISDR for their continuous work in countries worldwide to help underline the importance of disaster risk reduction as well as for convening the Third Session of the Global Platform.
2. The Philippines, as a signatory to the Hyogo Framework for Action, the global blueprint and policy for disaster risk reduction, affirms its commitment by continuing to build resilience in individuals, families, communities, and institutions and ensuring that we can build back better from disasters. The Philippines continues to strive to address the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthen the country's institutions and capacities for disaster risk reduction and management, and build the resilience of its people, especially in these times of a changing climate.
3. From the time of the Second Session of the Global Platform, the Philippines have emerged from many natural disasters, including the catastrophic devastation wrought by Typhoon Ketsana and Parma in 2009. Such disasters may have set us back in terms of economic growth and development but have also further fortified our resolve that we need to continue our ongoing efforts and approach to disaster risk reduction and management--that is--holistic, comprehensive, proactive in lessening the socio-economic and environmental impacts of disasters including climate change, and inclusive with the participation of all sectors and stakeholders at all levels, particularly, the local community.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. In our national progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action for the current biennial period, we are very glad to report that the legal and institutional bases for disaster risk reduction and management have been given a boost with the passage of Republic Act 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010. With this legal framework, integration of disaster risk reduction will be more intensively pursued at all levels of government even as the authority and responsibilities for implementing disaster risk reduction measures are decentralized to local governments, because vulnerability and risk reduction are more effectively done at the local level.
2. Disaster risk reduction is continuously being integrated across development sectors for a more effective mainstreaming of disaster risk considerations into development policies, planning and programming. The Philippines believe that prevention does pay off and thus adopts a longer-term, development oriented approach when tackling disaster risks by taking disaster risk reduction as an integral part of the development process. For instance, investments are being made in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in education through the integration in the school curriculum and teaching materials and in enhancing the capacities of urban and land use planners in integrating DRR measures in local development and land use plans.
3. The law has also expanded and rejuvenated the country’s national platform for disaster risk reduction, now rechristened as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council or National DRRM Council, by enshrining multi-sectoral representation in the national and local councils by providing council membership for four representatives from civil society and one from the private sector.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Further, Republic Act 9729 or the Climate Change Act of 2009 ensures that government policies, plans and programs are founded upon sound environmental considerations and sustainable development. Recognizing that climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are strongly interrelated, the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change has systematically integrated DRR concepts, while the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework, now being finalized for approval, has adopted climate change adaptation as one of its cross-cutting pillars. A Memorandum of Understanding has been forged between the National DRRM Council and the Climate Change Commission as a means to harmonize multi-disciplinary efforts and collaborate on mutually-reinforcing initiative for a more climate-smart disaster risk reduction.
2. The National DRRM Council also pursues evidence-based disaster risk reduction, which is currently being imbibed in the development of the National DRRM Plan even as it highlights the role and value of complementation, partnership and multi-stakeholder participation. These principles are exemplified by many local governments in the Philippines, including the provincial government of Albay, whose governor has been bestowed the honor as a senior champion for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption as well as the Sasakawa Awardee for this year, the municipality of San Francisco in Cebu Province.
3. The Philippine Government is also continuously investing in assessing and monitoring disaster risks by improving its early warning capabilities for weather-related risks such as typhoon and flood as well as for geophysical hazards such as earthquake and tsunami.
4. To further rationalize government spending and continue promoting ex-ante investments in disaster risk reduction, the Philippine Government will embark on a project in identifying embedded and stand-alone investments in disaster risk reduction and tracking the results and outcomes of such investments. Risk transfer schemes are also being studied and considered to cover the financial gaps in cases of disasters.
5. On the regional front, the Philippines is taking an active role in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response to implement and advocate for disaster risk reduction as a lead shepherd country for several flagship prevention and mitigation projects. The Philippines just turned over the Chairmanship of the ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management to Singapore in February this year. Further, the Philippines, as current Chair of the Regional Consultative Committee of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, prioritizes the need to scale up community level action for DRR in all high risk communities in Asia. The Philippines in the same vein enjoys close cooperation with the multilateral DRR community led by the UNISDR, and supports enhancing South-South, Inter-Regional and Triangular Partnership. The Philippine Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), for instance, was an initiative taken in response to the 2009 Cyclone Ketsana (or Typhoon Ondoy) with the cooperation of the World Bank and other international organizations.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Natural hazards will always be with us, but disasters need not be. The challenge for us then in government is to leverage scarce resources into effective prevention. Although not all benefits of disaster risk reduction can be valued, especially lives that are saved, emotional and psychological sufferings averted, and community life allowed to go on safely, we are committed to invest in prevention and mitigation. Working together with institutions and stakeholders like business, media, professional associations, civil society, and the citizens in general, we will continue to broaden our momentum towards enhancing our resilience to disasters and sustainably attain our development goals.