

**SECOND SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
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Statement by

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Chairperson,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ambassadors, and members of the diplomatic community,
Representatives of UN Agencies and civil society organizations,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary of National Defense and Chairman of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), the Honorable Gilberto Teodoro, allow me to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. John Holmes, Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator for convening this event. We also commend the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) for its continued endeavor to provide guidance to Governments seeking to reinforce domestic resilience to hazards.

The Philippines strongly believes that a focus on disaster risk reduction saves lives, averts damage, and reduces human suffering. It is important that we match our efforts on disaster response and recovery with deliberate work on disaster risk reduction. We would like to reiterate our political and practical commitment to invest in the implementation of the HFA. The Philippines' Biennial Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA outlines the major accomplishments and lessons learned of the NDCC, as the Philippine Government's national platform on disaster risk reduction.

Since the first session of the global platform in 2007, some of the successes of the NDCC are the implementation of a multi-agency and multi-hazard mapping project called READY which covers twenty-seven (27) provinces; the crafting of a national strategic plan on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM); the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in relevant sectors such as education, infrastructure, and physical framework planning; and the institutionalization of the cluster approach to improve inter-agency coordination and strengthen emergency preparedness and response.

Notable is the government's initiative to give due recognition for excellence in disaster management and humanitarian assistance through the Gawad KALASAG which was established in 1998. Last year, the value of HFA and CBDRM as well as the advocacy for "safe hospitals" and "safe schools" has been recognized in the Gawad KALASAG's guidelines and selection criteria. In partnership with the UNISDR, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (DIPECHO), the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), and Oxfam Great Britain, this award scheme is being showcased by the NDCC during this conference's disaster risk reduction marketplace to share with others the good practices of the Philippines and to show empirical data that the HFA and its priority actions are being and can be done.

The NDCC system is guided by the principle of inclusiveness with a multi-stakeholder dimension that recognizes the critical role of different interest groups. Civil society organizations are visibly taking proactive steps and innovative approaches in addressing community-based disaster risks. Gaps between the government and other partners are being bridged through dialogues and partnership agreements. The United Nations agencies and aid organizations, through funded projects, have been instrumental in creating stimulus to direct stakeholders' energies in working together.

In an effort to strengthen the nation's response to climate change and related impacts, several policy initiatives have been undertaken by the government. Of particular significance is Executive Order No. 785 which mandates the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change (PTFCC) to develop a national climate change adaptation framework. The Presidential Adviser on Climate Change has recognized the NDCC's work on disaster risk management as an inter-locking component of said framework. Indeed, we are mindful that there is much more to be done to ensure convergence of policy objectives and institutional mechanisms for climate change and disaster risk reduction at the national and local levels.

Our future direction and broader framework on disaster risk reduction is articulated on the document entitled "Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction in the Philippines: Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) 2009-2019." The SNAP identifies eighteen (18) programs and projects on disaster risk reduction that will be given priority over the next ten years. It is a product of several national consultations, workshops, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and focus group discussions. It has to be stated that the SNAP has greater prospect of being put into practice if there is an enabling legislation that underpins disaster risk reduction mainstreaming into plans and budgets. Although Presidential Decree 1566 has stood the test of time, this three-decade old national law on disaster management posits a reactive posture. Quite recently, the Philippine Legislature is taking positive steps for the passage into law of the Disaster Risk Management bill. Senate Bill No. 3086 entitled "Philippine Disaster Risk Management Act" was sponsored in February this year. Said bill is on its period of amendments at the Senate. Our esteemed Senator and regional champion on disaster risk reduction, the Honorable Loren Legarda is one of the co-sponsors of said bill. We are confident that with her intervention, the enactment of this bill is forthcoming.

The current level of disaster risk reduction expenditure by government based on Fiscal Year 2008 General Appropriations Act and international fund - is about PHP20 Billion or US\$ 417 Million. This amount is nearly equal to the annual direct damage (in constant 2005) from previous reported disasters between 1990 and 2008 prices based on NDCC data. This is roughly 0.5% of the Gross Domestic Product on the average every year. A preliminary analysis also indicates that half of the amount encompasses some objectives of the SNAP priority programs and projects. Thus, work on mitigation and preparedness has indeed taken root, yet stakeholders' actions need to be complemented with a set of measurable objectives and targets.

Countries that adopt a disaster risk reduction approach protect the well-being of their people and safeguard their economies from the devastating impacts of disasters on development and poverty reduction efforts. Indeed, investing on disaster risk reduction is not a political calculation; it is a moral decision. You can be assured that the Philippines, through active engagement with stakeholders, will step up the implementation of the HFA in the years to come.

Thank you for your attention.