Country Statement
to be delivered by
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78th Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

High-Level Thematic Roundtable 3: "Realizing climate action in Asia and the Pacific"

A Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Honorable guests and colleagues,

Good afternoon.

In 2019, the Institute for Economics and Peace identified the Philippines as the country most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. The adverse effects of climate change, such as heat waves, rising sea levels, and extreme weather conditions, do not only leave a physical trail of destruction but also an economic and social one.

The Philippines is not the only country confronting this challenge and the domino effect of climate change across other sustainable

development goals. Even for the Asia Pacific region, of which the Philippines is a part, there is so much at stake. The moment the earth's climate hits the tipping point, the consequences on the region will not only be crippling but disastrous to all life on earth.

While the Asia Pacific region is teeming with natural resources and bursting with biological diversity, it is also very much dependent on natural resources, agriculture, and tourism. In fact, a staggering 60%[1] of the region's collective population live within 400 kilometers from the coast, which implies that more than 2 billion of its 3.5 billion population, in one way or another, depend on the sea for livelihood. In many ways, our region's umbilical cord is connected to nature, and because of this, even the slightest shifts in climate conditions have the most profound impact on the region.

Forming part of our efforts in addressing climate change impacts, the Philippines has submitted our Nationally Determined Contributions. In our NDC, it was stipulated that the Energy and Transport Sectors remain the highest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and even as the country emits only 1.98 metric tons of carbon dioxide. Though our GHG is]still way below the global average of four (4) metric tons per capita, we are committed to pursue mitigation interventions to strengthen our resilience and enhance our adaptive capacity. This thrust is supported by

[1] http://kula.geol.wwu.edu/rjmitch/coastalpopulation.pdf

enhancements in transformative policies and measures for climate change mitigation and information, addressing residual loss and damage, in pursuit of low carbon, sustainable, and climate and disaster-resilient development.

As we continue to emphasize the significance of creating a common agenda to advance the cause of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, it is important for us to confront some of the most painful realities plaguing our region today. These include:

- The staggering rise in the number of people pushed into the precipice of extreme poverty[2];
- Limited technical capacities, including the capacity to generate and analyze relevant data, which impede the effective implementation of risk reduction efforts; and
- Scarcity in the availability of reliable data, which is needed in shaping policy anchored on empirical evidence.

While these challenges appear to stand in the way between us and a more resilient Asia Pacific, we must not consider these as stumbling blocks that prevent our region from meeting its commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Rather, these challenges present opportunities for the countries in our region to work together and to support each so we may

[2] Asian Development Bank (2021) Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 52nd Edition

emerge stronger and better as we rise from the ashes of every crisis that threatens to bring our region to its knees.

In particular, let us harness each other's strengths and explore the following areas of collaboration:

1. **The development of energy storage technologies (EST)** for integrating higher levels of renewable energy (RE) resources into the power grid. EST also holds the potential of attracting higher investments on RE development, such as the combination of RE sources in modern power systems and climate-smart grids;
2. **The conduct of R&D on smart grid systems** to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of sustainable energy systems, particularly within the context of addressing issues related to RE integration into the grid;
3. **The development of smart traffic management and resilient transport systems** that are expected to shift the demand towards alternative fuels and low carbon vehicles; and
4. **Knowledge exchange and R&D** in order to optimize national disaster risk management systems through the integration of information and communications technology and other emerging technologies.

As a part of the Asia Pacific region, the Philippines is keen on working with the rest of the Asia Pacific in creating, seizing, and maximizing the opportunities in order to advance the cause of sustainable development.

Let us continue to explore and create spaces for collaboration and cooperation where we can develop common yet targeted solutions that will enable us to individually and collectively withstand and overcome the consequences of climate change and its interlinked challenges.

On our own, we are no match against climate change, but together, we stand a chance at mitigating its risks and building back better. Although our region is home to a diverse collection of cultures and people, we have one vision, one common agenda: a sustainable future.

Thank you.