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PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

UNFCCC CoP 16 Cancun, Mexico

8 December 2010

Madame President:

At the outset, I would like to commend the excellent preparations by the Mexican Government for this important Conference of Parties. We are satisfied, in particular, with the lengths to which Mexico has gone to ensure that the discussions continue to proceed in an effective, and truly transparent and inclusive process, which constitute an essential environment for a collective agreement on this session's outcome.

Indeed, natural hazards transformed into disasters are a great equalizer. They respect no boundaries; do not differentiate between rich or poor. They just strike hard and indiscriminately. Unfortunately, the Philippines is experiencing them with more frequency and greater intensity. We, Filipinos, pride ourselves with the fact that we have learned to cope with the dangers associated with being in the Pacific ring of fire and in the typhoon path. We are now increasingly confronted by recent extreme climate events that have radically outstripped our capacity to cope. Tropical Storm Ketsana was not a strong storm by Philippine standards. It seemed just an unusually "rainy" day without the proverbial winds. But it caused devastation not seen in a long, long time. And in the capital city yet. Metro Manila, which was thought to be more resilient than the rest of the country, did not stand a chance, with more than 50% of the monthly average rainfall

dumped in 6 hours. Damage from typhoons alone average 0.5% of our GDP or 400 million USD annually and caused more than 30,000 deaths over the past two decades. These are the hard numbers that the Philippines has to grapple with, while we debate about imaginary cuts in emissions and definitions of vulnerability. Let us not ignore the fact that the Convention has already defined vulnerability and who are vulnerable for us more than two decades ago. While the Philippines is not SIDS, we are composed of 7,000+ islands that are just as most vulnerable. Countries like us represent the greatest bulk of the human population and communities that are most vulnerable to climate change.

The task is clear, Madam President. We have set it for ourselves three (3) years ago in Bali; and 13 years back in Kyoto: to strengthen the commitments we have enshrined in the Convention itself, according to our common but differentiated responsibilities. There is no denying the fact that no self-respecting country will ask for financial support to do what it can reasonably undertake on its own. But there are limits to self-sufficiency when every incremental gain is negated by the overwhelming adverse impacts of climate change. And since there are clear historical responsibilities as to the cause and impacts of this phenomenon, these historical responsibilities must be lived up to. Vulnerable countries such as the Philippines should not be made to feel like we are the defendants in this TRIAL FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL. The cost of inaction is a steep price to pay for developing country Parties simply struggling to achieve decent standards of living for their people.

As Parties, we have a commitment to breathe life to the Convention and actively contribute to solutions to break this intractable negotiations

process. And for this, we need confidence building results. Though we recognize that the process will continue to next year, Cancun should be seen as the "breakthrough" point in the negotiations. Let us finish what we set out to do in Bali and address the generally unmet commitments under the Convention. The new Fund with a responsive governance mechanism ensuring a balanced allocation for adaptation and mitigation is absolutely necessary to enable us to avoid the disastrous consequences of a rapidly changing climate. Resources are the lifeblood of climate change efforts. In this regard, we urge Parties to allow the Conference to agree to making resources flow, without making them conditional on the elusive agreement on the mitigation issue. Vulnerable countries like ours have no other recourse, but to urgently enhance and fortify our adaptation efforts. We are also doing our part on mitigation, though are emissions are almost negligible, but if we are expected to contribute more significantly to keeping our planet from the tipping point, we should be provided access, as soon as possible, to resources, and technologies, including new and cleaner energy technologies. We cannot do it through our forests alone.

We do not have the luxury of time, Madam President. Under your able leadership, however, we are confident that we will bring home the good news to our people... that they can start dreaming of a more secure planet for their children again because we had the political will to make hard decisions. We hope that whenever we remember Cancun, we would have memories of a significant breakthrough in these climate talks, in addition to the beaches and warm sunshine that we enjoyed during this session.

Thank you Madam President.