PHILIPPINES

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

delivered by
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JOINT HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF COP 22/CMP 12/CMA1
17 November 2016, Marrakech, Morocco

Greetings! The Philippines is a country of 7 thousand islands which has the highest endemicity per unit area in the planet. This means that 70 percent of the biodiversity found in the Philippines can only be found in our country. We have more than 3000 species of marine life, some of which includes a snail - the venom of which has been found by a Nobel laureate to be better than morphine in addressing pain without the side effects. Our sponges and shells are effective in addressing cancer, and we are barely scratching the surface of what there is. This is not just the wealth of the Philippines - it is the wealth of all of us together.

Should the planet escalate to more than 1.5 degrees, we lose all of that. The planet simply cannot afford an indecisive ambiguity about what needs to be done. The situation is clear - anything more than 1.5 degrees will destroy possibilities for quality of life. We do not need to give up economic growth - from clean energy, to sustainable transportation, to all facets of life. We need to have the courage to change the way we do

things. We cannot and must not build an economy based on suffering.

At an increase of .8 degrees, we suffered Typhoon Haiyan, which is the worst storm surge in the planets history wherein more than ten thousand died. Ironic. So much to give. So much to lose.

As the Secretary for the Environment, we will go heavily into mangroves because the islands with mangroves suffered 80 percent less damage in terms of lives and property. This thrust will not only save our islands but will result in economic zones because of the resultant increase in fish, shrimps, and other sea life. If handled well, our people can get out of poverty.

We will plant bamboo - which is superb in carbon sequestration. But this bamboo can also build strong six story buildings, low cost housing, floor tiles, textiles, clean our polluted waterways.

In essence adaptation, mitigation, inclusive economic growth does not have to be separate activities or choices. These objectives can all be achieved given the right approach because the Philippines is in the "firing line" of climate change. I propose that we be one venue for scientists as we explore ways for humanity to move forward.

I propose a dynamic direction of facilitating climate change models on the ground that give the message - it can be done, and we can do it! The rules of the Paris Agreement can state what the performance indicators of these models should be.

There is an integratedness of life. Yesterday, I was in awe at dynamism and non-negotiable commitment of the leaders of the Climate Change movement. If we all imbibe this consciousness deep in our hearts and manifest it in ground level reality - humanity faces a bright future if we continue to bloom this spirit of working together.

The Philippines is making a commitment to this exciting future.