

17th Session of the Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention
on Climate Change

MADAME PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Philippine delegation, allow me to express our congratulations to the government of South Africa and the City of Durban for a well-organized event. As we grew nearer to a close, we are confident, that with your leadership and the open, transparent and inclusive negotiations that you have consistently espoused, we will have a successful conclusion here in Durban.

MADAME PRESIDENT

As a developing and vulnerable country, we always attend conference of parties optimistic despite the increasing evidence of climate change impacts to our country. We have seen how our expectations have been dampened in the past, but we continue to engage, hopeful that we, together with the rest of the world will finally decide to wake up. Unfortunately, by experience, it is difficult to wake up someone who is already awake.

We know what science is telling us. It is no secret that the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change paints an even bleaker picture than we have imagined. We are confronted by the grim reality that climate change is here to stay and its impacts are unavoidable.

But we refused to be helpless; hence we do what we can with what we have. Trying to do more with less. We will adapt as a country not by choice and although no fault of our own. But adapt we will. Despite best efforts however, it will not be enough considering the cost. The Philippines has been ranked under extreme risk by several studies consistently in the top 6. Our weak adaptive capacity is characterized by high level of poverty, dense populations, exposure to climate-related events; and our reliance on flood and drought prone agricultural land. For us, climate change is no longer just a threat environmentally but also economically.

Extreme weather events have caused our economy in the past 3 years almost an annual average of 3% of our GDP. Every money spent on rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure and agriculture, is money taken away from our basic services such as education and health. It is now beginning to threaten even our millennium development goals.

We are now also seeing a strong move for green growth, green economy, low carbon pathway and low emission development. Whatever else you want to call it, for us, it is part of our sustainable development. As a developing country, we have already committed to pursue that path even if the implications trade offs are not yet clear, and with no successful precedent to show for anywhere else. Because we know that it makes sense not because they say so.

Hence, we want to see this green economy movement also strongly pursued first in developed countries, starting with a strong resolve to reduce greenhouse gases domestically, and truly lead the way towards low-emission development. The Philippines calls for more decisive action to increase the level of ambition in setting the needed mitigation goal. Including the non-negotiable establishment of the second commitment period. Not only is it consistent with the low emission development we are all pushing for but it also would keep us from the tipping point. We now recognize that Climate change requires the greatest economic transformation to avert its impact but it should also take in consideration our right to develop.

Having said that, the Green Climate Fund and its capitalization should be operationalized here in Durban. For us, it is not just an issue on how much, but it is more of an issue of good faith through a serious delivery on commitments under the Convention. We understand the current economic situation globally, but we believe that it is temporary set back as we believe as well in your capacity to rebound, but it should not be made an excuse to sideline or delay escape we have agreed and what have been previously committed. As we have always stressed, the Convention is a balance of commitments, with actions of developing country Parties contingent on the compliance of commitments by developed country Parties, especially on financing, including for the development and transfer of technology.

Again, we consider the operationalization of a truly responsive Green Climate Fund as paramount to the success of this Meeting. And that it should be responsive to the needs of developing countries especially on adaptation.

Of course, this expectation is predicated, on the appropriate "curing" of the perceived infirmities of the draft Instrument, to make the implementation of the Fund truly successful. Let me say, Madame President, that we are quite satisfied with the way that this is being undertaken. Your action has

increased confidence in the multilateral process and augurs well for the successful outcome of this COP.

We hope that between now and the close of this Meeting, we will muster enough political will and energy, to take the right decisions that would save our future. And we are with you in saving tomorrow, today. And today means, right now.

Durban should be remembered as the place where humankind extricated itself from further harming itself. It should be remembered by future generations as the moment that defined the adaptable and climate friendlier conditions that they are and will live in.

In closing, Madame President, allow me to return your greeting last week-
Ngiyabonga futhi nginifisela okuhle!