

## Climate Vulnerable Forum Statement by Philippines on Vanuatu and Cyclone Pam:

### We need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius to prevent unmanageable suffering and devastation inflicted by climate related disasters

20 March 2015

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*The Climate Change Commission of the Office of the President of the Philippines released the text of the following statement as Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in conjunction with the Vanuatu Cyclone Pam disaster.*

Philippines, as Climate Vulnerable Forum Chair, calls for solidarity with fellow Forum member Vanuatu as it grapples with nation-wide suffering and devastation inflicted by Cyclone Pam. This call is extended to Kiribati and Tuvalu, also members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, and other nations affected by this lethal storm.

**Cyclone Pam** is a consequence of climate change since all weather is affected by the planet's now considerably warmer climate. The spate of extreme storms over the past decade—of which Pam is the latest—is entirely consistent in science with the hottest ever decade on record. Recurring storms of this magnitude are the new norm and reflect today's reality of a hotter planet that can no longer be ignored.

In light of the extent of the material damage caused by Pam, it is extraordinary that greater loss of life was averted, highlighting Vanuatu's success in building resilience. A regional event of the Climate Vulnerable Forum just last month, supported by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, pointed to scope to strengthen the resilience of Pacific island nations still further.

But no matter how much is done to increase the resilience of communities of any country on any continent nobody is safe anymore from climate change. There will be damages, including irreplaceable loss of life, which cannot possibly be tolerated.

That is why the Climate Vulnerable Forum call for a strengthening of the international goal to limit warming to **1.5 degrees Celsius**, the most stringent of the scientifically feasible objectives for managing climate change.

Cyclone Pam, typhoons Haiyan (2013) and Hagupit (2014) that struck Philippines, and hurricanes Katrina (2005) and Sandy (2012) that hit the United States and several Caribbean nations, in addition to many other catastrophes, are a clear alarm warning for all to hear.

Pam should awaken the world to the fact that human interference with the climate has reached dangerous proportions. The current international climate goal of 2 degrees, which is double today's warming, would fall far short of a safeguard.

1.5 degrees is achievable through urgent and scaled-up efforts of nations to lessen warming pressures on the climate in particular through deeper cuts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Support for vulnerable nations whose capacity to cope with the impacts of current and committed changes to the climate is clearly exceeded constitutes both a humanitarian priority and an essential element to progress in reducing poverty globally.

On the road to a new international climate change agreement that culminates in Paris this December, the Philippines looks forward as Chair of this Forum to work with governments, institutions and civil groups around the world to rise to the global challenge of climate change.

### Notes for Editors

#### *Background:*

Launched by the Maldives in 2009 ahead of the Copenhagen climate summit, the Climate Vulnerable Forum facilitates cooperation of 20 countries highly vulnerable to climate change aimed at achieving policy advances, an amplified voice of vulnerable communities, and the building and exchange of knowledge. The Forum's 2011 Dhaka Declaration and its 2013-15 Costa Rica Action Plan guide much of the Forum's current work. The Forum also commissions the "Climate Vulnerability Monitor" policy research series on the global impact of climate change. Philippines chairs the Forum through to July 2016.

Forum activities are supported by the Climate Vulnerable Forum Trust Fund and partner institutions, including the United Nations Development Programme, which hosts a dedicated Climate Vulnerable Forum support project, and the International Organization for Migration, among other bodies.

#### *Forum members:*

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

#### *Pacific Regional Event:*

In February, eight small island states took part in the Forum's Pacific regional meeting, hosted by Samoa and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme with support from the United Nations Development Programme. They agreed a **7-point set of recommendations for a better response to climate change for Pacific island nations**. The recommendations underscore that national, regional and international policies and groups can do more to improve the way climate change is dealt with in the region, including extreme weather events.

For the recommendations and additional information:

<http://www.thevcf.org/pacific-islands-aim-greater-climate-action-samoa-vulnerable-countries-forum/>

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\* 1 degree Celsius equates to 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit.