



Sherpa Senior Officers Meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum

November 11, 2015

Malacañang Palace

Bonjour,

By agreeing to host the 21st conference on climate change in December, France has decided to take a special responsibility. We are closer than we've ever been in finally setting a framework for collective action on the climate. France, by holding the future presidency of COP21, strives to create the best conditions for the conclusion of a universal, ambitious and legally binding climate agreement.

We do not need to look further to know why it is crucial to reach this agreement. Today, it is estimated that more than 70% of natural disasters are related to climate change. This is twice as it was 20 years ago and may most likely increase in incidence and intensity in the future.

This past week, your country, joined by the international community, commemorated the second year since Typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines with such violence, causing considerable human and material losses. We do not wish to face another catastrophe like this, but if we fail to take appropriate action, and as much as I would not want to make such a prediction, this may not be the last super typhoon to hit the country.

Given that climate disruption is a human, political, ecological and economic issue, it is imperative for all of us to take action now.

In this collective action, vulnerable states can provide the moral voices in the negotiations because you have experienced first-hand the dramatic effects of climate disruption. Your experiences in dealing with these challenges are valuable in inspiring the decisions and solutions that would be taken in Paris.

As we have seen in the Manila-Paris Declaration presented today, we hear your need for an ambitious climate agreement in Paris to limit global warming to 2°C, or if possible, 1.5°C.

But first, let us look at where we currently stand based on the commitments made by the parties.

The analysis report of the Climate Convention Secretariat (UNFCCC) has taken into account the contributions published by 146 countries on the 1st of October, representing 86% of global emissions. It shows us that these initial contributions would put us on a trajectory in 2030 leading to approximately 3°C at the end of the century, ranging between 2.7°C and 3.5°C.

As things stand, the contributions limit global warming, but these are not sufficient to return to the target of 2°C. While we hope to consider the demands of all the parties, we must also consider our limitations and set a goal that is realistic.

We are optimistic, however, that we are in the right direction in limiting carbon emissions because the national contributions for the Paris agreement change things completely. They mark a significant improvement compared to the previous “status quo” scenario that would take us from 4°C to 5°C, or even higher. This is due to the strong commitments made by all parties, including the major emitters, particularly China, the United States and the European Union, as well as the least developed ones, who have also made pledges despite their minimal carbon emissions.

These contributions are part of the way forward. COP21, which will reinforce this first series of contributions, will make it possible to build the framework to ensure that we can achieve this realistic target of 2°C.

Last February, we embarked on the road to COP21 in Paris from Manila when President Holland and President Aquino launched the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change. Now that we are nearing this historic meeting, I would like to stress the need for all of us – from developed and developing countries, from civil society and the private sector – to take a united stand and do our part for the future of our planet.

Thank you and I join you all in hoping and working for a successful conclusion to COP21.