Keynote Speech of Senator Loren Legarda  
*Sherpa Senior Officers Meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum*  
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It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Philippines for the third global meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

I believe we are here today not to discuss the theoretical merits of doing something versus doing nothing about the climate crisis. The signs are all around us. The numbers speak for themselves. It is no longer an issue of taking action, but rather of how much action we need to take.

Three weeks ago, Typhoon Koppu battered provinces in Luzon here in our country, affecting more than three million people and causing damages to agriculture and infrastructure worth US$235.8 Million (Php11 Billion). This, as several communities in the Visayas, particularly in Tacloban City, have yet to fully recover two years after Super Typhoon Haiyan wreaked havoc in the region, killing more than 6,000 individuals.

Indeed, we must take urgent and aggressive climate action. The Philippines, and our fellow member nations in the Climate Vulnerable Forum, can no longer take this injustice sitting down.

This gathering is historic because first, we will be signing the Manila-Paris Declaration, which articulates the common aspirations of the world's most vulnerable countries for the UN Climate Change Conference that will be convened in France towards the end of this month.

Second, we are here to all agree and finalize the Climate Vulnerable Forum Road Map 2016-2018, which contains the medium-term climate action agenda of our vulnerable countries.

In crafting these documents, we have to be ambitious. We must no longer plead for the rest of the developed nations to commit and act upon the decades long stagnation to limit global warming to less than 2°C. Today, we demand that the world join us and do something to reach the target of a 1.5°C goal to prevent any further risks to present and future generations.

The average global temperature has risen by 0.8°C since 1880. At this level, we are already experiencing unprecedented extreme weather events—severe droughts, frequent and stronger typhoons, and sea level rise, among other climate change impacts.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or UNFCCC has received 154 Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). But these submissions are inadequate as the combined commitments as computed now would still lead to 2.7°C global warming by 2030.

The World Bank projects that under a 2°C scenario, there will be a 20% decline in water availability for many regions and 15-20% decrease in crop yield.

Moreover, with warming of up to 2°C, sea-level rise is projected to be around 70 centimeters. Sea level rise, floods that damage fish farms, and the increased acidification of the oceans by 2050 could reduce farmed fish yield by 90%.

If we reach 4°C warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts "...severe and widespread impacts on unique and threatened systems, substantial species extinction, large risks to global and regional food security, and the combination of high temperature and humidity compromising normal human activities..."
We need to limit warming to 1.5°C to be able to survive.

We are in the position to demand because as developing nations, who are the least emitters of carbon, we bear the brunt of climate change.

A study by DARA commissioned by the Climate Vulnerable Forum titled Climate Vulnerability Monitor: A Guide to the Cold Calculus of a Hot Planet, shows that if the world goes business as usual, there will be 6 million deaths per year by 2030, close to 700,000 of which will be due to climate change.

The report further states that "a significant share of the global population would be directly affected by inaction on climate change. The global figures mask enormous costs that will, in particular, hit developing countries and above all the world’s poorest groups."

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) faced an average of more than 7% of foregone GDP in 2010 due to climate change and the carbon economy. Over 90% of mortality assessed in the report occurs in developing countries only - more than 98% in the case of climate change. Of all these losses, it is us, lower and middle-income countries that are most exposed. Our losses of income are already extreme and our development goals, particularly on poverty reduction, will be harder to achieve because of the climate crisis.

Within our respective economies and among us vulnerable nations, we must adapt and mitigate. We need to strengthen the capacities of our governments and apply the whole-of-society approach in integrating responses to climate change within national to local policy frameworks and programs of actions.

I take humble pride in the leadership of the Philippines in global climate action and advocacy.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) has hailed our climate resilience laws as among the world’s best.

The Philippine Climate Change Law, which I authored, created the Climate Change Commission, headed by no less than the President of the Philippines, and mainstreams climate change adaptation in various phases of policy formulation.

The People's Survival Fund Act, a measure I sponsored in the Philippine Senate, complements our Climate Change Law by helping achieve its objectives through provision of funds to local governments and communities for their climate change adaptation programs. It supports the improvement of the monitoring, controlling and prevention of diseases triggered by climate change; establishment of forecasting and early warning systems; and strengthening institutional development, for local governments, for preventive measures, planning, preparedness and management of impacts relating to climate change.

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act promotes a comprehensive National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan that strengthens the capacity of the national government and the local government units together with partner stakeholders, to build the disaster resilience of communities.

Our government has also started climate-tagging expenditure for climate change adaptation and mitigation and will prioritize funding for adaptation to reduce the vulnerability and address the climate risks to our communities.

The Philippines is consistent in practising leadership-by-example. In our INDC, we demonstrate that even vulnerable countries can plan, design and implement ambitious climate adaptation and mitigation commitments.
The Philippine Government has also taken an active role in the CVF, initiating the establishment of the Vulnerable Twenty group of Ministers of Finance or V20.

We have also committed to hosting the future South-South Centre of Excellence on Climate Information and Services. The Project, is a joint undertaking of the Climate Change Commission and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA, which aims to facilitate collaboration on climate information and services by key actors in the country and globally through the Climate Vulnerable Forum by providing a venue for knowledge exchange and learning among countries vulnerable to climate change.

In all of this, we want to tell the world that, we may be vulnerable, but we are not incapable of action.

In closing, I thank all the countries, agencies and individuals who have made this gathering happen. Everyone's role is important here because the outcome of this meeting will be used for the CVF High Level Event at COP21 in December.

I would also like to take the opportunity to invite other vulnerable nations to join the CVF as members. And we ask the developed countries to support us and back us up. It is no longer ‘to each his own’ philosophy, not only a matter of economy, or policy. It is an issue of humanity and conscience.

We live in only one planet and by now climate change should make countries, developed and developing, realize that moats, gates, massive barriers, borders are ephemeral, easily destroyed, and antiquated concepts. The truth is, there are no borders, we are all connected and we suffer the consequences of climate change together. This is not the time for restraint; this is not the time to wag the finger of indictment. This is the moment for collective and urgent climate action.

Thank you.