

Good Afternoon

It is my pleasure to be able to close this very important regional event. I know you have been working very hard these past two days and I understand this has translated into an excellent set of recommendations.

On behalf of UNDP and in conjunction with the Philippine Government, I would like to thank all of you who have travelled from across the region to join us here today and I hope you have enjoyed your stay in Manila. I would also like to thank the Government of the Philippines for hosting this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Development Programme is pleased that it can play its part to support the work of the Forum. This support is both facilitative and substantive.

As you know, we have been assisting countries to implement climate change activities on adaptation, mitigation and REDD+ initiatives, and also through our partnership with the Global Environment Facility, the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Special Climate Change Fund among others.

I am pleased therefore that we can bring to this process lessons from policy dialogue and on the ground interventions.

I am obviously preaching to the converted when I say that changing weather patterns are already impacting food production, poverty, migration and social stability – factors that significantly increase the risk of livelihood hardship, conflicts and instability, and compromise national prosperity. So your sharing of information and ideas is both timely and critical.

It is fitting that the event was located here. The Philippines is one of the countries in the world that are most vulnerable to climate

change. It has recognised the issue and is taking deliberate steps in response.

I want to highlight these efforts.

In its commitment to engage in multilateral efforts to address climate change and achieve sustainable development, the Philippines has been a leading voice in the international climate negotiations under the UN convention. More so, it has also led in implementing these agreements, both in the areas of adaptation and mitigation.

The 2009 Climate Change Act (Republic Act 9729) remains almost unique in establishing a lead government policy-making body—the Commission—that has proven itself very capable, for instance, in securing budget allocations on climate change for a range of line agencies. This is mainstreaming in action.

Moreover, given the urgency of addressing the climate problem concertedly at local, national and global levels, in 2010, Philippines pushed further its implementation of climate action by crafting a National Framework Strategy on Climate Change.

National policies have also been directed towards supporting research and systematic observation, and in promoting education, training, and public awareness – efforts that are already yielding clear dividends.

I understand many of you visited PAGASA's impressive and expanding facilities yesterday afternoon. I hope you would agree that the Philippines really is fit to showcase a science-based disaster/climate risk assessment approach that takes into account both historical and projected climate data.

The Philippines has also developed innovative tools such as the climate-adjusted impact models for flood hazards; climate

exposure database application; mainstreaming of DRRCCA into sub-national and local development planning and programming.

It is fitting therefore, that the newly announced South-South Centre of Excellence for Climate Information and Services will be based here.

I am of course particularly pleased that UNDP has been able to support the Philippines and I hope that the Philippine experience has helped to inform your own deliberations.

I have been told that your conclusions do much to respond to the main messages emanating from Sendai: That is to explore ways in which to:

- encourage public and private disaster risk reduction strategies to shift from reactive approaches to proactive ones
- manage disaster risks so that they become a defining characteristic of sustainable development

- Accelerate efforts to reduce exposure and vulnerability
- strengthen cooperation and partnership to continue building a culture of resilience

I understand that many of you have also developed your Intended Nationally Determined Contributions towards the Paris agreement and are also setting the pace in respect of the 2050 carbon neutrality target.

Ladies and Gentleman

From UNDP's experience in assisting with this and other regional workshops of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, the issues you have identified resonate strongly with what vulnerable countries from other regions have been saying. This is particularly true for concerns on: awareness, coordination for policy implementation, international finance, human and institutional capacity, private sector engagement and on technology and R&D.

With the final of these regional workshops taking place next week for the Middle East and North Africa (hosted by Lebanon), we will have a very updated picture of the shared views for vulnerable countries from all corners of the world.

But clearly there is already much common ground to build on and to seek new advances in the climate policy arena.

The “Durban Platform” negotiations to be held in Bonn in June is less than two weeks away and Paris in December is looming.

The region has a real opportunity to shape a collective orientation in the run-up to and after COP21, and to link regional agendas to global agendas for greater impact.

Let me congratulate you on your efforts and achievements.

Thank you.