WELCOME REMARKS

CLIMATE VULNERABLE FORUM
HIGH-LEVEL CLIMATE POLICY FORUM
15 August 2016
Senate of the Philippines
Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Senator Committee on Climate Change Chair Senator Loren Legarda and the honorable members of the Philippine Senate; the incoming Chair of the CVF, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change of Ethiopia H.E. Dr. Shiferaw Menbacho; State Minister Kare Debessa; Minister Abdullahi Majeed; Parliamentary Secretary Silas Melve; Ambassador Luis Calvo; Ambassador Juvencio de Jesus Martins; Ambassador Jan Top Christensen; Ambassador Julio Camarena Villaseñor; Ambassador Aruni Ranaraja; Ambassador Thanatip Upatising; Ambassador Safdar Hayat; Mr. Kristian Netland; Secretary Alfonso Cusi; Secretary Arthur Tugade; Representative Carlos Zarate; fellow members of the CVF Troika Plus, CVF-V20 Member Ministers and Senior Officials, CVF Expert Advisors, Legislators, High-Level Policymakers, and Resource Experts; fellow workers in government; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, a pleasant morning to you all.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) represents the group of nations most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Over the past years, we have bravely put a face to the realities of global warming. We have seen the rise in the average of deaths and displacements due to climate shocks in our respective countries. Our livelihoods and economic activities have been constantly disrupted by costly recovery and reconstruction efforts. And our people remain at risk as destructive extreme weather occurrences continue to ravage our lands.

We could have chosen to keep quiet, but we did not. We realized that there was a need for global solidarity to address the issues, so we came together and drew the world’s attention to managing climate change risks.

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We have proven that having a collective voice is key to pushing for our agenda. We have fought tooth and nail to ensure that the Paris Agreement would include the commitment to keep warming at below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial averages. And while we have been triumphant, more work needs to be done to sustain this victory.

In this regard, the inaugural seminar of the CVF South-South Centre of excellence was held in the past days. It is an honor for the Philippines to host this series of lectures in order for us to learn from one another and to align our efforts in advancing our collective climate agenda at international and domestic levels.

Moving forward, we need to ensure that our progress will not be derailed by becoming more vocal and visible in the discussions. We need to take claim of the role as the lead global advocate in climate change and make our voice matter because we are, after all, the countries who experience the worst due to its impacts. And as we institutionalize our efforts, may we raise awareness and lobby more people to support our cause.

Ladies and gentlemen, this will be the last time I will address you as chairman of the CVF. Later on, I will be formally turning over the CVF chairmanship to my colleague, Ethiopian Minister Shiferaw Teklemariam Menbacho. I have had many conversations with him about the future of CVF--his vision and plans for the group--and I am confident that the Ethiopian presidency will keep our momentum going. His passion and determination, I believe, will take us closer to realizing our shared vision for all.

To my colleagues in the CVF, let me also thank you for the opportunity to have served you. Collectively, we have achieved so much these past years, and we will only get stronger and better from here, as long as we continue to draw strength from one another and remain steadfast in our collective goal.
I would also like to thank in advance our distinguished resource speakers for today: Dr. James Fletcher, Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar, Dr. Saleemul Huq, and Mr. Wael Hmaidan, who will share their knowledge on a wide spectrum of topics, such as climate diplomacy, ensuring development in the agriculture sector despite the impacts of climate change, enhancing South-South cooperation, and climate action. They will be followed by Climate Analytics scientists Dr. Michael Schaeffer and Ms. Jessie Granadillas to present key findings of the CVF Low Carbon Monitor Report.

The presentation on the first edition of the Low Carbon Monitor, in particular, should be enlightening as we work to pursue low carbon development pathway and sustainable development and to reap the benefits of achieving the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal set forth in the Paris Agreement.

It is our sincere hope that the knowledge and information shared this morning will provide the impetus for action—and pave the way for genuine sustainable development programs that will benefit the present without sacrificing our future.

Thank you very much, and may we all have an inspiring and meaningful forum.