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COUNTRY REPORT: PHILIPPINES
Climate Change, Sustainability and Resilience

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Introduction

The World Risk Index 2011[1] (Index), conducted by the UN University Institute for Environment and Human Security in Germany, ranks the Philippines as the third most vulnerable to disaster risks and natural hazards. Manila, the densely populated capital, is particularly noted as of 'extreme risk'.

Considered a disaster epicenter, the Philippines is the world's top recipient of cyclone occurrence, buffeted by at least twenty typhoons annually. Damage to infrastructure and agriculture this year from typhoon Pedring alone reached P12.34 billion,[2] higher than the P10.9 billion[3] damage from the 2009 typhoon Ondoy.[4]

With climate change, the frequency and severity of cyclones and other devastating consequences are inevitable, a fact acknowledged by the Philippine *National Framework Strategy on Climate Change 2010-2020* (*Framework Strategy*):

> 'The Philippines, an archipelagic nation of over 90 million people, now faces threats from more intense tropical cyclones, drastic changes in rainfall

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[1] The *Index* (available at www.ehs.unu.edu) shows the risk of various countries and regions from disaster, with a focus on 'exposure, susceptibility of the population, coping capacities and adaptation strategies'.
[2] Equivalent to almost US$285m.
[3] Equivalent to US$ 252m.
[4] See further: http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/regions/10/07/11/typhoon-pedring-damage-surpasses-ondoy.

> patterns, sea level rise, and increasing temperatures. All these factors contribute to serious impacts on our natural ecosystems – on our river basins, coastal and marine systems, and their biodiversity – then cascading to impacts on our food security, water resources, human health, public infrastructure, energy and human settlements.
>
> Indeed it is unequivocal that climate change will have serious implications on the country's efforts to address poverty and realize sustainable development for current and future generations – ultimately making climate change an issue of intergenerational equity.'[5]

Climate change does exacerbate the chronic poverty challenge confronting the country. The worst climate victims are the poor and those with no voice in governance. As of 2009, 26.5 percent of the population lived below the national poverty threshold,[6] 8.4 years behind the *Millennium Development Target* to reduce poverty by 50 percent.[7] A recent survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations, showed 52 percent of families rated themselves as poor.[8]

Participant states in the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and signatories to the *Hyogo Declaration*, affirmed that '[d]isasters have a tremendous detrimental impact on efforts at all levels to eradicate global poverty; the impact of disasters remains a significant challenge to sustainable development'. Philippine officials know only too well that calamities push back efforts to reduce poverty and attain targets set under the *Millennium Development Goals*. The 'adverse weather conditions which negatively affected the fishing subsector' is among the official justifications for the slow growth in the Philippine economy.[9] Climate change also worsens biodiversity loss and destruction. The Philippines, as a mega-biodiversity hotspot, suffers from 'demands arising from development and utilization activities, population expansion, poor environmental protection, and external factors such as climate change, however, have placed the country's environment and natural resources under grave threat'.[10]

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[5] Preface to the *Index* (available at www.ehs.unu.edu).
[6] See further: http://www.nscb.gov.ph/headlines/StatsSpeak/2011/111411_rav_joe_mv.asp#tab7.
[7] See further: http://www.nscb.gov.ph/headlines/StatsSpeak/2011/111411_rav_joe_mv.asp.
[8] Third Quarter 2011 Social Weather Survey, fielded over September 4-7, 2011 (available at www.sws.org).
[9] See further: http://www.neda.gov.ph/econreports_dbs/NIA/DG_Statements/DG%20Press%20 Statementniaq22011.pdf.
[10] *Philippine Development Plan*, 2011-2016, Chapter 10.

A signatory to various international conventions including the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, the Philippines has a strong legal framework and mechanisms in carving the path towards sustainable development and in addressing climate change and poverty. The country is besieged and its progress retarded by issues of ineffective and inefficient governance, patronage politics, poverty issues, population pressures and corruption.[11]

Laws Addressing Climate Change

For decades, climate change was relegated into the background as a non-issue in the Philippines. In 2009, Typhoon Ondoy provided the much-needed wake-up call for the Government and stakeholders to 'get their act together' and pro-actively respond to climate change and instill governance reforms. Laws specifically addressing climate change (the *Philippine Climate Change Act* (2009))[12] and disaster risk reduction and management (the *Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act* (2010))[13] were enacted. The *Philippine Climate Change Act* mainstreamed climate change into government policies. The *Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act* strengthened the disaster risk reduction and management system, provided for development of the national disaster risk reduction and management framework, and institutionalised the disaster risk reduction and management plan. Both laws highlight the crucial role of local government units[14] (LGU) and local stakeholders in responding to climate change and disaster and vulnerability risk reduction.

Responsibility for ensuring the promotion of public health, safety and security of civil society as well as sustained service delivery for efficient and effective governance within their territorial jurisdictions lies with the LGU. Local Governments are duty-bound to be the first responders in cases of crises and emergencies since the local chief executive sits as chair of the Local Disaster Coordinating Council (LDCC)[15] with membership drawn from both the public and the private sectors. Under section 4 of

[11] In the *Corruption Perception Index* (2011) (available at cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/#CountryResults), the Philippines placed 129th out of 182 countries, with a score of 2.6 in a scale of 0-10. In 2010, it ranked 134th among 178 countries, with a score of 2.4.
[12] Republic Act No. 9729.
[13] Republic Act No. 10121.
[14] Political and geographical units in the Philippines. As of June 30, 2010, local government units consist of 80 provinces, 122 cities, 1512 municipalities and 42,025 barangays. See further: www.dilg.gov.ph).
[15] Now known as Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

the *Implementing Rules and Regulations* (*IRR*) of the *Philippine Climate Change Act*, that created the Climate Change Commission and provided for the mainstreaming of climate change into government policy formulations, LGUs are to be the frontline agencies in the formulation, update, planning, and implementation of climate change action plans in their respective areas. LGUs are also responsible for mobilizing and allocating necessary personnel, resources and logistics to effectively implement their respective action plans.[16]

Section 2 of the *Philippine Climate Change Act* provides that '[i]t shall be the policy of the State to enjoin the participation of national and local governments, businesses, nongovernment organizations, local communities and the public to prevent and reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and, at the same time, maximize the benefits of climate change and … to incorporate a gender-sensitive, pro-children and pro-poor perspective in all climate change and renewable energy efforts, plans and programs'.

Under the *Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act*, a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRM) is required for each LGU, where not less than 5 percent of the internal revenue allotment must be set-aside for this purpose. 70 percent of a LDRRM Fund may be used for pre-disaster activities to make the LGU's more proactive in disaster risk reduction.

Policies, structures, coordination mechanisms and programs with continuing budget appropriation to respond to climate change and disaster risk reduction and management are now institutionalized. Key implementing bodies and coordinating councils are established at both national and local levels.

Tasked to 'coordinate, monitor and evaluate the programs and action plans of the government relating to climate change', the Climate Change Commission (Commission), has promulgated the *Framework Strategy* and recently the *National Climate Change Action Plan* (*Plan*), as the road map for climate change adaptation and mitigation.[17]

[16] See further: http://ncr.dilg.gov.ph/program2.html.
[17] See further: http://climate.gov.ph.

Recent Developments in Pursuing Climate Change Solutions

Recent Policy and Programs Emanating from the Executive Department

National Government

The adoption of the *National Climate Change Action Plan*[18] on 22 November 2011 caps the gigantic strides taken by the Philippine Government in recent years in putting in place the policies, institutions and mechanisms to fight climate change, build a climate-resilient citizenry and institutions and promote sustainable development. The ultimate goal of the Plan is 'to build the adaptive capacities of women and men in their communities, increase the resilience of vulnerable sectors and natural ecosystems to climate change and optimize mitigation opportunities towards gender-responsive and rights-based sustainable development'.

NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

ULTIMATE OUTCOMES	1.0 Enhanced adaptive capacity of communities, resilience of natural ecosystems, and sustainability of built environment to climate change.	2.0 Successful transition towards climate-smart development.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	100 Food Security	200 Water Sufficiency	300 Ecosystem and Environmental Stability	400 Human Security	500 Climate-smart Industries and Services	600 Sustainable Energy	700 CC Knowledge and Capacity Development
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	Availability, stability, accessibility, affordability, safe and healthy food ensured amidst climate change.	Water resources sustainably managed and equitable access ensured.	Enhanced resilience and stability of natural systems and communities.	Reduced risks of the population from climate change and disasters.	Climate-resilient, eco-efficient and environment-friendly industries and services developed, promoted and sustained.	Sustainable renewable energy and ecologically efficient technologies adopted as major components of sustainable development.	Enhanced knowledge on and capacity to address climate change.
IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	1000.1 Enhanced CC resilience of agriculture and fisheries production and distribution systems.	2000.1 Water governance restructured towards integrated water resources management in watersheds and river basins.	3000.1 Ecosystems protected, rehabilitated and ecological services restored.	4000.1 CCA and DRR practiced by all sectors at the national and local levels.	5000.1 Climate-smart industries and services promoted, developed and sustained.	6000.1 Nationwide energy efficiency and conservation promoted and implemented.	7000.1 Knowledge on the science of climate change enhanced.
	1000.2 Enhanced resilience of agricultural and fishing communities from climate change.	2000.2 Sustainability of supplies and access to safe water ensured.		4000.2 Health and social sector delivery systems are responsive to climate change.	5000.2 Sustainable livelihood and jobs created from climate-smart industries and services	6000.2 Sustainable renewable energy development enhanced.	7000.2 Capacity for CC adaptation and mitigation at the national and local level enhanced.
		2000.3 Knowledge and capacity for CC adaptation in the water sector enhanced.		4000.3 CC-adaptive human settlements and services developed, promoted and adopted	5000.3 Green cities and municipalities developed, promoted and sustained.	6000.3 Environmentally sustainable transport promoted and adopted.	7000.3 CC knowledge management established and accessible to all sectors at the national and local levels.
						6000.4 Energy systems/infrastructures climate-proofed, rehabilitated/improved.	

[18] See further: http://climate.gov.ph/index.php/en/nccap-executive-summary.

The *Plan* is anchored on seven priority programs: Food Security; Water Sufficiency; Environmental and Ecological Stability; Human Security; Sustainable Energy; Climate Smart Industries; Services and Knowledge; and Capacity Development. The details are set out in the table above.

Some national agencies are also adopting initiatives to build the capacity of LGUs to mainstream climate change and disaster risk reduction and management. First, the Department of Interior and Local Government,[19] has issued guidelines, conducted capacity-building training and awarded grants and incentives, such as the Performance Challenge Fund aimed at jumpstarting 'local development projects to attain the Millennium Development Goals, boost local economic development and Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Climate Change and Adaptation'.[20] Secondly, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources[21] (DENR) has set up an Environmental Compliance Assistance Center (ECA Center) at the Environmental Management Bureau in Quezon City to help LGUs comply with environmental regulations. It also established the LGU-dedicated ECA Center website.[22] Thirdly, the Cabinet of the President has been clustered to focus on key areas including climate change and mitigation.[23] Under *Executive Order* No. 43, signed by the President on 13 May 2011, the five Cabinet clusters are: Good Governance and Anti-Corruption; Human Development and Poverty Reduction; Economic Development; Security, Justice and Peace; Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. The Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation cluster is chaired by the DENR Secretary with the Climate Change Commission functioning as secretariat. Finally, the *Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016*[24] has been institutionalized. Dubbed as President Aquino's Social Contract with the constituents, the *Philippine Development Plan* provides the framework of his administration with 'good governance and anti-corruption' as overriding themes. It supports and implements 'effective and responsive social safety nets that will support and capacitate the vulnerable sectors of the society in addressing not only poverty but also the devastating effects of climate change'.[25]

[19] See further: www.dilg.gov.ph.
[20] DILG, *Memorandum Circular* No. 2011-123, dated 31 August 2011.
[21] See further: www.denr.gov.ph.
[22] See further: www.emb.gov.ph/ecacenter.
[23] See further: http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/220714/news/nation/aquino-signs-eo-establishing-5-cabinet-clusters.
[24] Available at: http://devplan.neda.gov.ph/.
[25] See further: http://devplan.neda.gov.ph/about-the-plan.php.

Local Government – Islands of Good Governance and Climate Leadership

Albay province (in Bicol), Puerto Princesa City (in Palawan) and San Francisco municipality (in Cebu) are award-winning models of initiatives aimed at building the capacity of stakeholders to face the climate crisis and to integrate sustainability in their programs and projects. Participatory governance through active civil society engagement is a common thread that connects them.

Albay leads the way in disaster risk reduction and management practices. It was declared a 'Global Local Government Unit (LGU) model for Climate Change Adaptation' by the UN-ISDR and the World Bank in 2008. The province has boldly initiated many innovative approaches to tackling disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) and continues to integrate CCA in its DRM structure.[26] Considered as a local government exemplar in CCA, it recently inaugurated the first-in-the-world Climate Change Academy for LGUs 'to develop integrated competencies and provide information and technology for building the resilience of communities to climate change impacts'.[27]

Puerto Princesa[28] has achieved numerous international, national and local awards for achieving a balance between development initiatives and environmental protection. It looks at multi-stakeholdership as the best approach to implementing local climate change mitigation actions.[29] The Municipality of San Francisco, received the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011. It has integrated its *5-year Risk Reduction and Management Plan* in its programs and projects down to the purok level.[30]

Pending Bill to Address Funding of Climate Change Adaptation

Senate Bill 2811 seeks to establish the People's Survival Fund (PSF), a special trust fund for financing adaptation programs and projects based on the *Framework on*

[26] Province of Albay, Philippines: Responding to the Challenges of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (available at http://www.preventionweb.net/files/section/230_Philippinesalbaycasestudy.pdf).
[27] See further: http://www.pia.gov.ph/?m=1&t=1&id=65717.
[28] See further: http://www.puertoprincesa.ph.
[29] See further: http://kitakyushu.iges.or.jp/docs/demo/puerto_princesa_philippines/presentation.pdf.
[30] San Francisco *5 - Year Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (MDRRM) Plan* (2011-2015) (available at http://unisdrhpps.net/confluence/download/attachments/9994301/San_Francisco_MDRRM_Plan_Package.pdf?version=1).

Climate Change. The Bill, already passed on third and final reading at the Senate, now awaits approval by the Lower House of Congress before it becomes law.

A Test Case on Ecological Sustainability in Mining Zones

While laws and policies are in place to help the country adapt to climate change, reduce vulnerability and poverty and promote sustainability, the DENR (the country's primary enforcement agency) has come under fire for its indiscriminate issuing of mining permits and failure to enforce relevant environmental laws. Citizens are now seeking novel remedies under the *Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases* (2010) (the *Rules*).[31]

In August, 2011, a petition[32] for the issue of the Writ of Kalikasan (Nature) and a Temporary Environmental Protection Order (TEPO) was filed by indigenous peoples, residents and non-government organizations to: (a) prohibit the DENR and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) from processing and considering all pending and new applications for mineral agreements or financial technical assistance agreements in the Philippines; and (b) stopping all mining operations in the Zamboanga Peninsula, including the mineral exploration of MSSON Mining in Midsalip's forest reserve or watershed area until all environmental concerns were sufficiently addressed. The environmental issues raised involved giving effect to the 'statutory definition of carrying capacity of our ecosystems and whether public respondents' mindless issuances of mining tenements in biologically diverse Zamboanga peninsula have violated the principle of non-regression'. As of March 2011, the total land area of 808,269.09 hectares or about 51 percent of the region's total landmass, which covered critical protected areas, is subject to potential mining. The Supreme Court granted the petition for a Writ of Kalikasan against the mining operations in the area. However, it did not issue a TEPO. Instead, it directed the respondents to submit a return of the writ. The Supreme Court has designated the Court of Appeals to handle the reception of evidence for the parties.

[31] These rules formed the focus of the Phillipine Country Report published in *IUCNAEL e-Journal* 2011(1).
[32] *Phil. Earth Justice Center, Inc., et al vs. Department of Environment and Natural Resources*, G.R. No. 197754 (available at http://www.elaw.org/system/files/Writ+of+Nature+%28Kalikasan %29+v.+Mining+Phils.pdf).

Except for a handful of extraordinary LGUs with action-oriented leaders, effective climate change response is still in an arena of plans and discussions. It remains to be seen whether the adoption of the *National Climate Change Action Plan*, like a magic wand, will stir the stakeholders into action and help provide the longed-for solutions to the vulnerability and sustainability trials that the Philippines must surmount?

Against the backdrop of the country's dynamic governance structure, complex political system, poverty, political stability problems and the prevailing cultural values, the challenges to integrate climate change adaptation and DRRM in programs and projects are enormous. The President has to exhibit the political muscle that his predecessors failed to exercise, to make the LGUs key players in this process - and embed a participatory, transparent and accountable mindset of governance under the rule of law. The DILG Secretary has to start pressuring local chief executives to mainstream climate change in governance and to ensure that multi-sectoral local development councils (as policy-making and program monitoring bodies of each LGU) and the local DRRM councils are functional. Policy pronouncements, policies and laws for effective climate change response should be cascaded down to the stakeholders of the smallest political and geographical units, pursuing 'appropriate disaster reduction measures at that level to enable the communities and individuals to reduce significantly their vulnerability to hazards'.[33]

The new administration under President Benigno Aquino III has shown there is light at the end of the tunnel in societal reforms. There is a bigger 'space' for civil society engagement with Government, a fact that most civil society members acknowledge. President Aquino's actions and policies in curbing corruption, prosecuting erring public officials and widening the democratic space for governance by engaging with civil society, have generated increased trust from the citizens and even investors that genuine reforms can take place under the new administration.

In addition to initiatives by the national government, and perhaps as a sign of increased trust in the policies of the Aquino administration, foreign-assisted climate

[33] *Hyogo Declaration*.

change adaptation programs and projects are currently being implemented.[34] These are expected to help in strengthening community level capacities to reduce disaster risk at the local level.

It is imperative that the national administration re-examine its policies in promoting mining and fossil fuel industries, which are not sustainable for the longer term and may compound the miseries of devastated communities and worsen the ecological impacts. The administration's flagship programs must be congruent with the vision, goals and programs outlined in the *Philippine Development Plan* including incorporating the integrated ecosystem approach to attain sustainable development and reduce poverty. The clustering of the Cabinet hopefully paves the way for a more focused assessment and implementation of the over-all goals of this *Plan*.

Since time is of the essence, it is imperative that urgent concerted actions from all sectors are effected in moving towards long-term sustainability of the Government's policies and programs, and strengthening the capacity of its inhabitants and institutions in stemming the disastrous effects of climate change in the Philippines.

Possible New Research Agenda's for the IUCNAEL

There is a marked resistance by the influential policy makers towards effecting the goals and visions enunciated by the *Philippine Development Plan* and the *National Climate Change Action Plan*. Research and collaborative work on the *Plan*'s seven priority programs of Food Security, Water Sufficiency, Environmental and Ecological Stability, Human Security, Sustainable Energy, Climate Smart Industries and Services and Knowledge and Capacity Development would be a significant boost in educating stakeholders and in making the *Plan* a living reality in the country's climate-challenged communities.

[34] These include: the Millennium Development Goals Fund 1656: Strengthening the Philippines' Institutional Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change funded by the Government of Spain; the Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project (which aims to develop the resiliency and test adaptation strategies that will develop the resiliency of farms and natural resource management to the effects of climate change) funded by the Global Environmental Facility(GEF) through the World Bank; the Adaptation to Climate Change and Conservation of Biodiversity Project and the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (envisioned to develop the adaptation capacity of communities), both funded by the GTZ, Germany. See further: http://kidlat.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/cab/climate_change /Impacts.html).