

**Secretary Angelo T. Reyes Presentation on the Strategic
Framework and Structure of the Presidential Task Force on
Climate Change (PTFCC)**

22 October 2007 – Albay Climate Change Adaptation Summit

Madame President, Mr. Vice President, other distinguished guests, fellow conference participants, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

The Presidential Task Force on Climate Change convened last Friday to arrive at a climate change response framework and to finalize the structure of the PTFCC. And, this morning, I would like to formally present our recommendations to the President and to share this working document with the participants of this conference.

Before doing so, allow me to commend Albay Governor Joey Salceda for organizing this First National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation. It brings to fore not just the sense of urgency with which we in government, alongside our partners in the private sector and civil society, must confront the challenges of climate change, but also the key role that local governments and communities must play in mounting such a response.

Hopefully, the response framework that I will present would serve as a good starting point for approaching the problem from a common perspective.

By this time—and especially considering the presence of some of the nation’s most eminent scientists and technical experts in this conference—there should be no reason to dwell at length on the science behind the issue of climate change and on the urgency with which we must confront it.

What we should be clear on is **how climate change would likely impact the Philippines** and, consequently, on **how we should address the problem.**

Scientific studies indicate that as a country we contribute very little by way of greenhouse gas emissions which give rise to global warming. Ironically, our archipelago—by reason of terrain and location—is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Over the past several decades, nature has given us fair warning in the form of warming and precipitation trends, the frequency and intensity of typhoons, the occurrence of devastating floods and landslides, the alternation of severe El Niño and La Niña events, and the seasonal outbreak of health hazards like dengue and red tide.

If these adverse trends worsen, our **food and water supply**, along with the **health, livelihood** and **settlements** of some communities, could soon be at risk.

It is precisely to assess the magnitude and proximity of the threat and to mount an appropriate and cohesive response that our Task Force has been formed.

In my view, operations of the Task Force should be premised on the following principles. First, they have to be **aligned with the global action agenda on climate change**. Second, they should be **comprehensive and holistic** in character—involving the total community, including the bureaucracy. As such, they should serve to **synchronize currently disparate efforts** across disciplines, agencies and sectors under one common strategy for maximum impact. To facilitate program or project initiation and implementation, there will be a **strong bias for local efforts** and interventions.

Taking off from these principles, we can now agree on a climate change response framework and map out the road ahead.

The core of the proposed response framework hinges on a **critical balance between mitigation and adaptation measures**. Both are essential in addressing the current and imminent risks brought about by climate change.

While the Philippines might not contribute significantly to total greenhouse gas emissions, it does not absolve us from the moral imperative to clean up our act. We have to do our share in mitigating climate change as part of the global community.

On this score, the Department of Energy, in collaboration with the members of the Task Force, will take decisive action, for instance, to achieve a climate-friendly energy supply mix. In the same context, the passage of a renewable energy bill in Congress would be a strategic impetus to raise the share of renewable energy sources to 20% of the overall portfolio. Many more mitigation interventions in the areas of energy generation, energy efficiency and transport/consumer behavior are outlined in the draft Action Plan, but I will not dwell on them in this presentation.

At the same time, the Task Force will design adaptation responses to address vulnerabilities of specific sectors and areas. Focus will be on disaster-prone settlements, high-risk population centers, and food production areas. The draft Action Plan contains a number of

adaptation measures that have been recommended in previous discussions, and I expect this conference to enhance its substantive content in this area.

In view of the magnitude of the challenge, the country would need to harness **financial resources** and **technology solutions** to address the causes and effects of climate change.

Recognizing the massive infrastructure and technical requirements to pursue its twin goals, the Task Force is committed to search for financing mechanisms in support of local and sectoral initiatives. These include ODA funds, market-based incentives, subsidies targeted at lowering costs for power generation using solar, wind and other clean technologies, and innovative lending schemes.

To carry out mitigation strategies, local communities would need access to climate-friendly technologies to establish low-carbon infrastructure for transportation, energy, agriculture, industry, and settlements. On the adaptation side, farmers, for instance, would need to be introduced to technologies for producing drought-resistant crops and the like. The Task Force will facilitate transfer of technology through bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements.

The enabling interventions on the financial and technology fronts would enhance the capacity of the Task Force to rally stakeholders from diverse sectors around its core advocacy. By addressing the main constraints to effective mitigation and adaptation responses, it can focus on **social mobilization** as a key strategy to achieve the critical mass necessary for maximum impact.

In the months to come, we will engage various clusters of stakeholders—from home and office builders to local government officials, from car manufacturers to mall owners, from appliance makers to the academe—to assemble a critical mass of climate change response advocates who can make a genuine difference.

We expect widespread social mobilization to yield benefits on several fronts:

- First, we can look forward to effective governance of the Philippine climate change response by setting in place the right policy environment and a system for tracking the progress of concerted multi-agency efforts to plug vulnerabilities.
- Second, pro-action and cooperation among diverse stakeholders would ensure a unified and coherent national response.

- Third, ordinary citizens would be more open to adopting lifestyle changes, which can help in reducing carbon emissions.
- On the international level, Philippine stakeholders, working in concert, can highlight the urgent need for industrialized states to fulfill their mitigation commitments so as to avert devastation and dislocation in their home land.

To be consistent with the proposed response framework, we propose the following refinements in the **organization** of the Task Force.

First, the PTFCC Chair and Vice Chair would enjoy the benefit of counsel on matters like technology solutions, financing schemes and social mobilization strategies from a **Board of Advisors**.

Day-to-day operations will be handled by a **Climate Change Office**. Headed by an Executive Director, this office will handle policy development, project monitoring and evaluation, information and education, and administrative support.

All the **Task Force members** will be involved directly in program planning and implementation. In keeping with the principles stated earlier, we have opted not to group programs along functional areas. Instead, **cross-sectoral PTFCC flagship programs will be classified into four areas**—mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology—consistent with the proposed climate change response framework.

These flagship programs—and the projects under them—would not preclude the initiation or continuance of mitigation and adaptation measures that fall under the exclusive ambit of any of the line agencies.

Let me conclude my presentation at this point, and submit the preliminary substantive program elements contained in Version 1 of the Philippine Climate Change Response Action Plan as input to the discussions in the next three days. We will update the Action Plan for everyone's benefit after this conference.

Thank you very much.