

**THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY IN TRANSPORT (MEET):
SPEECH ON INLAND TRANSPORT**

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*Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Heads of Delegation,
Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

On behalf of my Philippine government and my delegation, I'd like to thank our Japanese hosts for their very warm hospitality and the Minister Kazuyoshi Kaneko for his efficiency. It is indeed a pleasure for me and my delegates to be here at Tokyo for this Forum to hear and exchange views with our friends on Global Environment and Energy in Transport and I hope to share with you our experience. Transport sector is responsible for 23% of global CO2 emissions and continues to grow rapidly in developing countries. At the same time, transport sector is a critical enabler of economic development and growth. It is one of the backbones of growth. Transportation plays a central role in facilitating

economic activities across sectors and between regions, and is thus the essential fiber in nation building, in economic development and ensuring quality of life of our people.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change has been cited as perhaps the greatest threat humankind is facing nowadays. The latest document to stress this fact is the Fourth Assessment Report (FAR) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which has given more evidence of local impacts of a changing climate.

This is particularly true for the Philippines which has an inherent vulnerability to natural disasters, stemming in part from its geographic location. As an archipelago situated in the Pacific ring of fire, its large mountainous terrain, narrow coastal plains and interior valleys, the Philippines has always been confronted by natural hazards like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tropical cyclones.

The Philippines is ranked highest in terms of tropical cyclone occurrence and the resulting deaths and third in terms of people exposed to such events annually. An average of 20 cyclones traverse the country yearly, causing physical and economic

devastation. Climate variability either produce floods or droughts for the country with their respective adverse consequences.

A threat as great and serious as climate change requires no less than focused and consolidated action that can only be brought on by a common vision of both the private sector and the government with synergistic planning and programming to combat climate change impacts on the Philippines.

Under the current circumstances, development cannot proceed on “business as usual”. There is a need to re-think our over-all development strategy in light of the alarming manifestations of climate change impacts. The urgency of this task cannot be emphasized enough because we must not reach the tipping points of global warming beyond which uncontrollable climate disasters will occur. We need to do meaningful mitigation. We need to make a lasting difference.

Voluntary carbon reduction is a necessary aspect of anticipatory adaptation which is critical for the Philippines as a climate change vulnerable country. This means employing risk management in planning and programming.

Recognizing that inland transport, particularly in the urban sector, is one of the highest sources of greenhouse gases and air pollution because of the rapid rise in private vehicles, it is important to develop a mechanism to ensure that national policies, especially those that promote public transportation and non-motorized transportation. It is also equally important that these national policies are translated to local actions and to provide necessary technical and financial expertise.

The need to actively involve other stakeholders in the national and local levels is deemed as an important element to ensure that policies that promote energy efficient and environmentally-friendly transportation systems have the buy-in and support of the populace and see to its implementation.

Considering that emissions from developing countries are rapidly rising and in a few years can rival or overtake the emissions from developed countries, it is essential that developed countries and development institutions support developing countries for the appropriate and necessary technology, finance, and capacity-building, in order to achieve what we have agreed and signed today.

The Philippines, very much share the long-term vision for a low-carbon and low-pollution transport systems while ensuring sustainable economic development. As such, the government is willing to commit local resources in order to achieve this vision. The Philippines has recently allocated US\$40M for programs aimed at attaining this vision.

Perhaps more importantly, and while recognizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, the Philippines calls for a genuine and serious commitment, both by developed and developing countries, to ensure deep cuts on greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector and to prevent future emissions by institutionalizing environmentally sustainable transportation policies for sea, air and land transport. As we speak, back in my country, we are now formulating our Environmentally Sustainable Transport Strategies to address these concerns, among others.

In order to better support effective policy-making and assessment, the Philippines support the call to improve accuracy, adequacy, and comparability of statistics on environment, energy, and transport. A simple and transferable methodology to measure emissions and estimate reductions is needed in order for national

and local governments in developing countries to better understand the problem and formulate effective policies.

In Conclusion Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Philippines recognizes the need to re-visit its existing policies and mandates that govern the transport sector, especially in urban areas. A new paradigm in tackling problems on energy efficiency and environmentally sustainable transport must be put in place to redirect the current development path that favours low carbon and low pollution transport systems. The countries in the world are at different stages of development. There are many, many opportunities for collaboration and sharing of experiences. Those with the experience and means can partner and assist those in the development stage. It is opportune for us to work together for a better tomorrow.