

LAUNCH EVENT OF CCC-UNDP-AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PROJECT: PROJECT CLIMATE TWIN PHOENIX

Oakwood Premier Nostalg, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
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Message of **Comm. Antonio M. Bernardo**
CEO, HLURB

1. H.E. **Bill Tweddell**, Australian Ambassador to the Phils.
2. Ms. **Luiza Carvalho**, UN Resident Coordinator, Phils.
3. Secretary **Mary Ann Lucille L. Sering**, Vice Chairperson, Climate Change Commission
4. Deputy Secretary **Ewen McDonald**, Department of Foreign Affairs
5. Undersecretary **Lesly Cordero**, Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery (OPARR)
6. Commissioner **Heherson T. Alvarez**, Climate Change Commission
7. Commissioner **Naderev M. Saño**, Climate Change Commission
8. Commissioner **Linda L. Malenab-Hornilla**, HLURB

Honorable local government officials, fellow servants in government, guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

It was just a month ago when the "ASIA-EUROPE Meeting (ASEM) Manila Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: Post Haiyan – A Way Forward," was held here in Manila. The Vice President of the Philippines, who also happens to be the Chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, HEJejomar C. Binay, addressed this conference which was attended by around 150 senior government officials, scientists, academics, policymakers, industry and business leaders, and representatives of regional and international organizations from Asia and Europe. They were here to discuss how best to handle future mega-disasters. The Philippine experience with Typhoon Yolanda served as the backdrop of the discussions and

debates on whether current international practices and principles still hold in the light of these experiences and whereby new policies and principles on disaster risk reduction and management can be adopted.

Indeed, the devastations we have encountered from Typhoon Yolanda and from previous natural hazards, and our country's position as the third most disaster-vulnerable country on earth according to the World Risk Index of 2012, have opened up countless opportunities for strategic convergence among local and international actors in terms of not just relief and recovery programs but more so on disaster risk reduction and management. We need all the assistance we can get from our foreign partners as much as we and the global community, have to learn from our devastating experiences to raise the level of awareness, expertise, preparedness and intervention measures on disasters and disaster events.

The Project Twin Phoenix was conceived in response to the destructions wrought by Tropical Storm Sendong that hit Northern Mindanao particularly the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan in December 2011. Exactly a year after, a stronger typhoon, Pablo, struck Southern Mindanao. These areas were not previously known to have experienced strong typhoons, thus, making the project all the more significant.

We are gathered here today to launch the three milestone outputs of the Project Climate Twin Phoenix which are envisioned to help communities and cities assess their climate and disaster risks as a basis for risk-sensitive contingency, development and land use planning, and identification, design and implementation of climate and disaster risk adaptation and reduction measures.

At this point I commend with gratitude the entities and personalities who were involved in producing the outputs being launched today. Special mention goes to the Climate Change Commission as the implementing agency, the UNDP, and the Australian Government for providing the funds and technical support. I also commend the other national government agencies, the local government units, and other stakeholders who have contributed to the successful completion of these projects.

It was just timely that one of the project outputs, the **Supplemental Guidelines in Mainstreaming Climate and Disaster Risks in the Comprehensive Land Use Plans**, was already approved last February of this year by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB). As stated in the document, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) is an effective disaster risk reduction instrument which may at the same time result in climate change adaptation. Through the rational allocation of land uses, the CLUP has the capability to reduce the exposure of people, assets and economic activities by identifying safer places to live, sustain livelihood, and ensure optimum productivity of our natural resources.

Since the start of the HLURB "Zero CLUP Backlog" project in 2012, we have been urging all the LGUs to update their CLUPs in a way that these should be climate and disaster

resilient not only in compliance to the Climate Change Act of 2009 and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, but more so because of the country's high exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards and disaster risks. The succession of natural hazards like tropical cyclones and storms, storm surges of tsunami proportions, rising flood levels, etc., that hit the country, compounded by the effects of climate change should propel everyone to undertake concerted action at all levels.

I hope that the Supplemental Guidelines and all of the tools, methodologies, and strategies developed under the Project Twin Phoenix will be fully appreciated and utilized by all cities and municipalities in the formulation of their CLUPs, and by all actors to be fully guided in making informed decisions on intervention policies and strategies to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities in their respective communities.

Once more, congratulations and thank you for all these worthy endeavors.