

Unity Statement of Philippine Climate Watch Alliance

The world is in the middle of an environmental crisis. The increased concentration of greenhouse gasses (GHG) particularly carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere has led to the unprecedented rise in global temperature within a very short period of time. This phenomenon is called global warming. The GHG concentration in the earth atmosphere is the highest in the last 650,000 years and is expected to continue in the coming decades.

Global warming is brought primarily by the unsustainable production, use and emission of fossil fuels and GHG in the last two centuries. Industrialized countries and their transnational corporations (TNCs) in the North particularly the United States, Japan and European countries are the main contributors to the total global CO₂ emission since 1840. The situation is aggravated by the fast and relentless destruction of the earth's forests, which act as natural sinks of carbon in the atmosphere.

Meanwhile, global warming brings sufferings to the world, particularly the impoverished populace who has no means to adapt to environmental changes that it induces. Typhoons, hurricanes, and floods are becoming more rampant and destructive all over the world. Epidemics and water-borne diseases have been observed to be on the rise because of the inundation of many communities. Elsewhere, communities experience worsening water scarcity. Biodiversity is similarly threatened due to the resulting alteration or destruction of natural habitats.

To avert global warming and address its adverse impacts, the Kyoto Protocol, a landmark international agreement on climate change, came about in 1998. Yet far from resolving the problem, the Kyoto Protocol only targeted to reduce global carbon emission in 2012 by 5.2% from the 1990 level. It also introduced market-based and profit-oriented mechanism such as carbon trading and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to reduce carbon emission of countries or corporations.

After a decade of implementation, the Kyoto Protocol failed to reduce global carbon emission. Worse, its carbon trading proposal became a convenient excuse of countries from North America and Europe to totally evade the real problem of carbon emission. Despite the failure of the Protocol, the United States and a few industrialized countries are opposing the immediate formulation of new and more binding international agreements to significantly reduce global carbon emission in the next decades.

In the Philippines, global warming is currently one of the major concerns of the people. Studies made both by government agencies and independent institutions point out that the Philippines is among the countries in the world that are most vulnerable to the impacts of global warming. In particular, the country is forecasted to experience increased frequency of tropical cyclones and rising sea levels. The recent tragedies caused by 'super typhoons' that have killed thousands of people and the record-breaking temperature extremes in the past ten years are deemed part of the effects of global warming on the Philippines.

In the midst of these, the Arroyo administration still lacks a genuine program to mitigate the impacts of climate change and help the people to adapt to the effects of global

warming. This is compounded by the fact that the administration's globalization-oriented policies and programs for the energy, mining, forest, agriculture and trade sectors are making the Philippines more vulnerable to the effects of climate change and will increase the country's GHG emissions in the long run. In its strategic energy development program, construction of private coal power plants continues and the dependence on coal as source of power increases. In agriculture, the massive plantation and production of biofuels for export are among its priority policy and program in the sector. While deforestation in the country continues as a result of the government bias towards large-scale mining and logging projects.

In this light, we, from the Philippine Climate Watch Alliance, declare our unity and principles on the issue of climate change and global warming.

We believe that global warming is more than an environmental concern. The root cause of global warming is rooted in the unsustainable, wasteful and profit-oriented production of the global economy. Under this set up, industrialized countries and their TNCs will continue to extract, produce, and consume carbon-based fuels in an unsustainable and detrimental level. The current neo-liberal globalization policies of industrialized countries, international financial institutions and export credit agencies, which the Philippine government firmly adheres to, perpetuate this situation. Recognition of this context is pre-requisite to genuinely address the issue of climate change and global warming.

We believe that decisions and actions which the international community and the Philippine government will eventually take should primarily consider and uphold the interest and welfare of the majority of our people and the environment.

Below is our position and calls

1. We are one with the international community in demanding the significant reduction of global carbon emission between 50% to 90% of the 2000 levels in the next three decades, especially by industrialized countries like the USA, the European Union, and Japan.
2. We are highly critical on the use of market-based solutions such as carbon trading and CDM as these are not effective in reducing GHG emissions. Private corporations and TNCs have manipulated such mechanisms for them to continue emitting GHG to the environment
3. We propose an overhaul of the energy plan and program of the government which promote the dependence of the country to foreign fossil fuels and technologies. A new strategic energy plan should be formulated that genuinely promotes and harness locally based clean energy resources and will lead to energy independence and self sufficiency. At the same time we demand moratorium on the construction and operation of new coal and nuclear power plants.
4. We demand the comprehensive development and expansion of new renewable energy (RE) resources and facilities particularly from geothermal, solar and wind power resources. The development of RE resources and facilities should be in

control and for the benefit of the Filipino people not for the interest for profit of local and foreign corporations.

5. We call for massive education and public information campaign on climate change and global warming.
 - a. to ensure public awareness of climate change and how each one can help mitigate and adapt to the effects of global warming at the local level
 - b. to promote sustainable, responsible consumption and to counter the culture of consumerism
6. We demand that government to prioritize climate change adaptation and prepare towns and communities on the possible impacts of climate change.
 - c. conduct and make publicly accessible a nationwide geohazard study of the current Philippine geochemico-physical situation
 - d. construct necessary and appropriate infrastructures such as landslide or flood control and riverbank stabilization systems especially in disaster-prone areas
 - e. promote risk reduction and disaster preparedness among the populace
7. We demand on government to implement a total commercial log ban and mining in our natural forests, and launch massive forest rehabilitation and protection program using native forest species.
8. We call for the review and suspension of Bio-fuel Act. We believe the Act serves as the framework which promotes the large-scale production of biofuels in a way that will threaten the food security, aggravate landlessness and deforestation in the country.
9. We call on the rejection of government policies and international agreements that only serve to hasten the depletion of our natural resources, destruction of the environment and contribute further to the impacts of global warming.
10. We call on the Philippine government, the academe, professional scientific organizations, and individual scientists to promote and conduct research on climate change, particularly on local climate forecasts, impacts and mitigation measures. Results of such efforts should be disseminated to all concerned agencies, organizations and sectors through the mass media, educational institutions and various public fora.