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Asia-LEDS Forum 2013
Manila, Philippines
Putting LEDS Into Practice

Commissioner Naderev Saño
Opening Remarks

Friends, distinguished delegates, a pleasant morning to all of you. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Reed Aeschliman from the USAID, Ms. Preety Bandhari from the ADB, and the Co-Chairs of the Asia LEDS Partnership, Dr. Doddy Sukadri and Mr. Orestes Anastasia.

Imagine. I invite you to imagine. Just imagine.

On my way here while on the MRT, I realized the realities we confront. People want faster, more efficient, and more convenient transport. People want dignity. People want better lives.

I realize likewise that we have to work to make low emissions and climate resilient measures a real choice, not an imposition, not a false option.

I start by borrowing a story about Mahatma Gandhi. A woman once brought her boy to Mahatma Gandhi to have him tell her boy to stop eating sugar. He told them to return in two weeks. When they returned, he told the boy to stop eating sugar. When asked why he didn't tell the boy the first time to stop eating sugar, Gandhi replied, "Two weeks ago I was still eating sugar."

I hope you can imagine the moral of this story. "Do you want to change the world?" Then be the change you want to see in this world." This is the mantra of transformation. This is the mantra of development. It should also be the mantra of our quest to solve climate change.

The climate crisis demands us to imagine. Imagine if we take climate change seriously. Imagine if we were on track to solve the climate crisis. And imagine if in the process of solving climate change we were to respect the rights of people to development? Imagine a world where renewable energy powers our lives. A world where environment friendly transport brings us to our destinations. And imagine a world free from poverty and inequity.

My friends, if the world would even have a chance to pursue development, and preserve the dignity of the human race, the first order of the day is to meet the 2 degrees Celsius target. Imagine what ACTIONS are necessary to meet this goal while in the process ensuring human development and allowing the poorest of the world to pursue their aspirations of a better life?

Just last Friday, the IPCC released AR5 Working Group I summary for policy makers. Human influence on the climate system is clear. This is evident from the

increasing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, positive radiative forcing, observed warming, and understanding of the climate system. AR5 says “It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.” In June of this year, we have breached the 400ppm mark.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture and the situation is such that even the most ambitious emissions reductions by developed countries, who should have been taking the lead in combatting climate change in the past 2 decades, will not be enough to avert the crisis. We now live in a carbon-constrained world, and we face a future that leaves us with an even more narrow carbon budget. My friends, it is now too late, too late to talk about Annex I countries being able to solve the climate crisis on their own. We have entered a new era that demands global solidarity from the developing world in order to fight climate change and ensure that pursuit of sustainable human development remains at the fore of the global community’s efforts.

It is now time to talk about fair shares in this global effort. It is now time to talk about how we as a global community join hands in confronting this challenge. We cannot sit and stay helpless staring at this international climate stalemate. It is now time to take action.

It is possible.

But we need to acknowledge that we are facing two challenges at the same time: the climate crisis and the crisis of development. This is the only way that we can start making the whole world understand that what needs to be done can only be done by attacking climate change and poverty at the same time.

It was the Secretary general of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, Maurice Strong who said that “History reminds us that what is not possible today, may be inevitable tomorrow.”

I am fully aware that while this imagination of a vision of a principle-oriented and equitable approach to solving the climate and development crises are essential elements to encourage progress in the global efforts, they are never enough, and much more needs to be done. Imagine if we can muster the political will to be imaginative yet sensitive, to be judicious yet fearless. After all, the real essential prerequisite to solve the climate crisis remains elusive. But genuine trust and global solidarity can make a difference.

I am truly hopeful that the low-emission and climate-resilient development strategies are part of the right steps towards building trust and global solidarity and that the LEDS partnerships around the are fully contextualized by the emergency climate pathway and the imperative to fulfill and foster people’s rights to a better life. The opportunities and imperatives of these partnerships for learning, leadership, and collaboration must be taken forward as we collectively embark on this journey. Imagine if we can share best practices, tools,

collaborate, cooperate, and coordinate effectively. This will allow us to take climate action that is closely intertwined with our development decisions.

It should be stressed even with the context of LEDS, mitigation and adaptation can never be separable.

We note the key factors for success in promoting low-emission and climate-resilient development strategies: Top-level commitment and leadership; Integration into development planning, cross-cutting approach; Strong data basis & scientific analysis (GHG inventory, BAU, scenarios, etc.); Transparency in our approaches; Stakeholder participation and engagement; peer-to-peer learning; LEDS must be viewed as a living and dynamic process; Inter-ministerial coordination including key ministries.

It should be also stressed that LEDS will only be successful if there is country drivenness. We should pursue genuine global transformation and not mere burden-shifting.

In contrast, we note the key pitfalls of LEDS. LEDS would fail if there is external imposition, nationally inappropriate mitigation or adaptation actions, supply-drivenness, poor integration in national development strategies, and lack of information for prioritization.

Indeed it is time to move beyond what we put down on paper. It is time for action. It is time for implementation. It is time to put things into practice. It has been noted in the World Economic and Social Survey that “Nothing short of a technological revolution on the scale of the first industrial revolution will be required to meet the challenge of sustainable development.” It is time to transform the world.

“Do you want to change the world?” Then be the change you want to see in this world.”

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, on behalf of the Climate Change Commission and the Philippine government, and the people of the Philippines, I sincerely welcome all of you to the Philippines, here in the City of Makati here in Metro Manila for the Asia LEDS Forum 2013.

I thank all of you, kindly, for joining us and walking with us in this journey.

May we all transform the world. Thank you very much. Maraming salamat.