

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

**2023 POST-SONA DISCUSSIONS: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT
JULY 26, 2023**

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Welcome to the 2023 Post-SONA Discussions. After a successful State of the Nation Address by President Marcos Jr., let us continue to dive deeper into his message as we tackle specific issues in our cluster panel discussions.

Ang pag-aalaga ng kalikasan, ang pagbabago ng panahon o climate change at ang ating agarang pagresponde sa bawat sakuna – ilan lamang ito sa ating mga tatalakayin. And joining us this afternoon are our Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads for the Environmental Protection and Disaster Management Cluster while some will be joining us via Zoom as they are attending the ongoing NDRRMC meeting on Typhoon Egay.

We have Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, Department of Environment and Natural Resources; Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr., Department of Science and Technology; Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., Department of National Defense; Assistant Secretary Mylene Capongcol, Department of Energy; Undersecretary Marlo Iringan, Department of Interior and Local Government; Secretary Roberto Borje, Climate Change Commission; Secretary Rex Gatchalian, Department of Social Welfare and Development.

So, speaking of emergencies and disasters, the Philippines is highly exposed to natural hazards such as typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic activities. Since climate change exacerbates the impact of natural disasters, what are the efforts undertaken by the DOST to strengthen the country's disaster preparedness and resiliency such as improving early warning or strengthening the capabilities of the PAGASA and Phivolcs?

DOST SEC. SOLIDUM JR.: Thank you, Daphne.

To explain the whole range of what the Department of Science and Technology is doing, which is focused on science for resilience, let me quote first a famous part of the book of The Art of War by Sun Tzu – because this would give us the context of why we are doing this. *“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained, you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”*

So essentially what this would mean is that, we need to know the hazards that will be experienced in all places in the Philippines, when will this happen and most importantly, how would this impact the people, the communities, the structures, the buildings, the businesses, the agriculture, the environment and so on and so forth.

And so, one of the things that the Department of Science and Technology is doing is to conduct hazards and risk assessment by mapping the different hazards related to weather and climate

and geological events like earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis together with the other hazards mapping organizations from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and put these in a platform where everyone can get the information at their fingertips.

We have developed the GeoRisk Philippines Initiative, a multi-agency platform participated by many organizations including Phivolcs, PAGASA, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Office of Civil Defense, NAMRIA and all the other agencies where applications have been prepared so that you can get the information. For example, the HazardHunterPH will allow anyone that would use the application to know all the hazards that will visit a particular place in less than 30 seconds.

If you are a planner, you can use the GeoAnalyticsPH and it will provide you maps, charts, tables and assessment for political units like barangay, town, city or province. And if you want to have a nationally-consistent database for exposure of things that will be affected by the disaster, we have the GeoMapper.

So, all of these are now available for use because the GeoRisk Philippines Initiative is the government's platform for sharing hazard and risk information for a better, more accurate and updated hazards and risks assessment – that's knowing your enemy.

The second is, when will the enemy strike? Hence, we need to establish monitoring systems for weather and climate, for earthquake, volcanoes and tsunami, and landslides. So, PAGASA has been developing the Doppler radar systems – last year and this year under the President's term, we have inaugurated the most modern, solid state Doppler radar. And so, we now have around 19 Doppler radars and this is actually more than enough because some are for redundancy.

We have more flood forecasting warning centers and synoptic stations. For Phivolcs, we have at least 120 seismic stations and many tsunami alert stations; and on volcanoes, we can actually monitor the activities of the volcanoes anywhere we are – from our homes, from our offices, even if we're travelling.

So, science has improved the detection of what can happen. But how do we relate what we do in these weather and climate systems that are happening now versus climate change? We have to understand that at the Department of Science and Technology, our framing for present and near future hazards and global warming should be in a form where whatever we do now will impact how we prepare for the long-term global warming. There is one continuum process; climate change is not separate from one we do. So knowing the enemy when it will strike, we would know – through science.

But next is to know your self – what are your capabilities. Are the communities able to respond for small scale events? Yes, definitely! But what our problems are, are the large scale extreme events like super typhoons or the so-called big ones. So we have been developing scenarios so that our communities, our government can be prepared for extreme disasters that can really impact not only a city, town, province or even the whole country.

So, how do we actually help other organizations prepare? We have developed out of the GeoRisk Philippines platform, the first-ever automated planning for recovery – the 'Plan Smart Ready to Rebuild' – together with Office of Civil Defense and the World Bank where we developed an app we use - type the name of a city or town, it will prepare the socioeconomic physical profile, the

hazard maps, the exposure, the possible impacts. And what you do is to look at intervention options appropriate to the impact that has happened and just using down/drop menu options, you select the intervention and push the button, the app will prepare a recovery plan for you.

This will revolutionize the planning for recovery which would usually take months because a local government would need to find an expert, hazards assessment expert, a geographic information specialist expert and a person who can write good English *[laughs]* - but the app can do it all for you.

And so, these would now make things easier for all the rest because the key to disaster resilience is planning and the key to planning would be information and data, shared across agencies.

Now, we need to communicate the risk after we understand. So, to prepare our self, people have to be informed by sharing an online platform called Project MAGHANDA and of course... I will make the announcement that tomorrow, starting tomorrow until Saturday... DOST will lead and exhibition of all the technologies that we have for urban risk – this is the HANDA Pilipinas exhibition, the first leg of a nationwide tour; we will have one in Cagayan de Oro for Mindanao and another one in Tacloban by November during the Yolanda celebration. So this will showcase the innovations done by Filipino experts, by DOST, the inventors and our partners.

Lastly, when the disaster happens, then we need to assist all the other agencies by providing them science, technology and innovation solutions to manage the disasters or even combat global warming by lessening the greenhouse gas emissions through our electric vehicles. But definitely, science can be an input to all what we have.

So, know your enemy and know yourself... for sure, we will win all battles. Thank you very much.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Solidum.

From science and technology, let's go to energy. The administration is eyeing to tap nuclear energy to beef up the country's power supply and ensure energy security. For the DOE, what is the government's plan and strategy to ensure the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards for the use of nuclear energy in the country?

DOE ASEC. CAPONGCOL: Thank you, Daphne. As part of the President's SONA statement in 2022, that for the government to adhere or to reexamine the development of nuclear power plants in the country and of course to adopt the regulations of the international atomic energy agencies considering there was a Fukushima incident so that we also look into the new technologies like the small scale modular reactors for nuclear power.

The Department of Energy spearheads the nuclear energy program with the creation or establishment of what we call the Nuclear Energy Program Interagency Committee which is composed of the various government agencies in charge of providing a support and standards for nuclear energy development in the country.

So, the NEPIAC undertakes several studies by virtue of the subcommittees that were created, to undertake a solution or responses to the 19 infrastructure issues that was defined by IAEA in developing nuclear power or energy development in a country. As we speak right now, there is

an ongoing stakeholders' nuclear energy training awareness program in Tagaytay City right now and that is to provide more information to our stakeholders. Our NEPIAC also is working with congress in the development and formulation and enactment of law that will spell out the policy, legal and regulatory framework for nuclear energy program in the country and that would include the creation of an independent, strong regulatory body for nuclear.

Also, we are now spearheading also the development of what we call the nuclear energy roadmap that will encompass all the requirements of the 19 infrastructure projects. Right now we are in the phase one or milestone number one of the approach that was taken by the IAEA which is informed or knowledgeable commitment towards energy development.

So, as far as renewable energy is concerned vis-à-vis the nuclear, it complements because nuclear power is stable in based-load and the variable in terms of dispatch of energy can support the power. So, this is also consistent with the government particularly the DOE's thrust of energy security. So, we need to provide supply of electricity to our consumers 24/7, 365 days in one year.

So that is our part and rest assured that we are doing all the transparency as well as decision making as far as the establishment of nuclear energy program in the country. Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Asec. So, this is also in keeping with the President's vision to have a healthy energy mix in order to address the energy needs of the country. We'll go back to that conversation also, I'm sure we would like to talk about that with the climate change commissioner here.

Let's first move on to DILG. Para sa kaalaman ng lahat, ang DILG ay nakikibahagi rin sa kampanya sa pagtitipid ng tubig. Please tell us more about DILG's initiatives in water conservation and other campaigns in environmental protection.

DILG USEC. IRINGAN: Thank you very much, Ma'am Daphne. Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat. Much, much earlier when we received the advisory from DOST-PAGASA that we'll be experiencing El Niño in the coming months, upon the directive of our Secretary Atty. Benjamin Abalos Jr., the DILG issued a memorandum circular for the guidance of all our local government units. Particularly, we ask our local government units to come up with policies and enact ordinances for the prudent use of water because we believe that we know of course, that with El Niño the result will be less rainfall which would further result to less stream flows and ground water and it will practically affect our supply of water.

So, part of the guidance that we gave to our local government units is to come up with policies and ordinances for the prudent use of water. Particularly, we highly encouraged our local government units to allow water concessionaires to fix leaks in water pipelines even while the permits for the digging of the roads is yet to be issued by local government units; we also urged our LGUs to do intense advocacy to their constituents particularly as minor as fixing the leaks in our faucets, it could seem inconsequential but if we lump on the households in the entire country, it would come up with a large volume of saved water, so as simple as that.

These are things that our local government units have been doing for quite some time. Also, from the directive of the Secretary, the Bureau of Fire Protection will only draw water from water hydrants if necessary. So, the BFP has that guidance from the Secretary.

On environmental protection, the DILG is a key agency in the implementation of the Supreme Court decision to have a Manila Bay cleanup recovery and rehabilitation. We have 187 local government units which are within the Manila Bay area and part of our collaboration with our local government units and other national government agencies is the conduct of yearly environmental compliance audit. So, the last audit that we came up with resulted to like 181 out of 187 cities and municipalities have come up with their sewage and septage management ordinance. 88% of the business establishments, 89% of the factories and 77% of households have already established their sewage treatment plant or have their own septic tanks. 181 local government units have already their approved solid waste management plan approved by the National Solid Waste Commission and 165 local government units have already their material recovery facility. These initiatives would contribute to addressing the factors and the practices that contributed to the degradation of Manila Bay.

So, as I mentioned in coordination with other national agencies, we will be monitoring the adherence to these policies by our local government units and we do it yearly. Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Undersecretary. At this point we are now joined live by the Secretary of the DENR, Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro of the Department of National Defense who are both currently at the Department of National Defense managing the situation on Typhoon Egay.

Thank you, sir and ma'am, for joining us. We know your time is very limited at the moment so I get right into the discussion. First question for DENR Secretary: The President said considering its fundamental importance, water security deserves our special focus; our efforts must not be scatter-shot but rather cohesive, centralized and systematic. On July 4, 2023 PAGASA declared the start of the El Niño phenomenon – daily water interruption started to decrease water level dams around the country. What are the programs being implemented by the government led by the Water Resources Management Office or DENR to ensure water supply?

DENR SEC. YULO-LOYZAGA: Thank you very much, Daphne, and good afternoon to everyone.

As you know the WRMO, the Water Resources Management Office was organized by executive order to actually coordinate the functions of all the water-related agencies of which there are more than 20 as you know, in order for us to achieve what we call an integrated water resource management approach to our water security – that means equity, economic efficiency and environmental sustainability are at the heart of the government's water security program.

So, in terms of our water security efforts let me start with the immediate. The WRMO has issued two bulletins already: One of course, basically to government offices and; the rest, for the general public to warn on the effects of El Niño. This means that conservation is at the top of our list. We do know that there are problems in infrastructure as well as of course the problem of supply because of the decreased rainfall amount. So infrastructure, whether it's the major infrastructure distribution or whether it's the pipes leading to your very home and your own usage as Usec. Iringan has already mentioned, we would like to plug the leaks wherever possible and this is something that every household can do.

We also need to collect and impound water. And so we are working with DPWH to see whether we can have some of the flood control projects. In fact, they also [have] water impounding projects to see whether those can be stored for the coming months and years, because of climate change and its impact.

Thirdly, we are looking for funding resources and of course for the cooperation of the local governments. And here's where it gets very interesting for us: We would like for example and this is through largely to the convergence of the different departments in this administration led by the DPWH and of course NEDA, we have LWUA and MWSS also participating looking at our budgets and our programs to see how we can design multi-purpose infrastructure to actually serve the different needs – of agriculture, of power, of water domestic used, of industry.

And so, we are looking at this infrastructure, a multi-purpose, in order to address the different dimensions of water security in the country.

Thirdly, in terms of the longer term, funding of course is a question. So we are now working with the DoF to see how we might be able to incentivize PPPs for bulk water and other projects that could in fact deliver water where it is most needed.

And lastly, we are looking at development partners such as the World Bank for example, who were actually interested in looking at multi-purpose infrastructure funding for us to be able to address especially those that are critically endangered because of climate change.

So, these are a whole range of projects and we hope that, in fact, by August we will be able to release our integrated water resources management plan. The consultations have already been completed and therefore, that new plan will be released for everyone to examine. Thanks, Daphne.

MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Toni. Let's move on to Secretary Teodoro. Sir, in the Philippines climate emergencies, natural disasters are not a matter of 'if', it's a matter of 'when' and currently we have one right now and I hope it's not so bad. But, seeing the Philippines as highly expose to natural hazards, what is the DND doing to strengthen the country's disaster preparedness and resiliency? Go ahead, sir.

DND SEC. TEODORO: Well, great strides have been made by our partner agencies with the primary responsibility for preparedness and resiliency namely of course the DILG because the first responders are the local government units; in case of predictive capabilities for natural calamities, a lot has been done by the DOST through PHIVOLCS and PAGASA and; the DPWH in terms of mitigating and resiliency, and the DENR.

Now, on our part what we want to be is the bridge between concerted national government assistance and efforts in all these aspects and the local government units. That is what the Office of Civil Defense is all about. So, it's a matter of marshaling and coordinating all efforts and – I forgot to mention our very energetic DSWD partner, Secretary Rex Gatchalian, who also has a great deal to do on preparedness and response and rehabilitation too. So, what the OCD is doing is to increasing its coordinative functions to get as reliable and timely information and analyze this in as much a real-time situation or scenario as possible for concerted efforts of the national government. In case a local government unit cannot cope with a natural or a man-made disaster.

That being the case too, we continue also to partner with international humanitarian agencies and response agencies to advocate with the rest of the national government in best practices in disaster risk reduction. That being said, in the DND proper, the Armed Forces of the Philippines too are tasked – big share – of helping our people in times of crisis and in terms of delivering basic goods and services when communities are isolated as we see now.

We also want to report that last Sunday under EO24, the National Task Force on Crisis Management for Response was convened by the Executive Secretary and we held our first joint NDRRMC and Task Force meeting today to study the effects and to coordinate the efforts on typhoon Egay and the Southwest Monsoon that it brings and, another tropical disturbance which is forming in the area of Southeastern Philippines. Thank you, Daphne.

MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Teodoro. Right now, let's move to DSWD. Okay, the President said, we have learned many painful lessons from past disasters. We continue to be alert and prepared in our disaster response. It has in fact been commented that sometimes, we are over-prepared for such natural disasters. To continue that, we are reorganizing our response teams to make them more adaptable, agile, and effective in times of calamities and crisis. With a clear unity of command, what are the efforts undertaken by your agency to ensure immediate and faster delivery of relief assistance and services to the affected communities, DSWD? And feel-free to comment again, Secretary Teodoro or DILG as well.

DSWD SEC. GATCHALIAN: Well, Daphne, you will hear this word over and over again in our programs – Handa, prepared. In the department of DSWD, we encapsulated our program in a program called “Buong Bansa Handa”. We believe that disaster preparedness and response is not just the government's responsibility, but it's every single Filipino's responsibility. Now, for the department, at least we are in charge of the response, making sure that the immediate needs or the immediate relief will be there, the humanitarian side of it. And DSWD has formulated a plan, based on the President's instruction, to come up with a fail-safe mechanism for our supply chain. The goal there is to be omnipresent, so to speak, making our people, most especially the victims, feel that the government is there, in fact ahead during and right after the storm or a natural calamity.

So, in the “Buong Bansa Handa” Program, we created two supply chains: The first supply chain is a government supply chain, it's government-driven wherein we tap into the warehouse facilities of local government units, provincial governments, and other agencies like DND led by Secretary Teodoro who lent us a couple of warehouses – so, we started prepositioning goods to all our regional offices and as far as we can in the provincial offices.

As we speak right now, for instance, we have around 1.3 million family food packs spread across the entire country, on the grounds, so that when typhoon like Egay hit, it's not like we are marshaling things always out of Metro Manila or the urban centers, but the goods are already there. That is part of being omnipresent.

But we also know that, if we just use government resources, it won't be enough that is why iyong Buong Bansa Handa, we procure the services through framework agreements or supply agreements of the private sector. People or companies who are in the food distribution business, grocers, we know that their expertise or their infrastructure is more superior, we plotted out their

presence nationwide and they can fill in the gaps where we don't have government facilities or warehouses.

So, we are in the process of procuring that and it should come to a fore very shortly, that will complement the government-driven supply chain line that we created and thereby now creating two supply chain lines. One, government-driven; the other is private sector-driven. We will lean on these two supply chain lines to make sure that government relief efforts or government relief packs are spread across the entire country as widespread as we can, because that is about being prepared, getting the private sector involved as well as making sure that government is omnipresent in the farthest areas of the country where a disaster can strike anytime.

MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, Secretary Teodoro, would you like to add to that?

DND SEC. TEODORO: To add to that, the coordination between the Department of Social Welfare and Development, of course anchored on the much improved predictive capabilities of PAGASA and PHIVOLCS has allowed us to adequately plan beforehand and marshal our resources more efficiently in order to serve our people in a faster manner. And it is a testament to the close coordination between cabinet members that we are able to function this efficiently. And we hope to institutionalize these practices so that the continuing delivery of services for our countrymen in need, when they needed comes at the quicker pace because preplanning and prepositioning without wastage of course.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, thank you sir. Now let's move on to the Climate Change Commission. Of course all of this whole-of-nation approach is needed to fully respond to the impact of climate change. For the CCC what are the country's policies on addressing climate change such as the National Climate Change action plan? What is the status of the local action plans of the LGUs? And despite being one of the lowest contributors to carbon emission, the Philippines remains committed to the 2015 Paris Agreement. For the CCC, what are the policy measures to accelerate decarbonization efforts and any updates on the country's implementation of the nationally determined contribution?

CCC SEC BORJE: Thank you very much, Daphne, for that question. First and foremost, I'd like to say that the Climate Change Commission is very much encouraged by the presence of the difference agencies here. It goes to show that it is indeed a whole-of-government approach in order to address not just the issue of climate change but other issues of governance. But we'd like to say that the climate change is a governance challenge of our generation.

And if we can stretch it a little bit further, instead of simply a whole-of-society or whole-of-nation approach, we would say that it's a whole-of-world approach because the problem of climate change is global, it's historic and it also systemic. And I think it puts a very good context to the work that we do if also understand not just the responsibilities of the Philippines as a party of UNFCCC (United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change) but also the responsibilities and commitments of the developed countries or industrialized countries that have been historically responsible for climate change.

Now that being said, there are several policy frameworks already that have been implemented and put in place including the national framework for NFSS, we also have the National Climate Change Action Plan of course, and we have our nationally determined contributions that set an

ambitious goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emission by 75%. But again, we have to understand that the 75% reduction is dependent on—more than 72% is dependent on the assistance being given by our partner countries in order to reduce our greenhouse gas emission.

With that being said, it is also important that we understand that we have our national—NBC implementation plan that's currently being undertaken by the CCC, and it's important to note that what we have under President Marcos is truly a whole-of-government whole society approach that is based on nature-based solutions. And with guidance from SENR, we're able to work right now also on the National Adaptation Plan, wherein its main objective is to make sure that we have a framework and a plan for the country for our LGUs and our agencies to truly help where it matters.

It's important to note also that under this administration, we have been making good headways in our greenhouse gas inventory and we're working on completing the 20—we have already done 2010, but right now we're completing 2015 and 2020. Why is this important? It's important because the different sectors in the Philippines need to understand the trajectory of our industries and we need to, accordingly, plan for that and I think it's going to be a major accomplishment of the Marcos administration once we get up-to-date on our 2015 and 2020 greenhouse gas inventory.

But that being said, there are couple questions there. We'd like to focus on the communities and LGUs and we've been working very closely with the Department of Interior and Local Government on the Local Climate Change Action Plan. Right now, what we have is 85% compliance with the LCCAP (Local Climate Change Action Plan).

But is that enough? No! What we want is 100% compliance with the Local Climate Change Action Plan. And when we speak about this, it was explicitly said by Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga, that it's important – as she is the representative of the President to the Climate Change Commission – it's important to study not only the quantity but also the quality of the Local Climate Change Action Plans, why? Because it's in the grassroots that climate change is truly felt, and what we're doing right now together with the DILG is to make sure that the submissions are both qualitatively and quantitatively good.

So, these are some of the measures that we have under President Marcos that we are working on in terms of strengthening the actions for climate change. And make me say again, that it's important for us to really understand that when we talk about climate change, it's the lives and the livelihood and future of our country. And President Marcos has been very clear on his vision and marching orders for this.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you Commissioner Borje. You mentioned the National Adaptation Plan and the importance of the LGUs and of course these are all anchored with the DENR's, so let go back to Secretary Loyzaga: What are the DENR's efforts to promote collaboration among the national and local government, private sector and the public to strengthen solid waste management and address plastic pollution and I suppose as well, climate resiliency, any focus on mitigation and adaptation measures?

DENR SEC. YULO-LOYZAGA: I will start with the solid waste question. As you know, we do have a national solid waste management law, and all the LGUs are mandated to submit their

plans to the council which is the National Solid Waste Management Council. All of these plans have to carry their own estimates moving forward, for ten years, in terms of the way their waste will be generated, the kind of waste, the budget they expect to actually earmark, and of course, what it is that they will actually do with that waste.

Right now, most of the LGUs are using their sanitary landfill facilities. They locate these within their own properties, their political boundaries. But we know there are challenges – there are challenges in segregation, there are challenges as well in identifying land that will be suitable for these landfills.

So there are new solutions that we're beginning to look at. Some of the LGUs have now been working with cement companies, for example, that use the solid waste in their coal processing in order to use that as fuel for their own generation of their product. What this does for cement companies – decarbonizes them slowly. But what this does also for the LGUs is it gives them a solution where they are short of land and short of technical expertise to actually handle their solid waste problems.

Now, on the private sector as a whole, and this is where it gets very, very important, that this administration has actually seen the passage into law of the Extended Producers Responsibility Act. Now, that requires all producers using plastic packaging to collect their packaging at the rate of 20% a year until they reach 80% collection. The accountability and the responsibility for the recycling and the reduction of their plastic packaging, now is in the hands of those who are actually producing and using the plastic packaging. This is very important because at the end of the day, we know that we cannot collect all of these plastic packaging and, of course, dispose of them adequately because plastic doesn't degrade; depending on the type of plastic packaging that you use, it will take hundreds of years before you can actually get rid of it.

So the private sectors' responsibility is very, very important in this whole effort. But we need to work with local government as well. It is very much a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-government, whole-of-society effort in order to address plastic wastes. And here's where we need to also at this point, begin to think of who are involved in the solid waste management sector and make that an industry in itself. Why that's important is this: There is a whole group of informal sector participants in the solid waste management activities of our country. These individuals, these families, many of them live for generations beside the large landfills that we know. They need to be given a fair wage; they need to be valued for their contribution to the solid waste management effort of this country. And that means, they need social protection; they need the just pay that they actually should receive; and they need occupational hazard and safety training in order for them to actually be more protected against the hazards of this actual profession.

So let's not forget that the private sector, the local governments, they're key actors; but we need to also include in this particular problem of solid waste management, the role of the different partners and contributors to what we see as a value chain for the solid waste management industry, if you will, and to give those sectors a fair wage and the social protection and the benefits that they need.

Lastly, I would like to say that marine plastic litter is a big issue for us. We are now baselining and actually looking at the methodologies as to how we can baseline a marine plastic litter. The development partners have been very, very generous with us in trying to work with us, not just

the UN agencies but organizations at the World Economic Forum. We are working with all of these groups in order for us to establish the baseline for marine plastic litter, and then look at the methodologies for us not just to be picking it up when it's already in the ocean but, of course, to prevent it from actually reaching our rivers and streams.

This is a whole-of-society effort; it can't just be the government. And we look across our different department partners, as well as the local governments vertically to help us in this regard.

Thanks, Daphne.

MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Loyzaga.

Sabi nga ni Pangulong Marcos, we can never lose sight of our responsibility to the future. The economic agenda cannot and will not ever be incompatible with our climate change agenda.

Climate change is now an important criterion in our integral national policies in planning, decision-making, up to the implementation of programs.

And with that, maraming salamat sa ating panel ngayon. Thank you especially to Secretary Teodoro and Secretary Loyzaga who are currently handling a disaster management situation. Thank you so much for joining us today.

As we head on full speed to a modern and Bagong Pilipinas – disaster resiliency, dealing with climate change, pushing for a clean energy production and government assistance during times of calamities will remain key areas for our sustained progress through, of course, our dynamic environmental protection and disaster management cluster.

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