PH-US-UNCTAD HARNESSING STI FOR DRR WORKSHOP

Keynote Message

SECRETARY RENATO U. SOLIDUM, JR.
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Ms. Maria Theresa 'Bimbi' Villa *from the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines,*

Our colleagues who may not be able to join us in person today but have been with us since the beginning of preparations for this workshop,

The United States of America's Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State, ***Dr. Patricia Gruber****,*

UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics ***Director Shamika Sirimanne*** *(Siri-ma-ne),*

And the rest of the team from the United States of America and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,

Our esteemed speakers and poster presenters,
Our dear local and international participants,

Good morning.

This is a simple causal loop diagram of how a possible evolution of a disaster. This is not unfamiliar to most of us, or to all of us even. One can change the trigger to any natural hazard and the causal loop would still be true.

Disasters are seemingly **intractable**. Nevertheless, even small, small steps may bring us to our desired outcomes. And for that reason we are having this forum. So that we can inspire team spirit to **"de-tract"** potential disasters. After all, if framed as policy inefficiency or failure, disasters become preventable.

For this Keynote Message, I will deliver Three Key Messages that I consider most relevant.

The first,

1. Global collective action

*"As a scientist, you feel a **sense of team spirit** for your country but you also have a sense of team spirit for the international community." — Saul Perlmutter*

That is from Saul Perlmutter, 2011 Nobel Prize for Physics, who with two colleagues, discovered that the universe is expanding at an ever-accelerating rate. The universe will likely end in ice, based on their discovery.

However, for now, in this world, global warming is melting polar ice at an ever-accelerating rate. Addressing the ice melt is the subject of much discussion and proposed actions.

Ice aside, I dare hope our esteemed international-community participants here equally carry a **sense of team spirit** to collectively pursue and partake in, and contribute to policies and actions to build disaster and climate resilience.

In the Philippines, we have established **national mechanisms** (a) in 1978, for collective action for disaster management, (b), for in 2010 disaster risk reduction and management and (c) in 2014 onwards, for disaster and climate change actions. The Philippines has more than half a century tradition of collective action for addressing disasters. These policies are also the same bases for our international cooperation actions, such as this workshop, Harnessing STI for DRR.

Recently, the Philippines has again gained significant ground in cultivating a sense of collective action, this time for **information-building for disaster risk reduction**. As the Secretary for Science and Technology, I am pushing hard for a digital solution for accessing information because **information is a basic need**. Information is a basic need because it is a building block for science-informed decision making. And Philippine government officials consider the collective action for information-building a major breakthrough that a national directive was issued to implement what is necessary to make it a reality.

This now brings me to my second message:

2. Local best-fit Science, Technology and Innovation

It is often said, hazards know no political boundaries. The impacts, and therefore means of preventing and mitigating hazards, though, have local peculiarities and flavors. Here we recognize the **local efforts and the best-fit practices that work in specific contexts.**

I invite everyone to visit the Poster Presentations later in the day because these initiatives not only demonstrate specific STI solutions to a societal problem, but also imply the policy and collective government and even private support, for addressing disaster and climate resilience.

The Department of Science and Technology also prepared for you a set of information materials introducing who we are and what service we deliver. Particularly in line with the theme of this forum, we have for you a **publication, Science for Resilience**, which gives a preview of the Technologies for disaster and climate resilience developed with support from local STI Resources.

We hope that by presenting a set of samples of STI solutions, we can inspire our participants to **reflect on the enablers** that made the solutions possible. We would like especially to bring to mind that our Policies influence the way STI solutions are crafted, and at the same time, how STI solutions are iterated into the policy arena.

Which brings me to my third and last message.

3. The will of the state and people

As a Sterling Professor Emeritus of Economics and Political Science, Charles Lindblom, wrote 60-plus years ago, the Policy Process is a **science of muddling through**. We go by baby steps or increments. We the organizers of this forum - PH through the DOST US through the Department of State, and UNCTAD - have pinned high hopes for the iteration process because our ultimate Workshop Output is a set of Policy Agenda to pursue further when we come back to our own local contexts.

We hope that by holding this Forum, we can trigger a conversation that lends to a more inspired, and perhaps new way of thinking and doing STI for pushing forward disaster and climate resilience.

In closing I reiterate the three key messages to guide this Forum: Cooperative Action, best-fit STIs, and the will of state and people.

With this, I wish everyone fruitful sessions and conversations.

Mabuhay!