



GREEN CONVERGENCE  
For safe food, healthy environment and sustainable economy



## STATEMENT ON THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE<sup>1</sup>

### *An Underwhelming, Inadequate, and Shameful Climate Commitment*

24 December 2020

The year 2020 marks the beginning of the “Decade of Action”, dubbed by the United Nations as the ten-year period where transformative economic, social and environmental solutions must take place to achieve sustainable development. It also indicates that our world has less than a decade to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and avoid more extreme climate change impacts, which has significant implications on attaining national sustainable development for the benefit of current and future generations.

The finalization and submission of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for the Philippines is vital to achieve sustainable industrial development, poverty eradication, energy security, social and climate justice, and other aspects of development. Five years ago, after playing a key role in the adoption of the Paris Agreement, including the setting of the 1.5°C limit, the country expressed an aspirational target of 70% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 in its Intended NDC. Yet after this emphatic statement in the international arena, it remains one of the only Parties to the Paris Agreement to not have submitted an official first climate pledge.

Since 2015 and even prior to that, civil society organizations championing climate action have been active in engaging with national government agencies and other non-government stakeholders through available spaces for meaningful participation in the development of the NDC. We have brought the concerns of the local communities and sectors we represent, including indigenous peoples, women, the youth, and other marginalized groups, into dialogues, forums, and other available platforms to help realize the “whole-of-society” approach that the Philippine government attempts to enact in pursuit of inclusive climate action and enhanced resilience at the local level.

With the numerous delays in the submission of the country’s first NDC, some of which due to self-imposed deadlines, we expected that these delays were not simply due to inefficient and incoherent climate governance, but are indicators of a strong desire of government agencies to produce an integrated, evidence-based, peoples-centered climate pledge respectful of our pursuit of climate justice and sustainable development.

As we approached the end of 2020 or the “midnight survival” deadline, we submitted our statement to the CCC and other government agencies expressing our concern with the lack of a draft NDC text or even a public consultation on this document. Nonetheless, we expressed our call that the first NDC must be submitted as soon as reasonably possible while reflecting sufficiently high ambition, quantifiable targets, and accompanying concrete actions, without compromising its quality.

After much anticipation, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) finally presented on December 23 the latest less than three-page draft NDC text to representatives from the business, academe, media, and civil society sectors. In this version, the Philippines aims to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 30% by 2040 from its business-as-usual scenario (2020-2040), with at least 2% of these reductions to be done unconditionally. The draft NDC also presented aspirational targets of emissions peaking by 2030 and at least 15000 MW of additional renewable energy capacity by 2030.

Given the presentation of the latest draft NDC text currently accessible to us, the outcomes and overall conduct of the multi-stakeholder consultations, **we express our extreme concern, disappointment, and collective scorn with the latest draft NDC text, as it does not indicate sufficiently high ambition for the Philippines’s climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and undermines the “whole-of-government-and-society” approach that the Philippine government itself has been implementing in pursuit of sustainable development.** For a country that pushed hard for a 1.5°Ce target to be included in the text of the Paris Agreement and called on all UNFCCC Parties for ambition in

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the draft NDC text shared by the Climate Change Commission in the evening of December 22, 2020, hours before the scheduled multi-stakeholder consultation on December 23, 2020.

their commitments for climate action, the submission now of only a mere 28% conditional and 2% unconditional commitment in its NDC from a previous 70% conditional commitment in its Intended NDC in 2015, will embarrass the country before the international community.

Given this context, the following are our calls and serious admonitions to the CCC and the government agencies regarding the finalization and submission of the Philippines' first NDC:

1. As mentioned by a CCC official during the multi-stakeholder consultation, a complete version of the draft NDC, while still being finalized, is actually available but is being withheld for unclear reasons. In the interest of upholding meaningful participation in the development of the NDC, **we demand that the complete version which will be submitted as the final version of the Philippines' 2020 NDC be provided to the public prior to its eventual submission to the UNFCCC.** This critical period in the NDC development process should be guided by transparency and inclusivity, and devoid of the delays that, throughout this process, has hindered our collective capacity to address the climate crisis.

The conduct of the virtual multi-stakeholder consultation only reinforced our serious disappointment at the NDC development process' closing stages. For one, we were only informed about the multi-stakeholder consultation a day before the event proper, and the draft document was also provided belatedly. Worse, the CCC pushed for the consultations a day before Christmas Eve, at the height of holiday preparations. Notwithstanding these circumstances, well-meaning civil society organisations and other stakeholders raised numerous questions and clarifications about the short three-page NDC. The ultimate question boiled down to how these issues and concerns would be genuinely considered and integrated into the final NDC draft, with only a few days left in 2020. With this lack of clarity, we were told that the comments made would be subjected to a process and assessed for their merits, with an uncertain outcome. With this context, **we demand for the Philippine government to provide clarity in the NDC process towards enhancing the inclusivity and transparency, especially during the remaining time for finalization and submission, and the subsequent implementation and monitoring, review, and validation processes.**

2. **We call for the peaking year for the Philippines's GHG emissions to be set way before 2030,** in pursuit of attaining net-zero emissions by 2050, as expressed in the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The draft NDC text falls short by setting 2030 as the peaking year and only as an aspirational target, with no indication that an ambitious strategy towards attaining this goal will be pursued. It is also unacceptable that measures such as the entry of coal technologies are included as mitigation options for the Philippines, which is supposed to be championing climate justice at the global and domestic fronts.
3. **We reiterate that the Philippines's first NDC must set target limits to the production and consumption of fossil fuels by 2030 and 2050, with a peaking year for coal being set much earlier than other fossil fuels.** With the Department of Energy's moratorium on new coal plants and the long-overdue full implementation of the Renewable Energy Act (RA 9513), these targets can still be achieved. By committing more strongly to a deadline earlier than 2030 instead of 2040, it gives the country more time to realistically implement a robust decarbonization program and a just transition pathway towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Measures that must be prioritized include the phasing out of coal-fired power plants starting from 2021, scaling up indigenous renewable energy development, and improving energy efficiency, preventing the construction of nuclear power plants, and preserving natural carbon sinks.
4. **We renew our call on the Philippine government regarding its obligation to ensure that the submission of our first NDC must not compromise its quality.** The draft NDC must reflect a sufficiently high ambition, and clearly state the targets, mitigation and adaptation measures, and a cost-benefit analysis that indicate a transformative, low-carbon pathway towards inclusive,

resilient, and sustainable development. Without this, our first NDC will be an ineffective negotiating tool for accessing the means of implementation that our country needs to take climate action. We emphasize that this course of action is not an act of begging, as these modalities are allotted for vulnerable nations like the Philippines under the UNFCCC to be provided by high-emitting countries; we simply need the political will to take them. Climate justice cannot be achieved simply by being compliant; it must be embodied in actions as much as words spoken or written.

5. ***We call once more for the integration of the interlinkages between climate change mitigation options and cross-cutting issues with implications on enhancing adaptation, such as poverty alleviation, gender, health, education, biodiversity loss, pandemic, and youth development into the finalized first NDC.***

During the multi-stakeholder consultation, it was mentioned that the interlinkages among the six focused sectors (agriculture, waste, industry, transport, forestry and land use, and energy) have not been fully integrated into the calculations and proposed actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Without accounting for these factors, the proposed first NDC is at high risk of becoming more sectoral than economy-wide, undermining the country's pursuit of climate justice and sustainable development.

In closing, we take note that for several years now, the CCC has always highlighted how the NDC will partly be featured as an investment strategy for long-term development of climate-resilient infrastructures and systems. The importance of this aspect has never been more emphasized than in 2020, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic when opportunities for green recovery can also pave the way for ushering in the decarbonization of the Philippine economy. Yet nowhere in the latest draft NDC text does it indicate the details of how the Philippine government plans to pursue this strategy. In the next iteration of the first NDC, the "enhanced" version, or any other version, we expect that more details on climate-related investments, promoting sustainable finance, and divestment from environmentally-destructive ventures will be included and shown to the Filipino public.



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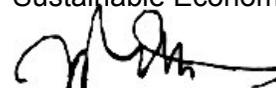
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Aksyon Klima Pilipinas is a broad civil society national network of more than 40 civil society organizations, networks and partners working on diverse climate and development-related issues. It aims to build campaigning capacity and leadership among its partner community organizations, NGOs and the academe, on climate policies and issues.



The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ) is a broad movement consisting of national networks/alliances and local organizations representing basic sectors in the Philippines that aims to lead the joint struggles, campaigns and actions in putting forward the climate justice framework as a fundamental element of solving the climate crisis.



Youth Strike 4 Climate Philippines, one of the pioneer, youth-led climate movements in the country, is a nationwide youth-led organization and campaign in the Philippines; fueled by the goal to empower young Filipino people to act against the climate crisis. It is a network and alliances of Sangguniang Kabataan, youth and student organizations, advocacy groups, and individuals in different regions, cities, and municipalities in the country who demand bold climate actions from the Philippine Government by humanizing climate action through activism and storytelling.



The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) is a global, grassroots movement of Catholics committed to living out the message of *Laudato Si'*: *On the Care of Our Common Home*.



Green Convergence for Safe Food Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy (Green Convergence Philippines) is a coalition that advocates for a development paradigm that addresses the need for social and economic upliftment, while preserving life-supporting water, air and land for generations to come.



The Green Thumb Coalition is a broad and united front of more than 40 organizations and networks that aims to elevate the issues of the environment, sustainable development and human rights in governance.



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