

The Philippines and the UK Agree Partnership on Climate and Environment

Climate change concerns in the Philippines continue to have more focused attention as bilateral cooperation and agreements with the UK are forged.

On 27 November 2020, the Philippines, represented by the DENR Secretary, Roy Cimatu, as Chairperson of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM DRR), signed a “Partnership Statement” with British Ambassador to the Philippines, Daniel Pruce, during the first Climate Change and Environment Dialogue (CCE-D). Ambassador Pruce co-chaired the virtual Dialogue with Ken O’ Flaherty, UK COP26 Regional Ambassador, and Undersecretaries Jonas Leones and Analiza Teh of the DENR.

As the two countries share and agree with each other’s climate priorities, including energy transition and nature-based solutions, Secretary Cimatu is optimistic that the partnership will benefit the Philippines as it prepares for the implementation of its nationally determined contributions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Secretary Cimatu added:

We are definitely pleased to enter into a declaration of statement of partnership on key environmental concerns and we look forward to it with great optimism that this will serve as a platform for an inclusive, green, and resilient economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her Majesty’s Ambassador Daniel Pruce said:

The United Kingdom is delighted to mark another partnership with Philippine Government to tackle an important issue that threatens both our island nations and the world. In our COP26 Presidency, the UK is committed to working with the Philippines to realise sustainability and clean growth through the full potential of the Paris Agreement and in a way that is responsive to post-pandemic needs.

Ambassador O’ Flaherty also added that:

More widely, as a long-standing partner of ASEAN, in particular on low carbon growth, sustainability and climate change, our application to be ASEAN’s dialogue partner offers an opportunity to strengthen collaboration on climate and green issues in coming years, building on existing UK cooperation with the region.

The Dialogue is an important element of the 'Enhanced Partnership', which the UK and the Philippines agreed to work towards at the annual bilateral 'High Level Political Talks' in November 2019. Under this new partnership for the future, both countries agreed to establish and convene an annual UK-Philippines Dialogue dedicated to discuss issues that are of common interest to both countries such as climate and the environment, including priorities for the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26).

The identified priority areas for cooperation will be supported through technical and policy assistance, as well as market development mechanisms under on-going UK programmes including the ASEAN Low Carbon Energy Programme, Newton Agham Programme and Darwin Initiative Fund. The Dialogue will also provide a platform to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices in the areas of energy transition, adaptation and resilience, nature-based solutions, sustainable transport, and green finance.

The Dialogue is another milestone as we prepare for the 75th celebration of diplomatic ties between the UK and the Philippines in 2021.

Other highlights of the event were the virtual signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Secretary Alfonso Cusi of the Department of Energy for the 2050 Calculator, a tool to plan the Philippines' low-carbon transition, and ASEAN Low Carbon Energy Programme focusing on Green Finance (renewable energy voluntary market) and Energy Efficiency, and the launching of the UK's 'Greening the Philippines' COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Strategies' Project, which will be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through Resident Representative, Dr. Selvakumaran Ramachandran.

Senior officials from the DENR, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Climate Change Commission, Department of Finance, Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, and National Economic and Development Authority, and UK Government representatives were present during the dialogue.