

UK calls for climate action ahead of UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow

Manila, 10 June 2021 – Together with its Philippine climate defenders, the United Kingdom calls for climate action ahead of UN Climate Change Conference (or COP26) in November in Glasgow, Scotland during a virtual roundtable discussion hosted recently by the British Embassy Manila marking the Philippine Environment Month.

Led by British Ambassador Daniel Pruce, the discussion was joined by COP26 local climate defenders including Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Assistant Governor Lyn Javier (representing Governor Benjamin Diokno), Department of Finance (DOF) Assistant Secretary Paola Alvarez (representing Secretary Carlos Dominguez, III), ASEAN Center for Biodiversity Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, Oscar M. Lopez Center Executive Director, Dr. Rodel Lasco, Atty. Jay Layug, and media personalities–Kim Atienza and Atom Araullo.

The climate defenders shared their views on single use plastics, youth engagement, climate risks and governance in the financial system, the role of the business sector in conservation of the Philippines's rich biodiversity and the political will to call for ambitious climate action including moving away from coal and harnessing the country's renewable energy sources.

Her Majesty's Ambassador Daniel Pruce said:

With the Philippines ranking fourth among countries most affected by extreme weather in the 2021 global climate risk index, and with the country's projected loss of 6% of its annual GDP by 2100 due to climate change, COP26 is indeed an important opportunity to advance the country's climate action agenda.

He welcomed the Philippines' submission of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which will hopefully serve as a basis for a long-term strategy toward net zero, and spoke about the practical ways the UK was supporting the Philippines to transition to clean energy, realise adaptation and resilience, deliver nature-based solutions, make the transition to sustainable transport and mobilise finance to address the country's vulnerability and mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change.

The climate defenders spoke about their own contributions to promoting green policies.

Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda said:

The House of Representatives passed on second reading HB 9147 which seeks to phase out and eventually ban single-use plastics over a period of 4 years with some earlier within 1 year. The bill also mandates plastic producers and companies to implement extended producers' responsibility schemes—proper recovery, transportation, clean-up, including establishments of recycling, composting, and waste diversion facilities.

DOF Assistant Secretary Paola Alvarez said:

The DOF is mobilising finance for climate change adaptation and mitigation to establish a sustainable finance ecosystem and synergize investments from both the public and private sectors, that will yield green social projects resulting in positive impact on the world's environment and on our people.

BSP Governor Benjamin Diokno said:

BSP and financial institutions play a crucial part in mobilising funds for financing green and sustainable projects, and at the same time, safeguarding financial stability from shocks and other environment-related factors. The BSP issued the Sustainable Finance Framework in April 2020. It expects banks to embed sustainability principles in corporate and risk management systems, business strategies and operations and complements Securities and Exchange Commission's guidelines pertaining to green, social, or sustainability bonds issuance.

With only five months left before the conference in Glasgow, the virtual roundtable underscored the value of a whole of society approach to respond to the climate challenges that we all face. The British Embassy Manila's COP26 climate defenders are all thought leaders and experts in their fields who have volunteered to raise up their voices and stand alongside the UK government to galvanise action and understanding in the Philippines towards the most ambitious COP26 outcome possible.

The roundtable welcomed a broad range of media representatives and emphasised the critical role the media plays in educating and engaging the public on climate issues. The Embassy, through our information dissemination sessions, will continue engaging the media and our COP26 climate defenders to populate communication materials that will resonate well, not only with the policy makers, but also at the grassroots level.

The virtual event concluded with optimism that through collective effort and ambition, we can rise to the challenges of climate change, at a meaningful COP26 and beyond.