



# PHILIPPINES

## 55<sup>th</sup> REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

### Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change

2 July 2024, 11:00 AM, Room XX

Delivered by

**Permanent Representative Carlos D. Sorreta**

*Speaking time: 5 minutes*

Mr. President,

The Philippines contributes less than a miniscule fraction of global greenhouse gas emissions, but bear the brunt of the climate change crisis. 20 typhoons of increasing intensity and frequency batter us every year. When not deluged, we suffer heat waves and drought.

Between 2011 and 2021, we suffered over 11 billion dollars in loss and damage to typhoons alone. Slow onset events like drought, extreme heat, sea level rise and biodiversity loss are making life difficult for many, especially the most vulnerable. Climate change profoundly impinges on the Filipino people's enjoyment of a whole gamut of human rights – from the right to life itself to the right to adequate standard of living and the right to development – and the causes are found outside our boundaries.

The climate change crisis is a human rights crisis. Mitigation and adaptation responses must therefore be anchored on the principles of equity and climate justice – may it be in the domestic or international sphere.

The Philippines has mainstreamed climate change in its national development strategy, with human rights and good governance as underpinning principles.

Our goal is climate resiliency and sustainable development that benefits everyone. In accordance with the **Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028**, we are enhancing the adaptive capacity of our communities and ecosystems.

We are also undertaking a multi-stakeholder process to craft the **Fourth Philippine Human Rights Action Plan**, which will include human rights and climate change as a key action area.

In line with our long-standing commitment to inclusive and participatory governance, relevant government agencies have instituted mechanisms for greater civil society participation. The Philippines' Climate Change Commission has, for instance, launched the “**Working to Empower Climate Action Network (WE CAN)**”, in order for government to benefit from CSOs' extensive grassroots connections and deep knowledge on the realities and needs of local communities.

Women and girls are among the most directly and disproportionately affected by climate change. The **Philippines' Climate Change Act of 2009** provides for gender-sensitive and pro-children policy measures, including women's active participation in international climate negotiations.

On the international front, the Philippines has been a constructive player in multilateral climate discussions and a strong voice for equity and climate justice, including in this Council and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Court of Justice.

In this spirit, the Philippines welcomed Mr. Ian Fry, the former mandate holder, for a country visit in 2023 in good faith and with full openness.

We regret that rather than focusing on the human rights challenges arising from climate change that weigh down the Filipino people, Mr. Fry choose to make unsubstantiated claims and sweeping conclusions in his report. We take strong exception to this.

Owing to Mr. Fry's mid-term resignation, the published report is essentially based on his preliminary, exit statement. It did not benefit from comprehensive review and fact-checking, nor is it a product of genuine dialogue and consultation.

On top of this, the Secretariat's failure to fulfil its duty to promptly publish the Philippines' official response is concerning.

Multilateralism is in great peril at a time we need it most. Our mechanisms are losing relevance and becoming loci of contestation and division. This downward spiral has to stop. We join others in reiterating the call for mandate holders to exercise the highest standard of objectivity, impartiality, and professionalism.

This is the only way to enhance confidence in the Special Procedures mechanism, which we have all built, and encourage greater engagement from States. The Philippines will continue to work with partners to make our multilateral institutions and processes more effective and efficient for all us.

Only then can this innovative mechanism realize its full potential as a positive, empowering force.

Thank you. **END**