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*Designing Solutions for Climate and Resource Risks*  
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The world's attention was focused on the Philippines more than six months ago when Haiyan, the world's strongest typhoon to make landfall, hit our country.

Entire towns and cities in Central Philippines were flattened, affecting nearly 10 million people. More than 6,000 people perished, and to date, a thousand more are missing.

Damage to property, infrastructure, and livelihood was staggering, estimated at USD2.2 billion<sup>1</sup> or the equivalent of nearly half the combined 2013 budgets of our Departments of Health, Social Welfare, and Agriculture.

It was no different in 2012. Bopha, the world's most deadliest catastrophe recorded that year, claimed nearly 1,900 lives and left the Philippines with more than USD 1 Billion<sup>2</sup> in economic losses.

The impacts from typhoon Haiyan in 2013 were huge, with economic losses registering twice the amount from typhoon Bopha. The numbers would seem to suggest we had not done enough.

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to PhP 89.5 billion

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent of PhP 42 billion

The subject of climate risks, however, is not as simple as adding numbers. Building resilience requires plans and solutions. More importantly, it requires a drastic change in our attitudes.

The United Nations estimates that between 80 and 90 percent of all declared disaster today are weather-related. Global exposure to tropical cyclones almost tripled between 1970 and 2010.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction noted that “countries in all regions have strengthened their capacities to reduce deaths from weather-related hazards.”

There are underlying drivers, however, that increase risks. These include poverty, badly planned and managed urban and regional development, informal settlements on unsafe lands, vulnerable rural and urban livelihoods, and ecosystem decline. This only means we should do more.

As a legislator, I see the importance of laws toward mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the national and local levels. Laws, however, are just part of the equation.

Solutions for climate and resource risks include investing in water supply, sanitation, flood control, transport, roads, social and health services, and energy infrastructure that build resilience to climate variability.

In all of these, let us not forget the role of Business.

The UNISDR calls attention to a glaring fact – “the transformation of the global economy over the last 40 years has led to rapid increases in disaster risk.”

Its report makes a “strong case that globalization – the search for lower costs and higher productivity, and just-in-time delivery -- is driving businesses into hazard prone locations with little or no consideration of the consequences on the global supply chain.”<sup>3</sup>

In Asia, where small and medium enterprises account for more than 90% of businesses and 60% of the work force, the role of business in reducing climate risks and creating

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<sup>3</sup> The UNISDR 2013 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR13): Creating Shared Value: the Business Case for Disaster Risk Reduction

resiliency cannot be overemphasized. MSMEs need business continuity plans that highlight resiliency as a core feature of their operations.

The aftermath of Haiyan led many to ask if its disastrous effects could have been prevented at all. Key lessons can be derived from these recent experiences.

*First, we must focus on managing the risks rather than managing disasters.* Local disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) plans are indispensable. Funds should be sufficiently allocated. Cooperation between local and national governments, businesses, and the communities are imperative.

Second, *Governments and businesses need to let science work for our communities.* The best solutions are possible only with the guidance of science. Develop land use plans that are risk sensitive. The dictum is not just to build, but build stronger. Build for the future.

Third, *protect our environment and pursue green urban development.* We need to go back to the basics: protect our ecosystems and natural buffers such as mangrove forests to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards. Design and enforce building standards to address future hazards, not past ones.

Fourth, *we should all be 'disaster-literate'*. We need to understand and believe in the risks. We need to be a part of the solution.

Finally, *prepare adequately and engage*. Sound policies and political will to implement do not complete the formula for effective disaster prevention. With adequate and proper preparation, we would already have won half the battle.

In climate risks, there could sometimes be no second chances. The UN said economic losses from disasters are "out of control." We should reverse this situation. We need to be in control.



Thank you.