

Opening Address of Sec. ROY A. CIMATU Chair, Council of Ministers for the 7th MINISTERIAL MEETING. 14 December 2018.

TO MY FELLOW MINISTERS AND OUR HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CT6 COUNTRIES – DR. SUSENO SUKOYONO, SENIOR ADVISER TO THE MINISTER OF MARINE AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES OF INDONESIA; DEPUTY MINISTER ISNARAISSAH MUNIRAH MAJILIS, MINISTRY OF ENERGY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OF MALAYSIA; EXECUTIVE MANAGER YVONNE TIO, CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA; DEPUTY DIRECTOR ROSALIE MASU, INSHORE FISHERIES DIVISION OF SOLOMON ISLANDS; MR. ACACIO GUTERRES, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FISHERIES. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES OF TIMOR LESTE; ATTY. JONAS R. LEONES, UNDERSECRETARY FOR POLICY PLANNING AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATIONS, PAK HENDRA SIRY OF THE CTI REGIONAL SECRETARIAT. DIRECTOR

CRISANTA MARLENE P. COLLEAGUES FOR THE PROTECTION OF
THE CORAL TRIANGLE REGION, GOOD MORNING!

TODAY IS THE CULMINATION OF THE TWO-YEAR
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE PHILIPPINES BOTH FOR THE
COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS AND THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS. I WOULD HAVE TO ADMIT, THAT ALTHOUGH I AM
RELATIVELY NEW IN THIS PARTNERSHIP, I HAVE QUICKLY
GAINED INTEREST IN PRIORITIZING OUR COASTAL AND
MARINE RESOURCES HERE WITHIN THE COUNTRY ESPECIALLY
KNOWING THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH THE LEAST
PRIVILEGED SECTOR IN OUR SOCIETY, THE COASTAL
COMMUNITIES.

MOST OF YOU MAY HAVE FELT THAT FOR OUR FIELD OF WORK
IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, OUR DEPARTMENTS
AND MINISTERS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY BURDENED THESE PAST
FEW MONTHS OR SO BECAUSE OF THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED
CONFERENCE OF PARTIES FOR THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND THE ON-GOING CONFERENCE OF

PARTIES OF THE UNITED CHANGED THE COURSE OF ALL NATIONS WITH REGARDS TO THE USE OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES. AS A REGIONAL COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE, CT6 MUST AIM TO BE HEARD IN THESE GLOBAL PLATFORMS AND SHOULD PUT FORWARD OUR AGENDA TO SERVE AS A REFERENCE POINT IN CRAFTING INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION.

THE CORAL TRIANGLE REGION, ALTHOUGH HIGHLY DIVERSE AND RICH BECAUSE OF THE ABUNDANCE OF CORAL REEFS, TROPICAL FISHES, MANGROVES, SEAGRASS AND OTHER COASTAL AND MARINE HABITAT AND ORGANISMS, WILL BE THE VERY FIRST REGION THAT WILL FEEL THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE. IN THE PAST TEN YEARS, WE HAVE EXPERIENCED UNPRECEDENTED RATES OF DROUGHTS, EXTREME RAINFALL AND WEATHER, CORAL BLEACHING, AND OCEAN ACIDIFICATION DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. IT HAS HAMPERED NOT ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL LIVES OF THE FAMILIES LIVING ALONG THE COASTLINE, BUT ALSO

HERE IN THIS COUNTRY, IN AN ISLAND CALLED TUBIGON, LOCATED AT THE CENTRAL ISLAND CLUSTER OF THE PHILIPPINES, RESIDENTS WERE LEFT WITHOUT A CHOICE BUT TO ADAPT TO AN ALMOST YEAR-ROUND FLOODING IN THEIR COMMUNITY BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE COMBINATION OF LAND SUBSIDENCE DUE TO AN EARTHQUAKE AND SEA LEVEL RISE. INSTEAD OF PERMANENTLY RELOCATING TO A MORE STABLE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN THE MAIN LAND, THESE RESIDENTS CHOSE TO STAY MAINLY BECAUSE OF THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD AND THE LACK OF PROPER TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO LIVE COMFORTABLY OUTSIDE OF THE ISLAND. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS HAS BEEN THE PICTURE FOR ALMOST ALL OF OUR ISLAND COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY CHOSE TO USE TEMPORARY INSTEAD OF LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS UPON US. IN THE WORDS OF SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH DURING THE SPEECH HE DELIVERED AT THE START OF THE ON-GOING 24TH NOT WITH DESPERATION, BUT WITH A SENSE OF HOPE AND PURPOSE. WE AT CT6 SHALL BE

THE CATALYST, SO THAT ONE DAY NATIONS WILL COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING ON HOW IMPORTANT PRIORITIZING THE ENVIRONMENT IS ABOVE ANYTHING ELSE.

THIS THE VALUE OF THE CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE. I SEE THIS PARTNERSHIP AS A LONG-TERM SOLUTION NOT ONLY FOR OUR REGION, BUT ALSO FOR ALL OF CIVILIZATION MAINLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT WE ARE PROTECTING THE NURSERY AND THE CENTER OF THE MARINE BIODIVERSITY OF THE WORLD. IN FUTURE INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES, OUR EXPERIENCES MUST BE HEARD AND OUR STORIES BE TOLD, LOUD AND CLEAR, RECOGNIZING THAT WE ARE ONLY A PART OF A BIGGER SOLUTION.

WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS INDEED BUT WE ARE FAR FROM CELEBRATING WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE A VICTORY FOR OUR PEOPLE – THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES. A LOT HAS YET TO BE I CALL ON YOU, OUR PARTNERS, WHO HAVE BEEN WITH US THROUGHOUT THIS WHOLE JOURNEY OF THE CT6 TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR

GREATER CAUSE OF EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES AND PROVIDING THEM WITH OPTIONS THAT WILL ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS AMIDST THE EMERGING IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. REST ASSURED, OUR GOVERNMENTS WILL BE WORKING HAND IN HAND TO GET THINGS DONE.

TO THE CT6 COUNTRIES, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, WE ARE HONORED TO BE HOSTING BOTH THE SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING AND THE MINISTERIAL MEETING THIS YEAR. IT IS OUR PLEASURE TO HOST SUCH A SIGNIFICANT GATHERING ESPECIALLY NOW THAT WE ARE CLOSE TO RESETTING OUR GOALS AND TARGETS FOR THE VERSION 2.0 OF OUR REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION.

WITH THE REINVIGORATED REGIONAL SECRETARIAT, I CONTENT KNOWING THAT WITH THE IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT, THE CT6 MEMBER COUNTRIES, AND

THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, WE CAN NOW FOCUS ON THE MORE SUBSTANTIVE TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES TO DISCUSS AND UNDERTAKE IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.

ONCE AGAIN, THE PHILIPPINES WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE FOR THE SUCCESS OF OUR MEETINGS IN THE PAST FOUR DAYS. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NEARING THE END OF THE WEEK LONG PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES, I BELIEVE WE HAVE YET TO DECIDE AND FINALIZE THE DIRECTION OF OUR INITIATIVE IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS. TO THE CT6 COUNTRIES AND TO THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, YOUR ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED MOST ESPECIALLY GIVEN THAT THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. TO THE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT, THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR UNWAVERING ON THAT NOTE, I FORMALLY DECLARE THE 7TH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY, OPEN.

I BID ALL PARTICIPANTS AND ATTENDEES PRODUCTIVE,
LIVELY AND HEALTHY DISCUSSIONS AHEAD OF US.

THANK YOU AND MABUHAY!