

OPENING REMARKS ON THE FORMULATION OF A NATIONAL EST STRATEGY FOR THE PHILIPPINES, A NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE, 22 APRIL 2009 AT THE CROWNE PLAZA GALLERIA MANILA, ORTIGAS CENTER MANDALUYONG CITY.

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Greetings:

The Departments' belief in and abiding commitment to Environmentally Sustainable Transport makes it a special pleasure for DOTC to co-organize this National Stakeholders' Conference.

Transport sector is responsible for 23% of global CO2 emissions and continues to grow rapidly in developing countries. At the same time, transport sector is a critical enabler of economic development and growth. It is one of the backbones of growth. Transportation plays a central role in facilitating economic activities across sectors and is thus the essential fiber in nation building, in economic development and ensuring quality of life of our people.

Climate change has been cited as perhaps the greatest threat humankind is facing nowadays. This is particularly true for the Philippines which has an inherent vulnerability to natural disasters, stemming in part from its geographic location.

A threat as great and serious as climate change requires no less than focused and consolidated action that can only be brought on by a common vision of both the private sector and the government with synergistic planning and programming to combat climate change impacts on the Philippines.

Under the current circumstances, development cannot proceed on “business as usual”. There is a need to re-think our over-all development strategy in light of the alarming manifestations of climate change impacts. The urgency of this task is exemplified with the issuance by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of Administrative Order No. 254 mandating the DOTC to lead in Formulating a National Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) for the Philippines.

Recognizing the need to re-visit its existing policies and mandates that govern the transport sector, especially in urban areas, a new paradigm in tackling problems on energy efficiency

and environmentally sustainable transport must be put in place to redirect the current development path that favours low carbon and low pollution transport systems.

The need to actively involve all stakeholders in the national and local levels is deemed as an important element to ensure that policies that promote energy efficient and environmentally-friendly transportation systems have the buy-in and support of the populace and see to its implementation.

We gather here today to discuss the strategies and action plan towards environmentally sustainable transport in the Philippines. More importantly, our output today will provide us the sense of direction where we want to go. Collectively, we have to do meaningful mitigation and make a lasting difference.

In parting I would like to thank the UP-NCTS as the National Collaborating Center for this UNCRD assisted formulation of national EST strategy, for the time and resources well spent. DOTC, together with DENR, is delighted to lead this very important advocacy. I wish you a productive, innovative and constructive conference. Thank you and good day.