

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-third session (virtual meeting)
Geneva, 10-12 June 2020**

**High-level segment on “Harnessing science, technology, and innovation to
accelerate progress on the SDGs and addressing COVID-19”**

Statement submitted by

H.E. Ms. Rowena Cristina L. Guevarra
Undersecretary for Research and Development
Philippines

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CSTD),
twenty-third session

Virtual Informal Meeting, 10-12 June 2020

High-level roundtable on “**Harnessing science, technology, and innovation to accelerate progress on the SDGs and address COVID-19**”

Statement submitted by

ROWENA CRISTINA L. GUEVARA, Ph.D.
Undersecretary for Research and Development

On behalf of the

Department of Science and Technology
Republic of the Philippine

[DRAFT AS OF 08 JUNE 2020]

*Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,*

It is an honor to join you today at the twenty-third session of CSTD.

The Philippines has 7,106 islands with 80 provinces. To ensure that Science, Technology and Innovation are used in attaining Sustainable Development Goals, we are accelerating research and development (R&D) and capacity building of R&D institutions and industries in the provinces through the Science for Change Program. This approach ensures narrowing the technological gaps between the capital and provinces, between MSMEs and large companies, and between the academe and industry. Regional research centers that are responsive to the local economic agenda on sustainable development, health, agriculture and emerging technologies have been established and equipped with R&D leaders, R&D agenda and funding. R&D in MSMEs are undertaken by academic and R&D institutes with support from the government to encourage academe-industry R&D collaboration. The result in the last 3 years is the increase of more than 100% in institutions involved in government-funded R&D projects. In the areas of space S&T application, data analytics for Covid-19, IT-enabled supply and value chain, and other applications of emerging technologies, we have taken the approach of parallel development and rapid technology diffusion to the 16 Regions of the country through higher education institutions and regional offices of national government agencies.

The world is facing an unprecedented global crisis that is attacking societies at their core, claiming lives and people's livelihoods. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has provided opportunities to explore how best to address this, through advances in Science, Technology and Innovation. The decisions of the Philippine Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) on community quarantine and government interventions are science-based. We have observed how data privacy and efficiency of contact tracing and Covid-test reporting tools have been discussed at length by our doctors, scientists, programmers and government regulators. We have likewise witnessed the relevance of science communication in the fight against COVID-19.

In this twenty-third session of the CSTD, allow me to share with you 5 examples of the Philippine Government's response to COVID-19 through science, technology and innovation.

First, is the development of an RT-PCR detection kit to enhance the testing capacity of the country.

Second, is support for health system capacity through re-purposing "RxBox", a locally-developed telemedical device into a bedside monitoring of COVID-19 positive patient's vital signs, oxygen saturation, and electrocardiogram readings. We also mass

produced 3D-printed and bamboo-framed face shields, coverall suits, REwearable face masks, disinfectants, and soaps.

Third, is the use of data science in syndromic surveillance using a spatio-temporal epidemiological modeller to create predictive models on the spread of COVID-19 and severity, through time and space, thus enabling the Philippine Government to project appropriate interventions.

Fourth, is the use of space technology to determine needed capacity in quarantine control points

Fifth, is the use of digital tools in ensuring the dignity of the social amelioration beneficiaries from government programs by digitizing the registration of beneficiaries and cash disbursement.

The Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted our the day-to-day lives. The challenges that we face require the use of resources at our disposal, as we continue to explore more ways to optimize advances in science, technology and innovation. It is our most sincere hope that through STI and strengthened international cooperation, we will soon prevail over this pandemic.

Maraming salamat po. Thank you very much. (END).