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Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-pandemic world

Statement submitted by

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The Philippine Statement

High-level panel on Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-coronavirus disease (COVID19) world

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Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-Coronavirus (COVID 19) world

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Good evening from the Philippines.

In 2021, the urban population in the world grew to around 4.46 billion brought about by rapid population growth in the city and migration from the rural areas. The UNDP cited that by 2050, the urban population will be at about 6.5 billion.

The concept of “urbanization” in the past decade revolved around transportation, energy, food, and related systems. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic inspired us to explore beyond these systems, as work-from-home, remote learning, health tele-monitoring, virtual meetings, e-signatures, and food deliveries emerged.

In my personal experience, travel time today is 33% shorter than pre-pandemic, processes in our office have been digitized and digitalized, technologies from R&D outputs have been re-purposed and quickly brought online thereby shortening the process of technology transfer, and new tools for urban planning are gaining acceptance among our government officials, among others.

Technologies such as blockchain and data science have to be deployed amidst the digitization and digitalization of the government, the private sector and the academe. Renewable energy, in tandem with energy conservation, has to be widespread to balance out the deferment of new power generation due to the pandemic. New technologies for addressing urban waste disposal need to be developed to manage more waste generated by the pandemic response, such as used test kits and PPEs.

Excellencies, the Philippines, through the Department of Science and Technology or DOST, continues its efforts to address the challenges of urban living in cities and communities.

The DOST Smart and Sustainable Communities and Cities Framework that the Department formulated serves as a guide in conceptualizing and prioritizing research directed towards the development of active, vibrant, and sustainable cities by leveraging smart city solutions. It aims to fully exploit the potential of the region's talent pool and maximize the benefits of an innovation-led economy.

The DOST also launched the “Cagayan Valley Smarter City Belt”, the first in the Philippines, to spur economic growth in the northern region of the country.

Lastly, the Philippines believes that ensuring food security is crucial in the post-pandemic world. In a sustainable urban setting, this may be done through vertical agriculture, pot gardening, and the use of hydroponics technologies.

Excellencies, the aspect of sustainable development still needs to be incorporated in our post-pandemic urbanization. The Philippines is one with you in rising above the pandemic while working together for sustainable urban development.

Thank you.