**44th Human Rights Council Session**

**Panel discussion on the rights of persons with disabilities
in the context of climate change**

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**Name of Panelist: Ms. Amalia A. Decena,**

**President of Handicapables Association of Cagayan, Philippines**

***(by video message)***

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very much honoured and privileged to be a panelist on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the context of climate change. The Philippine has consistently been extremely vulnerable to the effect of climate change due to its location the western pacific. Much of the country is exposed to more frequent and increasingly intense natural disasters. The Philippines experiences on average twenty tropical typhoon annually and Persons with Disabilities are at risk. This makes climate change a concern to most Filipino Persons with Disabilities.

In response, the Philippine Government has crafted policies related to climate change as follows:

1. The climate change Act 2009 designed the framework for integrating climate change adaptation in government plans and programs including Persons with Disabilities.
2. A year later, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act was enacted to provide a comprehensive and community based approach to disaster preparedness. A vital component of this law is a mandate to mainstream disaster risk management down to the local government units or LGUS which know the socio-economic groups most at risk. The mandate now requires each LGU to establish its own Disaster Risk Reduction and management office, and craft a local climate change action plan.
3. Finally, the People’s Survival Fund was established in 2014 as a supplemental fund for local government units and community organizations. The one-billion-peso or 20 million US dollar fund aims to finance the implementation of long term projects that will build resiliency to the effects of climate change among municipalities.

One of my advocacies is to Ensure Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management as part of Incheon Strategy in Goal #7. Persons with Disability and other vulnerable groups are at higher risk of death, injury and additional impairments, as a result of exclusion from disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programs. Public service announcements are often issued in formats and language that are not accessible by persons with disabilities.

In addition, emergency exits, shelters and facilities tend not to be barrier free. Regular participation of persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness drills and other disaster risk reduction measures at the local and district levels could prevent or minimize risk and damage when disasters occur. Physical and information infrastructure that incorporates universal design principles would improve the chances of safety and survival.

The Persons With Disabilities Office in the region helps strengthens disability inclusive disaster risk reduction planning and implementation of measures on providing timely and appropriate support to persons with disability in responding to disasters.

In line with the National Disability and Prevention week every July 17-23 every year, activities are regularly conducted to enhance the p the participation of Persons With Disabilities in environment protection. The Office of the Civil Defence has conducted advocacy campaigns on Disaster Inclusive for Persons with Disabilities in the region.

Environment protection indicators form part of the best practices of Local Government Unit to attain and maintain the Seal of Good Local Governance. The Office of Persons With Disabilities was created by law to promote and implement program and services for PWDs. In Santiago City, Tuguegarao City and Cauayan City in Region 02 Philippines, CDRRM office has created a database of Persons with Disabilities to facilitate immediate identification and response in case of natural disasters.

Lastly, Disabled Organization in the Philippines was recognized and accredited by the government. The National Council on Disability Office and Department of Social Welfare Office are mandated to provide policies in different disability related issues and empower Persons With Disabilities from National, Regional, Provincial, Municipal, City and Barangay or Village level.

As an advocate of Persons With Disabilities in the region, I assist in awareness-raising efforts to ensure that policies and programs concerning the Rights of Persons With Disability in the context of climate change are cascaded to the grassroot level to enable the informed participation of all concerned stakeholders. **END.**