

PGMA calls on provincial governors to join her in addressing destructive effects of climate change

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PILI, Camarines Sur - President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called on the country's provincial governors Wednesday to brace themselves up in joining the national government in addressing the destructive effects of global warming.

"We must assume the mantle of leadership and work to address the challenge of climate change. Each and every person bears some measure of responsibility for what we have done today and throughout history to diminish our global environment," the President said in her speech at the 2nd General Assembly of the League of Provinces of the Philippine (LPP) held at the Villa del Rey in this town.

The President said that investing in vital infrastructures includes "building up our environment as a reflection of our commitment to our quality of life. People need to breathe clean air and swim in clean water while we build factories and bridges."

She added that these programs and activities mirror how the provincial executives have operationalized the theme of their conference, "Enhancing National and Local Government Partnerships in Improving Environmental Governance and Natural Resources Stewardship."

She noted that from rising tides, to changing weather to deforestation and pollution of air, sea and land, the challenges of climate change are great.

"As a nation made up of more than 7,000 islands, rising seas due to global warming takes on a whole new meaning. In America, if we have rising seas Florida may lose some coastline. In the Philippines, if we have rising seas we might lose a whole nation," she said.

The response, she said, to this "grave challenge may sound humorous, but the intent is deadly serious: We must work together to solve this problem. If we do, it will be one of the great achievements of our national and local government partnership."

She stressed that compared with the emission of other countries, "our nation has been more responsible than others and we contribute less than one percent to global warming. And yet we are the recipient of the impact of global warming caused by other nations."

"But all that apportionment of blame does nothing against a rising tide of global warming that will swamp our nation if we do not act with decisiveness and solidarity," she said.

She explained that her administration has begun the "Green Philippines" plan, a blueprint for "mapping our environment and economic policies that will allow for sustainable development that doesn't fall on the backs of the poor or erode our environment."

She stressed that there is a cost to make the Green Philippines come to life. "For instance here in Bicol, we have the Bicol River Basin project. It is to preserve the Bicol River Basin from the ravages of environment. But the cost is greater without the investment in people and environment."