



# HISGUT KALIBUNGAN

## HURUHISGUTAY 3 POLICY BRIEF

22 April 2021

### SUMMARY

In Huruhisgutay 3, environmentalists and development planners discussed the challenges in mainstreaming climate proofing strategies in local resource development especially in coastal areas. They presented the following set of recommendations to enhance disaster preparedness and build resilient communities and ecosystems in Region 8 and beyond.

- Explore convergences among local government units (LGUs), line government agencies (LGAs), academe, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure vertical integration and horizontal coordination of regional and national goals and targets on climate resilience in local development planning, programming, and budgeting.
- Develop more specific climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies for each sector.
- Localize strategies and aim for specific and targeted impacts.
- Employ community-based and participatory approaches in addressing climate change vulnerability and disaster risks.
- Develop the capacity of academic institutions to help national government agencies assist LGUs in mainstreaming climate proofing in local resource planning development.
- Establish a focal unit that will cater to CCA-DRR needs and concerns at the local and regional level.
- Review and update existing Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) and other policies related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Intensify education, information, and communication campaigns among the local community to enhance their awareness of climate change, its impacts, and strategies for building climate-resilient communities.

### INTRODUCTION

Climate change refers to the change in global or regional climate patterns because of the increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere largely due to the use of fossil fuels. Coastal areas are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change like sea-level rise and natural hazards such as typhoons. The environment, economy, and living conditions of the people in these areas are vulnerable to disruption particularly during extreme weather events.

One way to avoid or minimize the detrimental effects of climate change is through climate proofing, which is a tool that can help prevent injury or loss of life and destruction/damage to properties. At the same time, climate proofing helps reduce adverse economic impacts, enhance local disaster preparedness, and build and expand disaster resilient communities. In general, climate proofing refers to the process of mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (CCA-DRR) in local resource planning and development.

The disaster experienced by the people and environment in Eastern Visayas in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yolanda served as a wakeup call for local authorities and other concerned organizations here and abroad, to look for ways to reduce the adverse effects of climate change. For example, ecosystem-based strategies like the rehabilitation of degraded mangroves, beach forests, seagrass beds, and coral reefs in Eastern Visayas have been undertaken to help restore ecosystem services. Essentially, these coastal ecosystems act as the primary line of defense against strong winds, intense typhoons, tsunamis, and storm surges. At the same time, coastal communities rely on these ecosystems as a source of food and livelihood. On the other hand, building of seawalls and tidal flood control structures, and clearing of human settlements and built structures along the coastal buffer or no-build zones in Yolanda-affected areas like Palo and Tacloban City, were implemented to help prevent or lessen the disasters caused by natural hazards.

However, there are challenges that have to be addressed in order to formulate and implement appropriate climate proofing interventions at the local level. These challenges include the lack of integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in local resource development because of lack of information on climate change vulnerabilities specific to the community. The shortage of human and fiscal resources for conducting climate and disaster risk assessment (CDRA) likewise hampers the process of building climate resilient communities and ecosystems.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Nine policy recommendations to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in local resource development especially in coastal areas were generated from Huruhisgutay 3: Climate Proofing and Resilience, the third episode of the Hisgut Kalibungan series, with Dr. Eulito V. Casas, Jr., Chairperson of UP Tacloban's Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, as lead discussant and Mr. Jay-ar O. Ragub, Senior Economic Development Specialist of the National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office 8, and Mr. Erwin P. Husmalaga, Information Officer and Head of the Partnership Development and Management Unit of the Climate Change Commission (CCC), as panelists.

1. **Explore convergences among LGUs, LGAs, academe, and other stakeholders.** By fostering partnerships with the community, stakeholders, concerned LGAs, and other LGUs, local authorities will be able to address part of the challenges regarding the lack of technical expertise and knowledge as well as the scarcity of human and fiscal resources for conducting CDRA and mainstreaming CCA-DRR in local planning and development as a whole.

2. **Ensure vertical integration and horizontal coordination of regional and national goals and targets on climate resilience in local development planning, programming, and budgeting.** This can be done by harmonizing and integrating climate change adaption and mitigation strategies in the comprehensive land use plan (CLUP) and the comprehensive development plan (CDP) of cities and municipalities. Doing so will give LGUs an additional advantage in accessing the People Survival Fund (PSF), which requires climate change expenditure tagging.
3. **Develop more specific climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies for each sector.** Local authorities must present more specific CCA-DRR strategies in the CDP for each of the following sectors: social, economic, physical, environmental, and institutional.
4. **Localize strategies and aim for specific and targeted impacts.** In formulating climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, the proposed solutions must be reflective of and responsive to the experiences and realities of the people and environment in focus.
5. **Employ community-based and participatory approaches in addressing climate change vulnerability and disaster risks.** Employing a bottom-up approach is one of the key strategies in developing informed and appropriate responses to avoid or reduce the impact of climate change and to enhance the adaptive capacity of the people and environment.
6. **Build the capacity of academic institutions to help national government agencies assist LGUs in mainstreaming climate proofing in local resource development.** The Climate Change Commission (CCC) already acknowledges the potential contribution of higher education institutions (HEIs) in helping LGUs draft their respective LCCAPs and in mainstreaming CDRAs in local resource development. As such, the CCC should intensify its campaign to build the capacity of HEIs to help LGUs integrate climate proofing initiatives in their plans, programs, projects, and policies for purposes of sustainable development.
7. **Establish a focal unit that will cater to CCA-DRR needs and concerns at the local and regional level.** This proposed action will help LGUs avoid overlapping functions and harmonize processes and programs within its executive domain. At the same time, the focal unit can facilitate the sustainability of programs, projects, and policies on climate change regardless of the political climate. Likewise, an inter-LGU and inter-agency body at the regional level (e.g. a consortium on climate change) will be instrumental in addressing climate change concerns through concerted efforts.
8. **Review and update existing LCCAPs and other policies related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.** A regular review and updating of development plans, programs, projects, and policies is necessary to address emerging concerns brought about by the rapidly changing society and environment. The results of the review of policies as well as the results of the monitoring and evaluation of completed and ongoing projects should be used as inputs to guide policymakers and implementers in developing new interventions in response to existing and emerging climate change concerns.
9. **Intensify education, information, and communication campaigns among the local community to enhance their awareness of climate change, its impacts, and strategies for building climate-resilient communities.** This will help LGUs and stakeholders enhance local disaster preparedness and develop resilience.

This policy brief has been prepared by the Leyte Samar Heritage Center of UP Visayas Tacloban College based on "*Huru hisgutay* 3: Climate Proofing and Resilience", the third in the monthly online *Hisgut Kalibungan* roundtable discussion series, which aims to provide expert analysis of the most pressing environmental issues and concerns in Eastern Visayas.