



# PHILIPPINES

Maximum time of delivery: three (3) minutes

## STATEMENT

**H.E. FORTUNATO T. DE LA PEÑA**

Secretary of Science and Technology of the Republic of the Philippines

at the

### **Sixth annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals**

Session 4: Ministerial Session: STI policies and initiatives for sustainable  
development - best practices and lessons learned  
05 May 2021 | 9:00AM-10:15AM, EST

*Excellencies and distinguished delegates,*

Good evening from the Philippines.

We would like to thank the co-chairs, Ambassador Mohammad Koba of Indonesia and Ambassador Andrejs Pildegovičs of Latvia for this opportunity to share our national perspective on the crucial role of STI in the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in this Decade of Action and considering the multidimensional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For middle-income countries such as the Philippines, the pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges and created new vulnerabilities, setting back progress and development gains made during the past years, in all the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The significance of science, technology, and innovation cannot be more emphasized.

The Philippines developed a strategic approach to utilize STI in managing the crisis and in fulfilling its commitments to achieve the SDGs.

First is devising immediate solutions through repurposing available technologies, platforms, and methodologies. The Department of Science and Technology supported the development of our local GenAmplify™ COVID-19 rRT-PCR Detection Kit which technology platform was initially used for dengue; a biomedical device that measures

the vital signs of patients; a disease spread modeler software adopted to monitor the COVID-19 spread; and a travel management system application.

Available facilities were also maximized such as 3D printing facilities for face shield frames, textile laboratory to develop re-wearable face masks with water-repellent fabric, and laboratories to produce alcohol, soaps, and hand mists from indigenous products.

Second is implementing new and existing policies and programs for medium term solutions and inclusive development. The government upskills Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises through technology support and technical assistance. Community Empowerment through S&T Program is being implemented to deploy a package of S&T interventions, such as training courses and livelihood programs, to build progressive and empowered communities. The Philippines invests in human resources by offering S&T scholarship for secondary to graduate students; fellowship; and training opportunities. The government also continues to fund scientific R&D programs.

Lastly, it is imperative to establish long-term solutions. The Philippines seeks to expand and strengthen its capacities in drug discovery R&D by strengthening its network of partner university pharmaceutical development centers. The establishment of the Virology S&T Institute of the Philippines is currently a pending bill in legislature. This initiative is aimed to serve as the premiere R&D institute in virology in the country.

The Philippines believes that this time calls for global unity and strengthened international cooperation to ensure that no one is left behind. Let us work in a coordinated manner to achieve the 2030 Agenda and to rise above the current global crisis.

Thank you.

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