

Climate change remains 'top priority' amid pandemic: Cimat

By Marita Moaje

July 22, 2020, 7:00 pm

DENR Secretary Roy Cimat

MANILA – Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimat said Wednesday the Duterte administration prioritizes climate change issues amid the coronavirus pandemic.

During a pre-SONA forum aired over state-run PTV4, Cimat, also chairman of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR), said addressing climate emergency remains as urgent as ever.

Cimat said the government will “increase our resilience and adaptive capacity to both coronavirus pandemic and climate change.”

He said among those being prioritized by the department include effective health care waste management as well as the treatment, storage and disposal facilities.

“More effective health care waste management shall be implemented to overcome the huge volume of infectious and hazardous waste of hospitals,” he added. “Treatment, storage and disposal facilities in the country shall be increased”.

There is a multiplier effect in climate change, he said, which eventually leads to other problems.

Cimat said this is because as the ecosystem becomes unstable and loses its balance, food production will, later on, be affected.

Cimat said as the head of the Cabinet cluster, he assures that government programs such as the "Plant, Plant, Plant" shall be aggressively undertaken to ensure food security, together with the reforestation and watershed management, forest protection and agro-forestry development.

He said the Covid-19 pandemic has been a big challenge to everyone.

“*Malaking dagok sa buong mundo ang naging dulot ng Covid-19, hinamon ang ating katatagan* (The Covid-19 pandemic brought huge challenges, it tested our strength),” Cimat said.

However, he expressed optimism that the country will be able to come out of this and that the Philippines can convert this health crisis into opportunities to accelerate climate action.

By formulating the correct responses to the pandemic and the problems on climate change, he said the country will be able to resist.

“Patuloy tayong magiging matatag. Lalabanan natin ang dagok at hamon na kinakaharap natin hindi lamang sa hamon ng pandemya ganon din sa hamon ng panahon (We will continue to be strong. We will fight this challenge we are now facing, not only that of the pandemic but to the challenges of the time),” Cimatú said. **(PNA)**

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1109787>